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A New Model for Reading Adaptation: The Textus, in a Case Study of Adaptations of “The Great Gatsby”

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A NEW MODEL FOR READING ADAPTATION:
THE TEXTUS, IN A CASE STUDY OF ADAPTATION OF *THE GREAT GATSBY*

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Title: A New Model for Reading Adaptation: The Textus, in a Case Study of Adaptations of *The Great Gatsby*

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Currently, adaptation studies privileges obvious text pairings (source text > adaptation; the classic pairing being novel > film). Although this basic approach appears to be intertextual, it is an impoverished and limited version of intertextuality, which is elsewhere a rich and multifaceted paradigm in literary studies. No one ever has a single textual model in mind when reading. Texts are always multiple in every act of reading, and the purpose of this dissertation is to present the textus, which is an attempt to systematically introduce this intertextual complexity into adaptation studies. Synthesizing post-structuralist criticism (notions of a text not possessing any singular authorial intent or purpose and instead transferring the agency to the reader to seek out the multiple meanings of the perceived signs found in the texts) and structuralism (the creation of a rigorous conceptual framework), the textus set forth in this dissertation will aid the reader in mapping the narrative found in adapted media based on various points of encounter.

While isolating the essence of an adapted text has been difficult due to the seemingly elusive and relative qualities of a text's spirit, utilizing the fixed structure of the textus's numerical coordinate system will assist in navigating the intricacies of applying and interpreting any number of texts found in a single adaptational set. For the purpose of this dissertation, the textus of *The Great Gatsby* will be examined. Numbers will be assigned to three separate textus divisions: *threads* (individual texts or instances of adaptation, organized in the order encountered); *interstices* (particular dramatic moments or other key locations that appear within

each of the threads, where analysis will likely bear most fruit); and *traces* (basic categories of aesthetic creativity, such as author and voice, modified as appropriate for the medium in question). The purpose of this framework is to offer the reader of adaptations the agency to extract meaning from the texts regardless of the text's presented form.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have been discussing adaptation for centuries, indeed for thousands of years, if we go back to Plato and Aristotle, which, of course, we must. This dissertation is relevant to contemporary criticism in that it offers another model for reading adaptation by shifting the discourse from the traditional writerly primacy of authorship, originality, and transmedia creativity, to what readerly knowledge can be extracted from multiple readings of a text (or viewings, in the case of film and dramatic adaptations).

While some form of aesthetic adaptation is and has been a part of our social consciousness for thousands of years, the critical discourse regarding the literary phenomenon has been primarily relegated to writerly topics concerning form, issues of fidelity, and what constitutes an “original” text. Much of the scholarship investigating adaptations revolves around isolating similarities and differences present in two or more adapted works, reinforcing the impetus to privilege one text above another. Robert Ray, noting the seeming plethora of case study articles published by scholars, argues that the “sheer number of these articles, their dogged resort to the individual case study, the lack of any evidence of cumulative knowledge development or heuristic potential” has left the field of study stagnant: “Without benefit of a presiding poetics, film and literature scholars could only persist in asking about individual movies the same unproductive layman’s question (How does the film compare with the book?), getting the same unproductive answer (The book is better)” (44). This sentiment reflects the state of current adaptation studies, which acknowledges the presence of intertextuality, but presently lacks a model for reading adaptations capable of encompassing all forms of adapted media.

In his 1996 *Novel to Film* Brian McFarlane acknowledges that the discussion of “adaptation has been bedevilled by the fidelity issue, no doubt ascribable in part to the novel’s coming first, in part to the ingrained sense of literature’s greater respectability in traditional critical circles” (8). He eloquently summarizes the fidelity debate as follows:

Fidelity criticism depends on a notion of the text as having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a single, correct “meaning” which the filmmaker has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tampered with. There will often be a distinction between being faithful to the “letter,” an approach which the more sophisticated writer may suggest is no way to ensure a “successful” adaptation, and to the “spirit” or “essence” of the work. The latter is of course very much more difficult to determine since it involves not merely a parallelism between novel and film but between two or more readings of a novel, since any given film version is able only to aim at reproducing the film-maker’s reading of the original and to hope that it will coincide with that of many other readers/viewers. (8-9)

While noting the difficulty in determining the transferability of the “spirit” or “essence” in an adaptation, McFarlane falls short of offering a model for readers/viewers/listeners of adaptations to employ in order to isolate the presence of essential narrative moments which may constitute the presence of the text’s essence. McFarlane also presupposes the adapted text, in this case using the paradigm of novel to film where the film is the adapted media, is limited by the filmmaker’s “reading of the original” without taking into account the viewer’s experience(s) with not only the original text (in this case, the novel), but with other adaptations of the same narrative. Just as Ray notes in the above paragraph, pitting the original against the adaptation is bound to yield “the same unproductive answer” when posing a question of comparison, but if

the reader/viewer/listener/participant of adaptations traces his/her experiences with multiple encounters with the same adapted narrative, isolating for him/herself points of investigation, he/she should be able to determine whether or not the text's essence has been maintained, and if not, question what precipitated its absence. If such a systematic model exists, issues of fidelity would eventually have to cease, as the consumer of adaptations would possess a framework granting him/her the agency to extract specific narrative moments from each encounter with not only the original text but with the adaptations of the text as well, regardless of the adaptations presented form.

This dissertation presents such a framework for examining adaptations, which I refer to as the *textus*, defined by the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* as being “the point at which the parts of the structure fit together.” The purpose of the *textus* is to offer a single construct in which to situate the point(s) of encounter for various adapted media in order to subvert or destabilize the hierarchical structure commonly utilized in the current discourse of adaptation studies. Synthesizing one's encounters with the adapted text(s) can undo the polarization among the varying disciplines (i.e. film versus literature versus music), since utilizing the *textus* may offer knowledge based not on a chronological scale of authorship or creation, but based upon one's serial encounter(s) with each adaptational text. Each experience with a text creates a memory of the text (according to Plato and Aristotle), so that when a subsequent encounter occurs, the memory of the past encounters aids in the overall construct of the single overarching experience, therefore heightening the reader's abilities to comprehend the ever increasing plurality of meaning(s) present in the text(s). Utilizing the symbiotic relationship established between the reader and the authors of the adapted media, the creator of the *textus* is able to add each adapted text to the construct based on points of encounter in order to achieve Ray's noted “cumulative

knowledge development [and] heuristic potential.” It is important to note that the textus is not finite, but is itself adaptable, as the creator of the framework will continue to experience subsequent encounters with the same adapted narrative and situate these using a list of criteria predetermined by him or her during his/her investigation. The specifics regarding this approach of choosing the criteria will be discussed later in the section which overviews the textus.

In order to step outside of what Thomas Leitch calls a “theoretical vacuum” in adaptation studies and address the phenomenon of adaptation with the “theoretical rigor” currently absent (“Twelve Fallacies” 149), this dissertation will offer an interpretive coordinate system to utilize in the discourse of adaptation studies. The purpose of this will be to alleviate the reader’s/viewer’s preoccupation with form or fidelity, and instead home in on concentrated points of convergence relevant to understanding the text(s) as individual pieces of the adaptational whole. Just as Roland Barthes asserts in his *S/Z* that the reader need “no longer [be] a consumer, but a producer of the text” (4), so too is the reader/viewer/listener/participant responsible for facilitating comprehension when utilizing the textus, as he/she will add individual texts to the larger structure based on the point(s) of experience, rather than utilizing the problematic chronological scale currently in use which privileges the “original.” Articulating how structuralism defines *structures*, Lois Tyson notes that

structures aren’t physical entities; they’re conceptual frameworks that we use to organize and understand physical entities. A structure is any conceptual system that has the following three properties: (1) wholeness, (2) transformation, and (3) self-regulation. *Wholeness* simply means that the system functions as a unit; it’s not merely a collection of independent items. The whole is different from the sum of its parts because the parts working together create something new [. . .]

Transformation means that the system is not static; it's dynamic, capable of change. The system is not merely a structure (a noun); it also structures (a verb). In other words, new material is always being structured by the system [. . .] *Self-regulation* means that the transformations of which a structure is capable never lead beyond its own structural system. (211)

At heart, the textus is a conceptual framework possessing the properties of wholeness, transformation, and self-regulation. As Tyson also notes, that “there are too many facts to be perceived without conceptual systems to limit and organize them” (211), the framework of the textus limits this organizational system by stipulating that the reader should add to the framework adaptations (physical entities) of one narrative in the order he/she encounters each, which focuses the systematic examination of the parts of the whole as the reader endeavors to investigate the way(s) in which “the parts working together create something new.” By acknowledging the reader's role in choosing which texts are added to the textus, since the reader/viewer/listener/participant is responsible for formulating not only the framework of the textus itself, but also for determining what criteria will be examined in order to systematically extract the presence of the narrative's essence, the structuralist approach is heavily reliant on reader-response theory as well. Reader-response criticism, especially that of Wolfgang Iser, is relevant in adaptation studies in that Iser asserts the reader's memory of past experiences plays an active role in his/her created understanding of the text he/she reads currently:

Whatever we read sinks into our memory and is foreshortened. It may later be evoked again and set against a different background with the result that the reader is enabled to develop hitherto unforeseeable connections. The memory evoked, however, can never reassume its original shape, for this would mean that memory

and perception were identical, which is manifestly not so. The new background brings to light new aspects of what we had committed to memory; conversely these, in turn, shed their light on the new background, thus arousing more complex anticipations. Thus, the reader, in establishing these interrelationships between past, present and future, actually causes the text to reveal its potential multiplicity of connections. These connections are the product of the reader's mind working on the raw material of the text. (1004)

In this way, as will be outlined later, the creation of each textus is unique to each creator of that textus based on his/her associations with words and/or images, sounds or any other of the sensory perceptions. One creator's textus cannot be identical to another creator's construction and is constantly expanding as he/she encounters more adaptations of not only a particular narrative, but the adapted memories of experiences with sensory perceptions signified within each encountered text.

I argue that current adaptation theory is not sufficiently readerly: it does not fully account for the importance of audience, specifically the rich intertextual consciousness that the knowing audience often brings to the complex field of source texts and multiple intermedia adaptations. Even at the most basic level, the knowing audience cannot be unconscious of an adaptation's intertextual field. That is, if the audience is to understand the process of adaptation, they must first be aware that what is being read/viewed/heard/played is indeed an adaptation. As Linda Hutcheon notes in her *A Theory of Adaptation*,

If we do not know that what we are experiencing actually *is* an adaptation or if we are not familiar with the particular work that it adapts, we simply experience the adaptation as we would any other work. To experience it *as an adaptation*,

however [. . .] we need to recognize it as such and to know its adapted text, thus allowing the latter to oscillate in our memories with what we are experiencing. In the process we inevitably fill in any gaps in the adaptation with information from the adapted text. (120-21)

Thus, how we read (our negotiation with signs) an adapted text is different from how we read an isolated text: we participate in recreating the adapted text using interpreted memories from our previous encounters with the text, as well as memories from previous life experiences relevant to the particular text itself. Therefore, the process of reading adaptations is based on the collaboration between the creator of the adapted text, the past creators of source texts, and the reader. However, even in this intertextual field, reading an adaptation as (and, perhaps, as if it were) an isolated text is also possible. Hutcheon asserts that for “an adaptation to be successful in its own right, it must be so for both knowing and unknowing audiences” (121). Either audience is in the role of active participant in meaning-making. The unknowing audiences may read the adapted work and gauge it a success without knowing its source text(s), but the experience of the knowing audience is surely more encompassing and complex.

However, the knowing reader of an adaptation is able to “oscillate in [his/her] memories” the previous encounters with the source texts, which may often introduce the problematic concept of “fidelity.” As Robert Stam notes in his essay “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation,” the “notion of fidelity gains its persuasive force from our sense that some adaptations are indeed better than others and that some adaptations fail to ‘realize’ or substantiate that which we most appreciated in the source novels. Words such as *infidelity* and *betrayal* in this sense translate our feeling, when we have loved a book, that an adaptation has not been worthy of that love” (54). While Stam explores only the relationships between novels and films,

other adapted media can also be examined according to the paradigm of “fidelity,” and the seemingly intimate relationship a reader forms with any text upon first encounter is certainly significant when discussing how to read its adaptations. Stam goes on to note that

words of a novel [. . .] have a virtual, symbolic meaning; we as readers, or as directors, have to fill in their paradigmatic indeterminacies. A novelist’s portrayal of a character as “beautiful” induces us to imagine the person’s features in our minds. Flaubert never even tells us the exact eye color of Emma Bovary’s eyes, but we color them nonetheless [. . .]. Where Steinbeck wrote “photographs,” Ford had to choose specific photographs [. . .]. The mention of “earrings” in the novel does not dictate Ford’s choice of having Ma Joad try them on. (55)

The unknowing reader of John Ford’s *The Grapes of Wrath* would not be concerned with fidelity or distracted by his/her own recollection of “photographs,” as he/she would not have been aware of the existence of the word in John Steinbeck’s source text.

James Naremore’s “Introduction: Film and the Reign of Adaptation” concedes that “Even when academic writing on the topic [of adaptation] is not directly concerned with a given film’s artistic adequacy or fidelity to a beloved source, it tends to be narrow in range, inherently respectful to the ‘precursor text,’ and constitutive of a series of binary oppositions that poststructuralist theory has taught us to deconstruct: literature versus cinema, high culture versus mass culture, original versus copy” (2). The problem with “fidelity” is that it assumes a one-way interpretive pattern that does not reflect the actual complexity of adaptations’ creation and reception. Again, according to Hutcheon, in the wake of theorists such as Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish, “readers are no longer considered passive recipients of textual meaning but active contributors to the aesthetic process, working with the text to decode signs and then to create

meaning” (134). To these theorists, Hutcheon argues, “*all* readers are engaged in the active making of textual meaning” (134). Textualization, then, is crucial to both the knowing and the unknowing audience of adaptation, but when discussing what is “already textualized,” Dudley Andrew maintains that “adaptation is the appropriation of a meaning from a prior text. The hermeneutic circle [. . .] preaches that an explication of a text occurs only after a prior understanding of it, yet that prior understanding is justified by the careful explication it allows” (29). The interpretation of adapted media is realized by the reader’s previous associations with previous forms of the same text. Robert Stam contends that “Each adaptation sheds a new cultural light on the [text]” being adapted (63), which is similar to Roland Barthes’s notion requiring that signifiers’ connotations be predicated by a culture. In this way, “the sum of these stock connotations equals a culture’s ideology,” according to Robert Ray. “Understanding even a single adaptation [. . .] requires that a reader participate [. . .] in that lexicon whose signifiers he or she has necessarily encountered elsewhere” (Ray 41). How one reads an adaptation, then, requires effort on the part of the knowing reader as “all media are mixed media, and all representations are heterogeneous” (Mitchell 5). According to Kamilla Elliott, “visual/verbal categorizations break down at every level in the hybrid arts of illustrated novels and worded films: at the level of the whole arts, at the level of the whole signs, and at the level of pieces of signs” (16-17). Referencing Elliott, Thomas Leitch notes that “contemporary adaptation studies resists a categorical distinction between verbal and visual texts in theory while reinscribing it in practice” (*Film Adaptation* 180). The textus offers a neutral place in which to house visual/verbal/interactive media based as much on the reader’s encounters as on the adapted texts’ forms, thus embodying in this theory of adaptation the same complexities that exist in our observed practice of absorbing such intertextual interactions.

While Kamilla Elliott observes that adaptation involves the “connection in which the spirit of a text passes from author to novel to reader-filmmaker to film to viewer” (137), which is discussed in more detail below, the “spirit” has often been difficult to decipher, especially when examining the paradigm of novel to film. However, film theorist Phillip Rosen argues that “the paradigmatic orderings of images [. . .] are based on certain identifiable types of narrative organization, with each image and sound answerable first of all to its place in the presentation of a story; that is, every image and sound of classical film responds to certain pervasive narrational principles which regulate the flow of sensations and meanings to the spectator” (8). This suggests that despite the differences between the two medias (literature and the classic Hollywood film), one is able to trace the narrative regardless of its presented form, thus solidifying the adapted text’s “spirit,” which has been deemed elusive by many theorists in adaptation studies thus far. The stakes of the textus are that its conceptual framework addresses the many calls for reform from adaptation studies scholars. I argue that the textus allows for the reader/viewer/ listener/participant to trace systematically the narrative in ways which permit him/her to examine its parts in order that “the parts working together [to] create something new” (Tyson 211) regardless of the form the physical entities take (i.e. whether film, literature, music, interactive media). The “something new” which is created through the textus is one’s ability to extract the presence of a narrative’s essence through the systematic examination of multiple renderings of the adapted narrative. If this model for reading adaptation is utilized, fidelity discourse will indeed be “terminated” as David Kranz argues is necessary for adaptation studies to survive, since readers of adapted media will eventually have to cease interpreting adaptations using the futile comparative paradigm, which often privileges the chronological order of authorial creation rather than the experience/encounter of the narrative by the reader. This reader

has acquired the agency as co-creator in the process of knowledge acquisition when creating the conceptual framework of the textus to use in his/her examination of adaptations.

In search of an explanation as to *why* adaptation persists and to what end, it seems imperative to trace the practice of adaptation back to its infancy by examining Plato's stance on the phenomenon. In his *Phaedo*, after concluding that all that is, comes from what it previously was not, Plato gives Socrates his theory of recollection: "if someone, on seeing a thing, or hearing it, or getting any other sense perception of it, not only recognizes that thing, but also thinks of something else, which is the object not of the same knowledge but of another, don't we then rightly say that he's been 'reminded' of the object of which he has got the thought?"(73c, d). This Platonic view, then, is that our knowledge in great part is realized through recollection, and that there are universal concepts fundamental to our constructs of knowledge which could not possibly derive from sensory perception. Without utilizing our senses, by experiencing the senses, all recollections would be unintelligible. Recollection, then, is the experience where something we perceive forces us to think of something else that is either related or connected to that which we are perceiving. Remembered experience is thus the vehicle to facilitate one's construct of meaning-making. In this way, in the study of adaptation, while engaging in a sensory encounter of one text, we are able to recollect a previously encountered text, thus forming connections in our pursuit of greater experiential meaning. Plato's Socrates also posits that when a man looks at an object and is reminded of another object, the second object is inferior because it is not the object itself. For instance, we acknowledge that Atticus Finch is a representation of a real man created by words and images. We utilize Plato's logic of inferiority by noting the characteristics ascribed to Atticus Finch which align him with being male, but

having never known the *real* Atticus Finch in name or body, we do not judge his *character* as inferior just because his fictional representation falls short of that of a real man.

And finally, Plato's Socrates differentiates between the corruptible, tangible, earthly objects that can be perceived through the senses and that which cannot be seen or corrupted. Much as in his *Republic*, Plato argues that that which is constantly undergoing change cannot be *real*, since true reality is that which is unchanging and thus eternal. This is relevant to the study of adaptation in that there is constant flux in the encountering of a textual object and subsequent adaptations of the object. It is through this acknowledgement, and subsequently through the process of recollection, that any experience of adaptational objects finds cohesion—a cohesion based not on the physical state (form) of the object, but on the conceptual principle signified by the sensory experience of the adaptations.

Perhaps recollecting Plato's *Phaedo*, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* begins with "All men naturally desire knowledge. An indication of this is our esteem for the senses" (1a). After privileging sight over the remainder of the senses, Aristotle informs us that through sight "in addition to the faculty of memory" (1a) we are able to learn: "It is from memory that men acquire experience, because the numerous memories of the same thing eventually produce the effect of a single experience" (4c). It is essential that one keep in mind this "single experience" when attempting to study adaptations, for it is not the source text solely that leads us to greater understanding, but rather multiple perspectives (memories) of the same idea that offer us the ability to see more dimensions to the idea. Therefore, in adaptation studies, we must utilize not only the empirical senses, but also Plato's theory of recollection, which is reinforced by Aristotle's epistemology of memory and how memory leads us to unified experience. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle reaffirms his *Metaphysics* by stating that "the reason why men enjoy seeing a

likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, ‘Ah, that is he.’ For if you happen not to have seen the original, the pleasure will be due not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, the colouring, or some such other cause” (1448a15). So having never physically seen Atticus Finch other than as a creation in my head derived from the combination of words on the page and my imagination, I am able to say, “Ah, that is he” when Gregory Peck’s calm face and slightly wearied shoulders present themselves on the screen in front of me. If another adaption were to surface, I would be able to say again, “Ah, that is also he,” and combine the characteristics of the newly signified Atticus Finch with my recollections of past experiences with the character, thus not taking away any attributes, but instead adding to my comprehension of his character’s complexities.

In his *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, philosopher David Hume’s understanding of the mimetic-self echoes Plato and Aristotle for the eighteenth-century’s shaping of adaptation. Hume asserts that “there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of the mind when a man feels the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of moderate warmth, and when he afterwards recalls to his memory this sensation, or anticipates it by his imagination. These faculties may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses” (17). Immanuel Kant too, continued this notion of experience stemming from one’s relation to the senses: “Experience is an empirical knowledge, that is, a knowledge which determines an object through perceptions. It is a synthesis of perceptions, not contained in perception itself but containing in one consciousness the synthetic unity of the manifold of perceptions” (208-09). Acknowledging this synthesis is crucial to the scholarship which follows in adaptation studies, as the collective object allows one to find meaning in the varied facets in what was previously a two-dimensional object (single text). The phenomena of objects creates

meaning not based then on a chronological scale of authorship or creation, but one's encounter with each object, thus creating a memory of the object so when a subsequent encounter occurs, the memory of past encounters aids in the overall construct of the experience. Gotthold Lessing's *Laocoon* (1766) marked the beginning of comparing the form art takes and creating a readerly and/or viewerly hierarchy.

Continuing along the path to find a place to house this single experience, one can easily become sidetracked by arguments regarding primacy of text, fidelity, and form. However, these arguments are circular in their reasoning, as they fail to address the issue(s) of why adaptation is and has been practiced. If originality is so important, why adapt in the first place? Though a text's physical form is crucial regarding genre expectations, the knowledge extracted from the form of the source text or the deviations from that same source text seems to be greatly neglected as a point of discourse. Surely, one cannot read (experience) a text, take from the text a unit of knowledge, and then be expected to relinquish that knowledge upon closing the book or seeing the credits roll on the screen or listening until the final note of a piece of music is played. This knowledge must remain with the reader/viewer/listener. Over and over in adaptation, then, this extracted knowledge remains with the reader, allowing in its very retelling another dimension of the text with every subsequent encounter.

Though George Bluestone's 1957 *Novels into Film* may have been the first book-length study devoted solely to the examination of film adaptations using novels as source texts, several film theorists were writing about adaptation in the years leading up to Bluestone's publication. Many scholars, such as Clement Greenberg, perpetuate what I see as a futile argument stemming from the binary between film and literature: namely they continue to assert that the meaning found in each is specific to its form. While acknowledging the genre expectations of the novel,

Andre Bazin suggests in “Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest” that a “novel is a unique synthesis whose molecular equilibrium is automatically affected when you tamper with its form” (12). Bazin also offers a more humanistic analogy of paintings hanging in a museum, all seemingly original works of art (*pace* Plato), but surely never intended to be canonized or forced to “exist in a completely different architectural and decorative context” (19). Bazin’s claim that “faithfulness to a form, literary or otherwise, is illusory: what matters is the *equivalence in meaning of the forms*” (13), supports the Aristotelian notion that one’s *experience* with a text can only be heightened when re-experiencing it. In this way, Bazin suggests the reader of any adapted text possesses the agency to extract meaning despite the text’s form, by seeking out the “equivalence in meaning” present in the various medias of the adapted text.

Much like Bazin’s analogy of someone standing back in a museum studying the works of art that have been collated there, Roland Barthes and Mikhail Bakhtin suggest the need for metaphorical distance when studying different forms of media. Barthes notes in his 1957 *Mythologies* that the “essential point in all this is that the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one’s disposal” (123). Barthes’ use of “impoverishes” and “distance” hold negative connotations, surely, but within the scope of adaptation studies, it is worth noting that from a distance, one is offered a vantage point which enables one to see more. From a distance, one can isolate patterns and examine these more closely. Similarly, Mikhail Bakhtin’s “Discourse in the Novel” suggests that meaning is not defined by its presented form. Bakhtin holds that meaning “is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean” (346). Bakhtin’s theory of the radical openness of meaning, its inability to remain finite, seems

daunting, so daunting that perhaps it seems easier to quarrel over fidelity and continue to produce compare-and-contrast readings of narratives relayed in different forms.

Having established in Bazin, Barthes, and Bakhtin the possibility that meaning is not predicated by its presented form, we can move on to Dudley Andrew, who suggests what the reader may choose what to do with the meaning he/she extracts from the various media. Eager for change in the study of adaptation, Andrew charges his readers: “Let us use [adaptation] not to fight battles over the essence of the media or the inviolability of individual artworks. Let us use it as we use all cultural practices, to understand the world from which it comes and the one toward which it points” (37). In this way, using adaptation as a map, one is able to use the knowledge extracted from all forms of representational expression in an attempt to understand the world. While not quite this ambitious, the textus likewise seeks to simulate the world of interpretation that each reader personally forms in absorbing a source text and its adaptations.

The reader, according to Christian Metz’s 1977 *The Imaginary Signifier*, “will not always find *his* film, since what he has before him in the actual film is now somebody else’s phantasy” (12). A reader’s expectation of ownership of an experience with a text is not attainable. Keith Cohen’s 1979 *Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange* sets out to find a system where the film and the novel are able to meet in the middle. Discussing the possibilities of the signifier and the signified, Cohen notes that:

The fact remains, however, that in each case a mental image is created. Both novel and cinema *refer* to, or at least *evoke*, some global configuration that is summoned up by the receiver of their messages. The cinema composes bits and pieces of the outside world that function very differently in that world, in much the same way the novel composes words that function as utilitarian means of

communication outside the work of art. In other words, the image comes into the film bearing the mark of the outside world, just as the word comes into the novel bearing the mark of verbal language and etymological history. (89)

The construct of meaning brought about by past experiences is also highlighted in Hugh Dalziel Duncan's 1953 *Language and Literature* in which Duncan asserts that "we are conscious of separation of time (through our historical sense) as well as in space, literature is assigned the task of creating and sustaining communal symbolic characters who must become part of the experience of every individual who is to take part in this society" (5). This idea is closely linked to future theorists' use of intertextuality.

Unlike other contemporary adaptation theorists and critics, who tend to be product-oriented, Kamilla Elliott's 2003 *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* offers her reader "six unofficial concepts of adaptation that split form from content in various ways to account for the process of adaptation" (134). In this way, she supplies specific maps for her reader to use when attempting to seek out meaning in any given adaptational set. The first of her six concepts is the "Psychic Concept of Adaptation," where Elliott goes into great detail about the "spirit" of the text: "The psychic concept of adaptation [...] does not simply advance an infusion of filmic form with authorial literary spirit: it posits a process of psychic connection in which the spirit of a text passes from author to novel to reader-filmmaker to film to viewer" (137). And in this way, Elliott has given her reader an equation of sorts, a diagram, a seemingly solid map of meaning-making: "THE NOVEL'S SPIRIT → (THE NOVEL'S FORM) → (READER-FILMMAKER RESPONSE) → (FILM) → VIEWER RESPONSE" (138). However, this map limits the scope of adaptations as a whole, as her focus is only on the adaptations of novel into film.

Film theorist James Welsh asserts that “[o]ne problem with cinema criticism and theory is that it has all too often involved a hermetic and limited society of scholars writing in codes for their mutual but limited enlightenment” (xiv). Thomas Leitch notes that the “literary study of film is likely to continue declining” (“Where Are We Going” 330). According to Leitch: “Given the declining numbers of film professors trained as literary scholars and the inability of adaptation studies to define a more compelling rationale than the question of movies’ fidelity to their literary sources [. . .] it might seem that adaptation studies, dismissed by both literary studies and film studies, is on the ropes” (330). Acknowledging the current stagnation in adaptation studies, Sarah Cardwell argues that readers of adaptation should focus on the context and intertextuality of adaptations and seek out alternative models of reading adaptation which “reject a centre-based, comparative understanding and accept a more flexible conceptualization” of adaptations (68). This alternative model should possess a “decentredness, comprehensiveness and flexibility, in their placing of adaptations within a far wider cultural context than that of an original-version relationship” (Cardwell 25). Agreeing with Cardwell, David Kranz asserts that “fidelity criticism should be terminated and replaced by an adaptation criticism [. . .] [that] opens up interpretation to infinite analytical possibilities via ever-changing intertextuality and contextuality” (83). Building on this, Linda Hutcheon argues that “what has come to be called intertextuality theory has shifted thinking away from looking at this phenomenon from the point of view of authorial influences on the writing of literature [. . .] and toward considering our readerly associations with literature, the connections *we* (not the author) make—as we read” (“In Defence”). Though several of the more contemporary theorists above acknowledge a need for alternative modes of engagement with adaptations, adaptation studies still lacks what Robert Ray refers to as a “presiding poetics.” The purpose of this dissertation is to present the guidelines for

constructing a framework to be crafted by the reader/viewer/listener/participant of an adaptational set. This systematic approach isolates points of inspection as well as limits the criteria to be examined so as to determine the presence of a narrative's essence across different media.

Currently, adaptation studies privileges obvious text pairings (source text > adaptation; the classic pairing being novel > film). Although this basic approach appears to be intertextual, it is an impoverished and limited version of intertextuality, which is elsewhere a rich and multifaceted paradigm in literary studies. No one ever has a single textual model in mind when reading. Texts are always multiple in every act of reading, and the purpose of this dissertation is to present the textus, which is my attempt to systematically introduce this intertextual complexity into adaptation studies. Synthesizing post-structuralist criticism (notions of a text not possessing any singular authorial intent or purpose and instead transferring the agency to the reader to seek out the multiple meanings of the perceived signs found in the texts) and structuralism (the creation of a rigorous conceptual framework), the textus set forth in this dissertation will aid the reader in mapping the narrative found in adapted media based on various points of encounter.

While isolating the essence of an adapted text has been difficult due to the seemingly elusive and relative qualities of a text's spirit, utilizing the fixed structure of the textus's numerical coordinate system will assist in navigating the intricacies of applying and interpreting any number of texts found in a single adaptational set. For the purpose of this dissertation, the textus of *The Great Gatsby* will be examined. Numbers will be assigned to three separate textus divisions: *threads* (individual texts or instances of adaptation, organized in the order encountered); *interstices* (particular dramatic moments or other key locations that appear within each of the threads, where analysis will likely bear most fruit); and *traces* (basic categories of

aesthetic creativity, such as author and voice, modified as appropriate for the medium in question).

The Latin word *textus* is defined by the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* as being a “Pattern or style of weaving; a woven fabric”; “Method of joining or fitting together, make-up, structure”; “the point at which the parts of the structure fit together”; as well as “The fabric made by joining words together, the body of a passage.” This word seems very appropriate for a construct that correlates to the individually perceived and thus remembered textual objects necessary to ascertain Aristotle’s “single experience” of an adaptational set. In effect, by pooling the remembered or recollected objects together (categorized based on knowledge granted by sense perception), we are in essence creating one of Plato’s forms for analysis; we are creating the unified framework where the multiple parts are defined by their parts of the whole textual structure. Acknowledging Plato’s prerequisite that no two percepts are exactly alike, we may find not only stimulation by examining, within the parameters of a particular medium, each recollected object’s difference, no matter how slight, but also appreciate anew how collectively each plays a significant part in the whole. Imagine, for instance, an intricately woven tapestry. At a certain distance, a narrative appears, as the threads merge their individual qualities like color and texture, which can in turn be picked out on closer inspection. These variances permit a greater image to be produced, since if the tapestry were woven all in one solid color, no dimension or narrative would emerge, thus cheating the one perceiving the object out of any aesthetic beauty, awe of the process of weaving, or the ability to take from the tapestry any meaning other than an approximation of its utilitarian purpose (i.e., a wall covering). Likewise, the function of the *textus* in adaptation studies is much the same as examining the intricately woven tapestry, in that it gives us the opportunity to recognize the varied colors of the individual

threads only in as much as they aid in creating the dimensions of the whole, which is to say that each individual adapted work aids in facilitating meaning of the whole set.

I should note at this point the caution provided by the inspiration for the readerly bent of this project. Though Barthes repudiates the practice of attempting to “see all the world’s stories [. . .] within a single structure” in order to “extract from each tale its model, then out of these models [. . .] make a great narrative model, which we shall reapply (for verification) to any one narrative” (*S/Z* 3), his concentration is on form in this instance. His assertion that creating a single structure “is ultimately undesirable, for the text thereby loses its difference” (3) is based on the notion that a text ends once the act of reading it is complete, as opposed to the unending interactions that continue as the reader has encountered and then encounters the text again. Indeed, his investigation of the *parts* of Balzac’s “Sarrasine” demonstrates the same readerly, active involvement in meaning-making that I have in mind, and encourages the reader to acknowledge the parts in order to extract a more holistic, if always evolving, meaning. The textus, by offering a framework which acknowledges form without privileging it, offers the reader the agency to choose the media housed in its construct, and to add continually to the construct in order to increase his/her understanding of the plurality of meaning present.

Much like biology’s taxonomic ranks, each work in a series of adaptations (including the “original”) will be described as a *thread*. In this study, the threads will be numbered, but the numbering will not necessarily correlate with the chronological order of the adaptation series; instead, in this proposed framework, each object will be placed inside the textus relative to the readerly encounter. Thus, the textus of *True Grit* need not begin with Charles Portis’s novel if the person constructing the textus encountered the Coen brothers’ 2010 *True Grit* prior to reading the novel. This will ensure the de-privileging of what has been considered an “original.”

A textus will be in constant flux, then, as one continues to explore its parts, and may never be complete as subsequent adaptations continue to evolve.

Due to the number of possibilities each thread may possess for examination, the creator of each textus will isolate a fixed number of *interstices* present in the first thread added to the textus and continue to focus on those same points, or on whatever signifies those spaces in other adapted media, so as to ensure even analysis. The omission of one or more of these interstices from subsequent threads does not indicate a failure on the part of the thread's creator, but instead may very well be indicative of something even more telling, therefore granting another dimension of investigation. For example, in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the third interstice of investigation may be signified by Nick's account that: "No telephone message arrived, but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o'clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came. I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared" (161). However, in Baz Luhrmann's 2013 adaptation, the phone does ring and the butler does answer it. The editing of this sequence is such that for the briefest of moments, the viewer is led to believe that in Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby does not die feeling forsaken. In this way, if a specific interstice of inquiry is absent (or signified very differently) in a subsequent thread, how it is rendered in other ways may very well offer much insight. For convenience, and in deference to Aristotle's foundational anatomy of texts, the minimum number of interstices, or points of investigation, should be three: roughly, the thread's beginning, middle, and end, as determined by the creator of the textus.

Each thread of the textus will be further subdivided by *traces*. Much like the colors and textures of various threads aid in creating an overall narrative when stitched together, each thread's traces or shadows will be categorized by their role in creating the overall narrative

present in each individual text. For example, still utilizing the *True Grit* textus, Elmer Bernstein's soundtrack could be a trace found in the thread of the 1969 *True Grit*. Likewise, Carter Burwell's soundtrack could be a trace found in the thread of the 2010 *True Grit*, as Roger Deakins's cinematography would be a trace for the same thread. Similarly, Portis's use of diction could be an examined trace. Thus, each collaborating faction would be ascribed a trace to each thread of which it was a participant.

For reference purposes, numbers will be assigned to each point of analysis of the textus. The thread's number will come first, followed by the number ascribed to each of the thread's interstices, and then a number for the trace being explored at that particular point. For example, 6.5.3 would denote Thread 6, Interstice 5, and Trace 3. The threads, interstices, and traces of the textus would not be restricted by each thread's form. Therefore, the point at which one encounters each thread will bring about an addition to the textus itself. The structure is not meant to confine or stifle, as indeed its very boundaries are constantly being expanded with additions as they are encountered, but rather to offer a unified place for analysis, a cohesion created by recollections of previous sensory experiences, a place full of "Ah, that is he." "Ah, that is *also* he."

The benefits of applying a structuralist approach to literature and film have been successfully articulated by others, most notably by Brian McFarlane in his *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Here, McFarlane uses Barthes' ideas of what constitutes the cardinal functions in a narrative as well as references Seymour Chatman's notion of "kernels" in order to lay the foundation for his own systematic approach of isolating what is and what is not transferable in a narrative when transitioning between the two media, novel and film. Noting that Barthes defines cardinal functions as being the "hinge-points" of the narrative

(Barthes “Introduction” 89), McFarlane sets out to divide the narratives presented in five separate novel and film adaptational sets by examining specific cardinal functions or “hinge-points” in order to determine whether or not the parts of the narrative are transferrable.

Chatman too draws from Barthes’ approach used in both his “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives” and the theorist’s detailed system of terms and concepts set forth in his *S/Z*. Chatman renames Barthes’ cardinal functions, calling them “kernels” which is a part of the narrative that “advances the plot by raising and satisfying questions. Kernels are narrative moments that give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events. They are nodes or hinges in the structure [. . .] Kernels cannot be deleted without destroying the narrative logic” (Chatman 53). After examining the role voice-over has in creating the narrative onscreen, reviewing the significance of characters and character functions in Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale*, McFarlane offers a somewhat hermetic assertion that two signifying systems are at work in adapting a novel to the screen. The “novel draws on a wholly *verbal* sign system, the film variously, and sometimes simultaneously, on *visual*, *aural*, and *verbal* signifiers” (26).

McFarlane continues to concentrate on form by arguing that as readers we “construct meaning from a novel by taking in words and groups of words sequentially as they appear on the page. In order, say, to grasp a scene, a physical setting, we have no choice but to follow linearly that arrangement of arbitrary symbols set out, for the most part, in horizontal rows which enjoin the linearity of the experience” (27). Though McFarlane fails to take into account the visual image created in the mind of the reader of the lines of text, his preoccupation with form confines the discourse to examining the narrative(s) separately because of each narrative’s presented media. Though Thomas Leitch contradicts McFarlane in his essay “Twelve Fallacies in

Contemporary Adaptation Theory” –as indeed Leitch’s third fallacy is “Literary texts are verbal, films visual” (153) –Leitch does not offer a convincing alternative. He merely argues that films are a combination of images and sound and scripted words are presented by actors in film, whereas in the act of reading the characters present their lines of dialogue in the reader’s imagination. Still, the narrative is lost in the discussion of form. Thus the bulk of McFarlane’s text is comprised of five extensive case studies (31-193) which investigate the transferability of the cardinal functions isolated by McFarlane himself present in the five novels and their film adaptations.

Like Barthes, Chatman, and McFarlane, I too ascribe terms and concepts to be examined in the application of the textus. Much like cardinal functions, or hinge-points, or kernels, the *interstices* become the points from the narrative to be sought out and examined in the various adapted *threads* or remediated adaptations of the same narrative. By examining multiple *traces* or basic categories of aesthetic creativity, the creator of the textus can not only extract greater levels of meaning from the examined threads given the multiple encounters with the remediated narrative, but also, in the process, decipher whether or not the essence of the narrative is intact. If the only two forms of communication were the literary novel and the narrative film, further discourse on the subject of adaptation studies would not be necessary. However, the focus of Barthes’ system is literary. Chatman and McFarlane limit their systems to the transfer of the novel to the screen, as indeed Elliott’s concepts of adaptation noted earlier are limited to the novel and the adapted film as well. In a culture of hypermediacy, in a culture increasingly inundated by the many forms a narrative can take, a model which allows for the inclusion of the varied adapted media is necessary in order to permit the reader/viewer/listener/participant of

adaptation a space to systematically extract meaning from the included forms. In this way, the narrative is privileged rather than the vessel in which the narrative is presented.

While any set of related texts might embody a textus, for the purpose of this dissertation I have explored a series of adaptations of *The Great Gatsby*: F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel, Simon Levy's 2006 stage play, as well as three surviving filmic adaptations of the novel—Elliott Nugent's (1949), Jack Clayton's (1974), and Baz Luhrmann's (2013)—will be the primary adaptational set, a case study by which to elucidate the validity of the textus's form and purpose. I have deliberately chosen *The Great Gatsby* because I had only encountered the novel as a high school student, and the 1974 film twenty years ago. My distance from the text(s) lets me apply the model of the textus without already having formed an interpretive bias, without feeling the unconscious desire to manipulate my findings for any predetermined outcome. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have ascribed the threads of the textus in the order of my encountering of them, though, again, this is in no way meant to create a hierarchy privileging one text above another. Therefore, Fitzgerald's 1925 novel will be referred to as thread 1. Thread 2 will be Clayton's 1974 film; thread 3 will be Levy's 2006 stage play; thread 4 will be Nugent's 1949 film; and thread 5 will be Luhrmann's 2013 film.

For this dissertation, the minimum of three interstices is utilized, which in turn constitutes the three main chapters of inquiry. These points align with what constitutes the beginning, the middle, and the end of the thread added first to this textus (Fitzgerald's novel), though it is worth noting that these points of examination could differ in the creation of another textus by another creator. Interstice One will be "I'm Gatsby" (Fitzgerald 48), or the point at which the audience first encounters the character Gatsby. Interstice Two will be "Daisy put her arm through his abruptly" (Fitzgerald 93), or the point where Gatsby and Daisy meet at Nick's cottage and begin

to rekindle their affair. Interstice Three will be “No telephone message arrived” (Fitzgerald 161), or the point when Gatsby is in the pool waiting in vain for Daisy’s phone call. (These points have been selected as they align well with the basic pyramidal plot structure of Aristotle and Freytag, but in any narrative, or if utilizing a non-narrative medium, other moments or locations could surely be examined.) Interstice One corresponds with the audience’s physical introduction to Gatsby. Interstice Two presents both the climax (Gatsby’s finally coming into contact with his elusive Daisy once again) and the plot’s falling action, as Gatsby’s driving force has dissipated. At this point, with Daisy’s arm through his, Gatsby’s character is altered completely. He has achieved what he had been striving for years to accomplish, and the chase is over: “Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. [. . .] His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one” (93). Interstice Three is essentially the end of the narrative’s *fabula* in many respects. When Nick notes that “No telephone message arrived” and that he had “an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared” (161), the audience recognizes, even before Wilson arrives to kill Gatsby, that Gatsby is already dead emotionally; his purpose in life has been stripped away from him, leaving him no longer passionate or forward-thinking, but numb and seemingly unaffected.

Selecting which traces to isolate for examination will be left to the creator of the textus or the instructor of a particular textus, if utilized in the classroom setting. Since traces are the elements of a particular medium which make up the form’s composition, traces found in one form may not be readily identifiable or applicable to another form. For example, a film’s mise-en-scène, sound, editing, and cinematography would not be relevant to an examination of a novel, but via these components, the viewer is able to extract knowledge by examining the

traces. In this way, the analysis of each thread's traces will be contingent upon the form of each thread and will utilize already accepted methods of inquiry specific to the form in question (i.e., written text = literary studies; moving pictures = film studies; music = music theory, and literary studies if utilizing written lyrics, etc.).

However, for the sake of ready comparison that is at the heart of the textus, it is essential that these methods of inquiry into traces specific to their forms align in some way with traces found via other methods of inquiry. For example, while a trace in literature may investigate characterization of and speeches by the protagonist, components of mise-en-scène and sound could be used for the examination of the *same* trace in order to extract descriptions of how the actor and costuming are presented, or how dialogue represents that character in filmic adaptations. After choosing which aspects of the text will be analyzed, a certain level of consistency should thus be exercised in further examination of the remaining threads. Having already isolated the interstices in each thread, overlaying the gathered data pertaining to the traces will consequently reveal as systematically as possible the ways in which each thread's traces reveal the presence of the narrative's essence.

For the purpose of this dissertation, the traces examined are as follows (detailed for the three forms to be examined in the textus of *The Great Gatsby*):

Table 1

Criteria for Traces.

		Fiction		Film		Drama
Trace 1— Character and Dialogue		characters (descriptions, actions, speeches)		actors, costumes, make-up, acting, dialogue		dramatis personae, dialogue (actors, etc. in live performance)
Trace 2— Author and Narrator		authorial and narrative point of view		film auteur, sound, voice- over, cinematography		narration, dramatic direction (including stage directions)
Trace 3— Theme and Symbol		repeated patterns of meaning and expression		repeated patterns of meaning and expression		repeated patterns of meaning and expression
Trace 4— World and Setting		settings and verbal description		indoor vs. outdoor locations, props, sets, lighting, color vs. black and white		sets and lighting, props, theater type, if specified
Trace 5— Plot and Narrative		plot, scene, narrative or chapter structure		plot, scene structure, editing		plot, scene, and act structures
Trace 6— Genre Conventions		literary devices, rhetoric, figures of speech, etc.		filmic conventions (e.g., reverse angles), editing devices, soundtrack, etc.		stage effects (e.g., wires), fourth wall, other dramatic devices
Trace 7— Reception and Response		...including book reviews, number of editions, etc.		...including film reviews, box office performance, production costs		...including reviews, places performed

While the first six traces seem self-explanatory, trace seven needs more clarification. This trace will offer overviews of the thread's reception as well as a personal response from the creator of the textus. Trace seven will only be examined in the final interstice, as reviews of a film or play

are based on the entire text. Personal reader-response to the various threads will be reserved until the examination of the final interstice as well.

It seems necessary to pause here and reiterate the adaptability of the textus itself, as each textus-creator brings to the construct different expectations. For example, if a film scholar is using the framework of the textus to investigate his/her experiences with multiple adaptations of the same narrative, he/she may choose traces to examine which are geared more toward the genre of film. Similarly, if an avid reader of critical theory were constructing his/her textus, he/she may choose to replace the traces I have isolated with various theoretical approaches so as to investigate the way(s) in which those approaches are signified in the different threads while examining each interstice or point of inspection. Likewise, while I have isolated what I consider to be the beginning, middle, and ending of *The Great Gatsby* narrative, future creators of the textus may choose to investigate more than three interstices or points of inspection. Even if future creators were to use *The Great Gatsby* as a case study and only isolate three turning points for examination, the beginning, middle, and ending of the narrative may differ significantly for a different creator.

The bulk of this dissertation offers a case study which applies the textus to the narrative of *The Great Gatsby*. Each of the three chapters presents the ways in which all of the five threads signify one interstice (point of inspection) through the examination of the traces. While the traces I chose to examine are relevant to my interpretation of the narrative, surely others may opt to utilize other traces when isolating the ways in which each text signifies each interstice. As such, when I extract my understanding of each of the traces from the narrative of each thread, I am offering a close-reading of those specific moments. I do so in the hopes of offering an account of my perceptions of the traces. Rather than offering in-depth analysis of my

examination of the traces, I extract only the details I find relevant to fulfilling the expectations of what criteria I predetermined constitutes a trace. While these chapters present the raw data gathered while applying the textus, it is essential that I seek out the same criteria across the different threads in order to assure uniformity in the presentation of findings which will be measured to determine the presence of an essence in that moment of the adapted narrative.

While the case study itself is not the primary focus of this dissertation, as indeed the framework of the textus may be applied to any other narrative which has been adapted into other forms, it may on occasion be necessary to address readings of the chosen case study through the critical lens. Outside of the scope of its contribution to adaptation studies, the textus may also work in orchestration with any given critical approach, especially when utilized in the classroom setting. As noted below in the Conclusion's "How-to Manual," an instructor may ask his/her students to isolate various critical approaches to take the place of the traces facet of the textus. In this way, the instructor utilizing the textus in the classroom may present multiple possible critical approaches from which to choose as traces in the application of the textus. Which critical approaches are utilized will depend upon the discipline of the course being taught. For example, if the textus is being used in a literature classroom, the students might be asked to apply literary criticism to the applicable threads so that the student would isolate a critical approach in the form of a trace, and then seek examples of that approach for each interstice examined across the threads added to the framework of the textus. Similarly, if used in a film theory classroom, the instructor might ask the students to examine various film theories as the traces for inspection, thereby also investigating the ways in which the film theories present themselves in each interstice across the adapted threads added to the textus. The caution here, though, is that utilizing theoretical approaches to apply to the case study not only shifts the focus of the final

purpose of the textus, which is to be able to determine the presence of an essence at specific moments of inspection across multiple remediated narratives, but also, because each theoretical approach would necessarily have to be specific to form (i.e. literary criticism for literature, film theory for cinema, etc.), the types of media which could be included in the textus would also be limited, then. As the textus is intended to offer a space in which to engage with the same remediated narrative regardless of its form, limiting that space by dictating the application of theory specific to form may be counterintuitive. Those who participate in utilizing the textus should do so to alleviate the tendency to privilege one form of an adapted narrative above another, which does not imply the creator of the textus be oblivious to any critical theory applied to the case study he/she chooses to investigate. Choosing not to concentrate on the form of the narratives, but rather extract what is presented in the traces of the interstices, I have not applied critical approaches to this case study, but do suggest ways the textus may itself be adapted to include theory in future case studies.

Chapter II examines the ways in which all five threads render Gatsby's introduction to Nick and the audience. Introducing Gatsby's character initially through rumors circulated by other minor characters, the reader of Fitzgerald's Thread One is given the opportunity to be taken aback when Nick is first introduced to Gatsby as well. That this introduction is not formalized until page 48 of the novel aids in the creation of mystery, which is crucial to Gatsby's persona. Though in Clayton's film more than half an hour passes before the audience is formally introduced to Gatsby's character (Robert Redford), the introduction lacks the surprise associated with Fitzgerald's rendering in that Nick (Sam Waterston) is informed by an armed body guard that Gatsby would like to speak with Nick privately. Though Nick's character appears anxious in the elevator and attempts to rationalize his legitimacy for being present at the party given his

invitation, the element of surprise is lacking in this thread, while the suspenseful anticipation to finally *see* Gatsby is satisfied. In Levy/Thread Three, magical qualities are proffered in the stage directions—“Out of the mist, Gatsby and his garden appear” (9)—and aid the reader of the script of the play in envisioning a Gatsby encompassed by mystery. Though Nick is unaware of Gatsby’s identity in this thread until Gatsby introduces himself with “I’m Gatsby” (9), the reader of the play has been informed through the above stage direction that Gatsby has simply appeared prior to Nick’s introduction, removing some of the surprise that might be experienced by attending a performance.

The audience is introduced to Gatsby’s character (played by Alan Ladd) early on in Nugent/Thread Four, well before Gatsby formally introduces himself to Nick at the party. During the montage of events rendered onscreen and narrated by the voice-over of older Nick’s character, Gatsby is seen in the front seat of a moving car shooting a gun out the passenger’s side window at men in another nearby vehicle. After killing the other men, Gatsby exits the vehicle in a darkened alleyway and, wearing a trench coat and hat to one side, turns to face the camera just as the voice-over of the older Nick continues to introduce Gatsby: “And out of the twenties and all they were came Jay Gatsby who built a dark empire for himself because he carried a dream in his heart” (3:50-4:03). The element of surprise is present in Luhrmann’s Thread Five as Nick nervously recounts rumors to a man at the party about the party’s host as they maneuver their way up the crowded stairs outside Gatsby’s mansion. With his back to the camera, the man with whom Nick speaks takes a martini from a tray beside him and, just as the previously promised fireworks begin in the background, Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) turns to greet the camera. With his short brown hair parted to the side and slicked back with precision, and wearing a pristine white shirt and fitted tuxedo, the symmetrically chiseled face of Gatsby smiles

directly at the audience as though he knows the answer to some riddle not yet posed. He raises his glass to the air in a near cartoonish manner as he introduces himself: “I’m afraid I haven’t been a very good host, old sport. You see, I’m Gatsby” (29:46-29:55).

Utilizing the same coordinates for the traces as referenced in Chapter II, Chapter III investigates the ways in which the five threads render the reunion of Daisy and Gatsby. The point of investigation for this interstice is found through the examination of “Daisy put her arm through [Gatsby’s] abruptly” (Fitzgerald 93). This moment signifies the climax of Fitzgerald’s Thread One in that Gatsby, who has sought Daisy’s acceptance for years, seemingly acquires her attention, if not her full affection. She reaches out to him in this instance as opposed to his continually pining after her. This demonstration of Daisy’s acceptance of Gatsby causes Gatsby to seemingly withdraw once again into the past, according to Nick’s account of the incident. Rather than rejoice in Daisy’s physical closeness, Nick notes that Gatsby seems preoccupied by the notion that “[h]is count of enchanted objects had diminished by one” (93), thus marking the beginnings of the narrative’s falling action. Clayton’s Thread Two approaches the interstice differently. After Daisy and Gatsby meet at Nick’s cottage, they proceed on a tour of Gatsby’s mansion. This action involving Daisy, Gatsby, and Nick is interrupted in this interstice by scenes of Jordan and Nick to returning to the valley of ashes in order for Jordan to stop at Wilson’s Garage to get fuel for the car she drives recklessly. The subsequent scene presents a quick montage of Myrtle and Tom in the bedroom of the city apartment. The action then returns to Gatsby and Daisy who sit in a symmetrically framed shot across from one another, both wearing white. This scene dissolves into another room in Gatsby’s house. While sitting opposite Gatsby, Daisy, dressed in the same clothes as the previous scene but without her hat, turns the pages in the album Gatsby has kept chronicling her life through newspaper clippings.

She asks Gatsby, dressed in white sweater and slacks, to come sit beside her. When he remains seated in the chair across from her, she reaches her hand out to him, holding it out before him. He leans forward in such a way that the audience believes he may take her hand. The camera closes in on the two hands just as Gatsby withdraws; his fingers not touching Daisy's.

The interstice for Levy's Thread Three is signified when Daisy "*throws her arms around [Gatsby] and they kiss, deep and passionately, laughing and crying*" (33), as this is the point in the narrative which aligns with the interstice, "Daisy put her arm through his abruptly" (Fitzgerald 93) since this is the moment when Daisy first touches Gatsby again in the present. Nugent's Thread Four does not present Daisy putting her arm through Gatsby's. Instead, she moves toward Gatsby and reaches her hand out to him when she first sees him again in Nick's cottage. Gatsby follows Daisy's lead and walks toward her, taking her hand, holding it, staring into her eyes, transfixed. In this way, Daisy is still the first to touch Gatsby and does so much more quickly than in other threads, so that this point of investigation only includes the scene in the cottage. Leading up to this space of examination, it is worth noting that Nick has not arranged the meeting between Daisy and Gatsby; Jordan Baker brings Daisy to Nick's cottage without Nick's approval after making an arrangement with Gatsby. In exchange for assuring Daisy meets Gatsby at Nick's cottage, Jordan asks that he give her his car, which Gatsby does willingly. In Luhrmann's Thread Five, this interstice offers two possible renderings of "Daisy put her arm through [Gatsby's] abruptly" (Fitzgerald 93). The first is presented when Daisy, joining Gatsby on the terrace outside Nick's cottage, places her hand over Gatsby's hand. The second possibility is signified when Daisy puts her head in Gatsby's lap as they both sit on the bed, scattered with brilliantly colored shirts, and Gatsby points through the room's French windows at the green light opposite his house.

Following the same format as the previous chapters, Chapter IV examines ways in which the various traces work in orchestra to create and recreate the physical (and possibly metaphorical) death of Gatsby. The minimalist account of Gatsby's death in Fitzgerald's Thread One is prefaced by the final interstice, "No telephone message arrived" (161), which signifies Gatsby's metaphorical, if not yet physical, death. The absence of the telephone call from Daisy indicates to Gatsby that he was not accepted, nor loved fully by Daisy, or anyone else for that matter, since even the narrator of the Gatsby's story notes that he had "disapproved of [Gatsby] from beginning to end" (154). In this way, the seeming love story ends in this final interstice just prior to Gatsby's death. When examining how Clayton's Thread Two addresses the interstice "No telephone message arrived" (Fitzgerald 161) the words themselves need not be a part of the diegesis, as the medium of film allows the audience to see the phone and hear its silence. The *mise-en-scène* found in the same interstice of Jack Clayton's 1974 adaptation presents a sunny summer day with a screen filled with the colors of blue and white and green. The presence of the blowing white and blue sheers reminds the viewers of the sheers in the sunroom of the Buchanan mansion when the audience first encounters Daisy. The silent candlestick telephone is visible on the side table near the blue pool while George unfolds his brown bag to reveal the revolver that he will use to shoot Gatsby before shooting himself.

The stage directions in Levy's Thread Three note that "*Gatsby puts a floating mattress in the 'pool' and lies on it, placing the phone next to him, staring up into the hopeful sky*" (52). The inclusion of the word "hopeful" to describe the sky implies that Gatsby's character still believes the phone call will arrive from Daisy, though the phone remains silent during and following Gatsby's murder. In Nugent's Thread Four, the events leading up to this interstice differ significantly from other threads in that Daisy informs the others that she was the one

driving the car who struck Myrtle; Gatsby, listening in through the window, hears Daisy and Tom conniving about letting Gatsby take responsibility for Myrtle's death. George Wilson pulls a gun on Tom Buchanan, and Tom, while denying a relationship with Myrtle, refuses to tell George who owns the yellow car, because Tom hypocritically announces he cannot be responsible for someone's murder. The interstice of "No telephone message arrived" (Fitzgerald 161) is rendered onscreen so that while a phone is heard ringing, the audience knows that Tom is the one calling Gatsby, and Gatsby, having denounced Daisy and all she represents, is presented as a character who no longer cares whether or not Daisy calls.

The interstice of "No telephone message arrived" (Fitzgerald 161), is presented in various ways in Luhrmann's Thread Five. Luhrmann's Gatsby is allowed to hear a phone ringing before he is shot so that as he falls back into the swimming pool, he dies believing that Daisy has called; he dies believing that he has not been forsaken, but is loved and not alone. Following Gatsby's death, the viewer learns that Daisy has not phoned, but that the person on the other end of the dangling phone's receiver is Nick. In this way, the audience understands that still no message arrived from Daisy.

In an attempt to solidify the presence of a recurring "spirit" or "essence" in the adaptations, the conclusion isolates only Trace One from each of the five threads in order to present the way(s) in which the three interstices are presented in each. Though any combination could be utilized, for the purpose of this model reading, the textus-coordinates explored in this concluding chapter are (1.1.1 + 2.1.1 + 3.1.1 + 4.1.1 + 5.1.1), (1.2.1 + 2.2.1 + 3.2.1 + 4.2.1 + 5.2.1), and (1.3.1 + 2.3.1 + 3.3.1 + 4.3.1 + 5.3.1). This offers a simple prototype for the application process and removes a large degree of subjectivity from the reader/viewer/listener's attempt to isolate the recurring essence in the remediated narrative.

CHAPTER TWO

INTERSTICE ONE

When introducing Northrop Frye's "The Archetypes of Literature," editor and scholar David Richter notes that "For Frye, literature originates in other literature, as stories are broken down into bits and reshaped into other stories [. . .] Each generation rewrites the stories of the past in ways that make sense for it, recycling a vast tradition over the ages" (691). If "narrative" is substituted for "literature" in the above assessment of Frye's ideology, the purpose of the textus can be seen as an attempt to isolate those "broken down" moments systematically in the hope of determining what, if anything, remains consistent in the adapted narrative during its evolution of "recycling." Frye asserts that "the texture of any great work of art is complex and ambiguous, and in unravelling the complexities we may take in as much history and philosophy as we please, if the subject of our study remains at the center. If it does not, we may find that in our anxiety to write about literature we have forgotten how to read it" (694). Again, when substituting "narrative" for "literature" Frye's warning that the critic anxious only to write about "narrative," may falter in remembering the importance of reading, is significant to the textus. When utilizing the framework while reading/viewing/listening to an adapted narrative—regardless of the form through which the narrative is presented—the textus-creator is encouraged to do two things. One is to use the criteria, as predetermined by the textus-creator, to examine the varied ways in which particular moments of the narrative are signified. The other is to articulate his/her findings—i.e., to write about them.

While without question each creator of each textus will include different interstices and traces to be examined while "reading" the adapted narratives included in the framework, since each creator will bring with him/her varying interests as well as fluctuating associations with the signification of sensory perceptions which together communicate the narrative, for the purpose

of this particular case study, I am applying the seven traces outlined in the criteria chart presented on page 29. Because this chart may expand with the inclusion of additional forms, the listed traces are not finite and may be altered by the creator of any textus as long as each is examined across each thread at each moment of inspection, or interstice. With this method in mind, I have determined that Interstice One will be “I’m Gatsby” (Fitzgerald 48), but this in no way presupposes that creators of a future textus will identify the narrative’s climatic beginning as the same. While maintaining the order of encounter with the threads (Fitzgerald’s 1925 novel, Clayton’s 1974 film, Levy’s 2006 stage play, Nugent’s 1949 film, and Luhrmann’s 2013 film), this chapter will focus its examination on the ways in which the traces signify Gatsby’s introduction to Nick and/or the reader/viewer.

Learning of Gatsby’s character initially through rumors circulated by other minor characters, the reader of Fitzgerald’s Thread One is given the opportunity to be taken aback when Nick is first introduced to Gatsby as well. That this introduction is not formalized until well into the novel aids in the creation of mystery, which is crucial to Gatsby’s persona. Though in Clayton’s film more than half an hour passes before the audience is formally introduced to Gatsby’s character (played by Robert Redford), the introduction in Clayton lacks the surprise associated with Fitzgerald’s rendering in that Nick (Sam Waterston) is informed by an armed body guard that Gatsby would like to speak with Nick privately. Though Nick’s character appears anxious in the elevator and attempts to rationalize his legitimacy for being present at the party given his invitation, the element of surprise is lacking in this thread, while the suspenseful anticipation to finally *see* Gatsby is satisfied. The magical qualities as offered through the stage directions of Levy’s Thread Three, note that “Out of the mist, Gatsby and his garden appear” (9) and aid the reader of the play in envisioning a Gatsby encompassed by mystery. Though Nick is

unaware of Gatsby's identity in this thread until Gatsby introduces himself with "I'm Gatsby" (9), the reader of the play has been informed through the above stage direction that Gatsby has simply appeared prior to Nick's introduction, removing the aspect of surprise.

The audience is introduced to Gatsby's character (played by Alan Ladd) early on in Nugent's Thread Four, well before Gatsby formally introduces himself to Nick at the party. During the montage of events rendered onscreen and narrated by the voice-over of older Nick's character, Gatsby is seen in the front seat of a moving car shooting a gun out the passenger's side window at men in another nearby vehicle. After killing the other men, Gatsby exits the vehicle in a darkened alleyway and, wearing a trench coat and hat to one side, turns to face the camera just as the voice-over of the older Nick continues to introduce Gatsby: "And out of the twenties and all they were came Jay Gatsby who built a dark empire for himself because he carried a dream in his heart" (3:50-4:03). The element of surprise is present in Luhrmann's Thread Five as Nick nervously recounts rumors to a man at the party about the party's host as they maneuver their way up the crowded stairs outside Gatsby's mansion. With his back to the camera, the man with whom Nick speaks takes a martini from a tray beside him and, just as the previously promised fireworks begin in the background, Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) turns to greet the camera. With his short brown hair parted to the side and slicked back with precision, and wearing a pristine white shirt and fitted tuxedo, the symmetrically chiseled face of Gatsby smiles directly at the audience as though he knows the answer to some riddle not yet posed. He raises his glass to the air in a near cartoonish manner as he introduces himself: "I'm afraid I haven't been a very good host, old sport. You see, I'm Gatsby (29:46-29:55).

Acknowledging that some sections will seem slightly redundant, in that the traces are often similarly rendered across the remediated narrative, the purpose of this exercise is to

articulate the findings of the examination of the traces in order to assure the validity of the subsequent overlay of the traces when assessing whether or not the culmination of multiple “readings” of the traces present the presence of an essence of the narrative at that particular moment of investigation. While the chapter is devoted solely to the inspection of Interstice One, “I’m Gatsby,” the chapter is rigidly divided by the traces examined in each of the five threads. This structure is necessary in order to ensure the overlay of specific traces later when assessing the existence of that moment’s “essence.”

Thread One—Fitzgerald’s Novel:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—1.1.1.

Gatsby

Identifying the protagonist in the novel would seem a simple task, but since the novel lacks a hero, perhaps Gatsby is best characterized as being the antihero. M. H. Abrams defines the antihero in literature as being one who is “petty, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest” (11). While these character traits have yet to be realized up to and including Interstice One, the very absence of Gatsby’s character in the first forty-eight pages of the novel suggests passivity. Thus far, Gatsby has been introduced by Nick to the reader in a self-referential manner. Early on Nick shares his remembrances of Gatsby, deliberately leading the reader to align with the character whose “end” is announced on page two. While expressing his distaste for his previous “riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart” (2), Nick notes that

Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction –Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was

something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away [. . .] No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end. (2)

In this introduction, the reader is still far removed from Gatsby as a character, as indeed the narrator himself seems still at a distance from experiencing intimacy with Gatsby, whose personality is described based on superficial outward gestures and his relations are compared not to others, but to a machine. Gatsby's mansion is then the reader's next introduction to the title character. The house, "a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy" (5), cues the reader in to the possibility that the man who inhabits the architecture is capable of also being a "factual imitation."

After Nick begins to share "the history of the summer" (5), Gatsby's name alone teases the reader. At the Buchanan's home Nick shares that he is living in West Egg. Jordan Baker chimes in that Nick must know Gatsby. "'Gatsby?'" demanded Daisy. 'What Gatsby?'" (11). But the moment is lost and the conversation does not return to the title character until Nick and Jordan are left alone on the veranda while Daisy and Tom are inside arguing about the phone call from his then supposed mistress. "'This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor,' Nick says, trying to engage Jordan in conversation" (14). He is silenced as Jordan wants to eavesdrop on the argument taking place inside the house. That "Mr. Gatsby" is present, if only in name, during the squabble regarding Tom's infidelity, is extremely relevant to the reader's piecing together of Gatsby's character. The evening following Nick's visit with Tom, Daisy, and Jordan, Nick returns to his cottage and realizes he "was not alone—fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of [his] neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets

regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested it was Mr. Gatsby himself [. . .] he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way [. . .] Involuntarily [Nick] glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light” (20-21). And so, Gatsby’s physical presence is finally signified, but uncertainty remains as the “figure” stretching his arms out as though capable of reaching across the water to grab the thing he desires “had vanished” (21) when Nick looks for him again.

The reader is introduced to the rumors swirling about Gatsby, implying that not only does the reader yet have a firm grasp of Gatsby’s character, but neither is he known to the other characters in the book with any concreteness. While at Tom and Myrtle’s apartment, Catherine asks Nick if he knows Gatsby. When Nick informs her he lives next door to him, Catherine says that “Well, they say [Gatsby’s] a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm’s. That’s where all his money comes from” (32). Again, the rumors persist and multiply. At the first party of Gatsby’s Nick attends one of the twins shares that after she tore her dress at a previous party, Gatsby sent over a new dress which cost “two hundred and sixty-five dollars” (43). To this, the other girl in yellow announces Gatsby “doesn’t want any trouble with *anybody*” (43). The other rumors spill across the lips of the other party-goers then: “Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.” ““I don’t think it’s so much *that*,’ argued Lucille skeptically; it’s more that he was a German spy during the war.”” “I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany” (44). These rumors come directly before Nick finds himself “sitting at a table with a man about [his] age” (47). Nick and the man exchange details about their stations during the war before Nick announces that “This is an unusual party for me. I haven’t even seen the host [. . .] I live over there [. . .] and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation [. .

.] ‘I’m Gatsby,’ [the man] said suddenly” (47-48). Finally, the reader meets Gatsby, but still knows very little about him. Disappointed, Nick demands Jordan to tell him who Gatsby is. “He’s just a man named Gatsby” (48), Jordan responds. With that introduction to Gatsby, Interstice One ends.

Nick

In competition with Gatsby as being the protagonist of the novel, the narrator Nick could be considered the text’s main character, as he is the only character present for the duration of the narrative’s unfolding. As Nick “wandered around rather ill at ease among swirls and eddies of people” (42), the reader is more apt to accept his account as he, though in receipt of an invitation to Gatsby’s party, is “ill at ease” for fear he does not belong. The examination of this interstice ends following Gatsby’s introduction to Nick. Here Nick reminds his reader that he has established himself as being observant and intuitive when he asserts that “some time before [Gatsby] introduced himself [Nick had] gotten a strong impression that he was picking his words with care” (48).

Jordan

Described by Nick as one of the “two young women” on the couch when he entered the Buchanan house, Jordan and Daisy were “both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just blown back in after a short flight around the house” (8). Jordan is described as a “stranger” to Nick. “She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless, and with her chin raised a little, as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall” (8). The “balancing girl” (9) shows very little interest in Nick’s initial presence: “She nodded at [him] almost imperceptibly, and then quickly tipped her head back again—the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something

of a fright” (9). Jordan is the first to verbalize Gatsby’s name. After telling Nick that she knows somebody in West Egg, Jordan asserts “You must know Gatsby” (11). Daisy hear the name, expresses interest, but the moment is lost as “dinner was announced” (11). Jordan is also responsible for sharing the gossip about the status of Daisy and Tom’s relationship during the examination of this interstice: “I thought everybody knew [. . .] Tom’s got some woman in New York” (15). Just as Nick was feeling overwhelmed by the circus of Gatsby’s party and “was on [his] way to get roaring drunk from sheer embarrassment [. . .] Jordan Baker came out of the house and stood at the head of the marble steps, leaning a little backward and looking with contemptuous interest down into the garden” (42). And so, Jordan becomes Nick’s guide for the party. She is with Nick when he is first introduced to Gatsby. When Nick asks about him, Jordan says, “He’s just a man named Gatsby [. . .] he told me once he was an Oxford man [. . .] However, I don’t believe it [. . .] Anyhow, he gives large parties [. . .] and I like large parties. They’re so intimate. At small parties there isn’t any privacy” (49).

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—1.1.2.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, along with wife, Zelda, and young daughter, Scottie, moved to the French Riviera for financial reasons during 1924 so that Fitzgerald could finish his manuscript, which had the working title of *Among Ash Heaps and Millionaires*, and still live comfortably despite his limited resources at the time. During this time of writing and rewriting the novel that would later be published as *The Great Gatsby*, Zelda “became involved with a French naval aviator, Edouard Joze, one of a group of young men the Fitzgeralds socialized with on the beach and in the evenings [. . .] Joze later insisted that it was only a flirtation” (Brucoli 195). However, consummated love affair or not, the turmoil this created between Fitzgerald and his wife influenced Fitzgerald as he penned the novel.

Nick Carraway's role as narrator is realized from the novel's onset. The novel begins with "In my younger and more vulnerable years" (1), which establishes the first person point of view. During this first interstice the point of view remains fairly consistent. Though the story proper was supposedly recorded by Nick some two years following his summer east, Nick as first person narrator, does not reveal too much at one time to the reader. For example, when Nick first sees Gatsby at the end of Chapter I, he does not tell his reader that the man "standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars" (20) is definitely Gatsby, though by the time of his recording, Nick would have been able to recognize Gatsby. Instead, Fitzgerald's Nick teases the reader with maybes, offers hints that Nick thought the man to be "Mr. Gatsby" (20). Still using the formal name, Mr. Gatsby, maintains the mystery of Gatsby's character as well as maintains Nick's role as a still passive spectator, which grants the reader the opportunity to piece together Gatsby's persona as though the action were just unfolding.

Had Nick merely *told* his reader he'd met Gatsby finally at the party to which he had received an invitation, the same reader would surely have been cheated the experience of living vicariously through Nick's journey. That he remains a passive, detail-oriented observer through the majority of the novel, and indeed during the unfolding of this first interstice, demonstrates Nick's abilities as a storyteller. In the opening lines, Nick offers a line of advice from his wealthy father: "He didn't say any more, but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more" (1). The implication here is that Nick is intuitive and capable of reading between the lines, filling in the voids the absence of effective communication leaves behind. In this way, the reader feels compelled to trust Nick's account. Since Nick is responsible for rendering the entire story (with a couple possible exceptions), his seeming ability to report the plot is essential to the trajectory of the text and its

characters within. Though the vehicle through which the reader is able to experience the story, little is known about him either, other than that he looks like his grandfather's brother who "sent a substitute to the Civil War" (3). The reader learns that Nick "graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after [his] father, and a little later [he] participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War" (3). The son, eager to find his own fortune, Nick's "Father agreed to finance [him] for a year" (3) so as to enable Nick to move to the east coast to become a bondsman.

Unlike Gatsby, whose relations were compared to that of a machine, Nick is presented as one with established familial roots in the Midwest. He too is rendered as somewhat passive. Nick's jaunt with Tom to "meet [Tom's] girl" (24) shows Nick as one lacking a degree of agency. Though a participant at the party at Tom and Myrtle's love nest, he asserts that he "was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life" (35). The direction of his moral compass had already been expressed when, after leafing through *Simon Called Peter* found on the coffee table in Tom and Myrtle's apartment, Nick shared with the reader that "either it was terrible stuff or the whiskey distorted things, because it didn't make any sense" to him (29). Contemporary readers would have been familiar with this intertextual reference (which is mentioned twice in this scene) so as to assume that Nick did not approve of so-called free love. However, Nick does not actually denounce this either. He gives himself an out by suggesting his drunkenness could be the reason for his dislike of the book. Thus, his character remains "within and without" so as to still give him the ability to lead both the reader who accepts the supposed immoral lifestyles being depicted as well as the reader who may reject such lifestyle choices.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—1.1.3.

In his “Symbolism and Fiction” Harry Levin notes that “Art is always an imitation, never quite the real thing. It cannot represent without symbolizing” (197). While one could argue the relative nature of symbolism, as experiences with past objects influence readers’ understanding of the mention of or encounter with those same objects again, some symbols have moved outside the realm of being only private or personal symbols to be known as conventional or public. When examining the symbolism utilized by Fitzgerald up to and including *Interstice One*, several possible symbols surface which may represent death, frailty, yearning, and panoptic powers.

Death is first symbolized during Nick’s first visit to Tom and Daisy’s mansion. After telling Daisy he’d “stopped off in Chicago for a day on [his] way East,” Nick jokingly tells his cousin that “The whole town is desolate [without her]. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath, and there’s a persistent wail all night along the north shore” (9). During this same visit, following Tom’s return from taking the phone call from his now still just supposed mistress, “Tom and Miss Baker, with several feet of twilight between them, strolled back into the library, as if to a vigil beside a perfectly tangible body” (16). Though the “tangible body” could also represent the tension present between Tom and Daisy, the reference of a deceased body still carries with it the idea of death. When Tom takes Nick to the apartment he shares on occasion with Myrtle, Myrtle rattles off aloud her to-do list for the following day: “I’m going to make a list of all the things I’ve got to get. A massage and a wave, and a collar for the dog, and one of those cute little ash-trays where you touch a spring, and a wreath with a black silk bow for mother’s grave that will last all summer” (36). The presence of the “wreath with a black silk bow” interrupts the listing of otherwise mundane items, bringing the notion of death symbolically back into the narrative.

The notion of frailty is represented in different ways in the examination of the first interstice. Daisy's very name aligns her with the tender flower. She is linked with flowers throughout the novel indeed, but in Chapter I, as Tom leads Nick from the dock to the mansion he shares with Daisy, passed "the front vista, including in its sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep, pungent roses" and "into a bright rosy-colored space" (7). Just after Tom excuses himself from the table to take the phone call from his mistress, Daisy turns to Nick and tells him that "You remind me of a—of a rose, an absolute rose" (14). Though roses are often associated with love, their reliance on the natural cycle of the seasons is also significant. This action takes place in New York during the summer where the weather would sustain a blooming rose, but the reader would also be aware of the fact that the roses and other flowers would fade and die in the next seasons. Along with flowers, Daisy is also aligned with birds. She and Jordan are first described by Nick as wearing white, "and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house" (8). Daisy's voice is described as being "glowing and singing" (14), and after she and Tom return to the veranda following Tom's phone call, Daisy sits back down at the table and announces that "'There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale [. . .] He's singing away—' Her voice sang" (15). While represented in different forms, the frailty of Daisy's character is a recurrent theme.

The most obvious symbol of yearning found in the novel and in this interstice is the green light at the end of Tom and Daisy's dock on the sound. The reader is first introduced to the "minute and far away" (21) image when Nick first observes "a figure had emerged from the shadow of [his] neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of stars [. . .] he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way" and

Nick “could have sworn he was trembling” (20-21). Though the significance of this green light is not realized in this interstice, the notion of yearning is most definitely implied by the figure’s outstretched arms, as though he were capable of reaching across the waters to retrieve the one he desires and whom later the green light will come to represent.

Though an all-knowing power is not implicitly a part of the novel (or this portion of the novel), the idea of someone or something watching is most surely signified in the text. As mentioned above, characters in the novel observe other characters, and indeed the majority of the narrative is a product of Nick’s noted observations, but the two-dimensional eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg seemingly symbolize a collective consciousness of sorts, a seeming mute oracle whose gaze is inescapable. There outside George Wilson’s garage in the “valley of ashes” (23), Nick doesn’t initially mention that the eyes of Doctor Eckleburg are a part of a billboard. Rather the narrator, on his way to meet Tom Buchanan’s mistress, notes that

above the gray land and the spasms of bleak dust which drifted endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face, but instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness, or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground. (23-24)

As though positioned in Foucault’s panoptic tower, these eyes, not associated with a face, are ever present. Just as Nick is approaching George Wilson’s garage, he “followed [Tom] over a

low whitewashed railroad fence, and [they] walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare" (24). Though significant to Nick, as his detailed description of the billboard suggests, Tom makes no reference to the eyes.

Trace Four—World and Setting—1.1.4.

Leading up to the first interstice of the novel, the narrative's action takes place in several different settings. Having "just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees" (3), Nick jumps at the chance to lease a house outside of the city. The house, "a weather-beaten cardboard bungalow" (3), was located in West Egg. Nick's house "was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season" (5). The house on the right side of Nick's own "was a colossal affair [. . .] it was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden" (5).

Across the sound from Nick's house, in East Egg, live Tom and Daisy Buchanan. Nick offers that their

House was even more elaborate than [he'd] expected, a cheerful red-and-white Georgian Colonial mansion, overlooking the bay. The lawn stretched at the beach and ran toward the front for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens—finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing [. . .] with reflected cold and wide open to the warm windy afternoon. (6)

As Nick enters the Buchanan home with Tom, he notes that they

walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of a ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea. (7-8)

To juxtapose the beautiful wealth and extravagance detailed in the first chapter's settings, Chapter II begins with a description of the "valley of ashes" (23), a place necessary to sustain the luxury previously described. Nick situates the desolate area as being

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is the valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of gray cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak, and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-gray men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud, which screens their obscure operations from your sight [. . .] The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it, and contiguous to absolutely nothing. One of the three shops contained was for rent and another was an all-night restaurant,

approached by a trail of ashes; the third was a garage—*Repairs*. GEORGE B. WILSON. *Cars bought and sold*. (24-25)

Inside the repair shop belonging to the husband of Tom's mistress, the "interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner" (25).

Reverting once again to a more lively setting, or at least one not physically gray, the next setting in the novel is Tom and Myrtle's apartment in the city. Nick observes that the

apartment was on the top floor—a small living room, a dining-room, a small bedroom, and a bath. The living room was crowded to the doors with a set of tapestried furniture entirely too large for it, so that to move about was to stumble continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles. The only picture was an over-enlarged photograph, apparently a hen sitting on a blurred rock. Looked at from a distance, however, the hen resolved itself into a bonnet, and the countenance of a stout lady beamed down into the room. Several old copies of *Town Tattle* lay on the table together with a copy of *Simon Called Peter*, and some of the small scandal magazines of Broadway. (29)

The claustrophobic nature of the small apartment gives way to the long description Nick offers of the parties hosted by Gatsby "through the summer nights" (39). Here, in Gatsby's "blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars" (39). Nick's presentation of the summer parties is initially a detailed observation of several parties which he describes collectively, but becomes a setting in the reader's mind once Nick is invited to a party and attends. In search of Gatsby, Nick and Jordan try "an important-looking door, and [walk] into a high Gothic library, paneled with carved English oak" (45).

Back outside the mansion, with “dancing now on the canvas in the garden” (46), Nick and Jordan take a seat “at a table with a man of about [Nick’s] age and a rowdy little girl” just as the “moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tiny drip of the banjoes on the lawn” (47). Interstice One ends here with this setting.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—1.1.5.

Thus far, leading up to Interstice One, which falls in the middle of Chapter III, the plot has already begun to congeal. M. H. Abrams asserts that the

plot is distinguishable from the *story*—that is, a bare synopsis of the temporal order of what happens. When we summarize the story in a literary work, we say that first this happens, then that, then that. ... It is only when we specify how this is related to that, by causes and motivations, and in what ways all these matters are rendered, ordered, and organized so as to achieve their particular effects, that a synopsis begins to be adequate to the plot. (224)

In this way, the motivating factors are as of yet still unclear in this first interstice, but since Abrams also defines Aristotle’s *mythos*, or plot, as being that which “is constituted by [the narrative’s] events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effect,” the reader surely realizes that the very “events and actions” which have transpired thus far are, in fact, the building blocks which will be used later on in the novel to achieve a “particular artistic and emotional effect” (Abrams 224).

To briefly review, the reader is aware that Nick has moved to work in the city to become a stockbroker. Nick is motivated to make this move following his participation in the “Teutonic migration known as the Great War” (3). Upon returning home from the war, he “decided to go East and learn the bond business [. . .] All [his] aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were

choosing a prep school for [him], and finally said, ‘Why—ye-es,’ with very grave, hesitant faces” (3). Though this seems somewhat of a flimsy motivation, this is all Nick shares with the reader. These first pages also have Nick substituting motivation for chance. “It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America,” Nick shares when informing his reader of his living situation in West Egg (4). Similarly, “On a chance, we tried an important-looking door” (45). Nick again offers “chance” as part of the reasoning behind his and Jordan’s choice to enter the library on the night of the first of Gatsby’s parties Nick attends.

Of all of the characters’ actions signified in these first chapters, only Myrtle’s motivations are clearly articulated. Her trajectory is introduced in the story in such a way so that the reader first meets her in her husband’s repair shop situated in the desolate “valley of ashes.” She escapes this desolation by traveling with Tom and Nick to the city apartment where Nick observes that with “the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur” (30). Here, in this apartment, where she is able to feign superiority in the class system of the 1920s, the plot suggests that she married her husband “because [she] thought he was a gentleman [. . .] thought he knew something about breeding” (34). Understanding Myrtle’s character as someone seeking those traits, if only on the surface, the reader cannot help but recognize the irony present in Myrtle’s tragic belief that she now is involved with a gentleman. She recounts to Nick how she met Tom, detailing his outward appearance and thinking him a gentleman because of the quality of his clothing: “He had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes, and [she] couldn’t keep [her] eyes off him [. . .] When [they] came into the station he was next to [her], and his white shirt-front pressed against [her] arm” (36). In the next sequencing of this

unfolding, “Tom Buchanan broke [Myrtle’s] nose with his open hand” (37), but Myrtle’s voice, her agency to signify her motivation, is replaced with “bloody towels upon the bathroom floor, and women’s voices scolding, and high over the confusion a long broken wail of pain” (37).

The structuring of the scenes which make up the first two and a half chapters (to Interstice One) is not rendered chronologically. The novel opens by having Nick reference what he considered to be his “younger and more vulnerable years” (1), followed by a brief account of Nick’s college years as well as his time in World War I. Nick notes that he “came back from the East last autumn” (2), which implies that the action proper, or Nick’s account of “the history of the summer” (3), takes place in 1922. The reader is given an account then of Tom and Daisy Buchanan’s lives before they too moved East, which includes Nick’s interactions with Tom in college and Tom and Daisy’s time in Chicago and France. Nick visits Tom and Daisy “on a warm windy evening” (6), which is two weeks away from the “longest day in the year” (11). So, if the summer solstice generally falls on June 21, Nick would have been visiting his cousin around June 7, 1922. During this visit, conversation reveals more references to the past such as Daisy’s “black and blue” (12) knuckle caused by some unrealized past encounter with Tom, “a brute of a man” (12). Jordan’s sharing with Nick that “Tom’s got some woman in New York” (15) implies Tom’s actions in the past are still recurring. And the presentation of time is focused on the past again in this first chapter when Daisy recalls the day her daughter was born.

While the structuring of Chapter II seems to be presented in a more linear fashion, as Nick concentrates on the forward moving events of visiting the “valley of ashes” (23), meeting Myrtle, going with Tom and Myrtle to their apartment in the city, the reader is not aware of how much time has elapsed since the previous chapter’s unfolding, only that this present action takes place on a “Sunday afternoon” (24) which is “a few days before the Fourth of July” (26). The

references to the past are interspersed in the conversation between those in the city apartment. Myrtle talks about why she married her husband, George. She also recalls her first encounter with Tom. Time is condensed in this chapter, though. Whereas the breadth of time seemed enormous in the previous chapter, Chapter II is much more forward moving. “It was nine o’clock—almost immediately afterward [Nick] looked at [his] watch and found it was ten” (36). Only one short paragraph separates ten o’clock to midnight: “The little dog was sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke, and from time to time groaning faintly. People disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, then lost each other, searched for each other, found each other a few feet away. Sometime toward midnight [. . .]” (36-37). In this way, the expression of time has become almost a character itself in this structuring.

As the first interstice is in the middle of Chapter III, only the structure up to that point will be examined in this trace. The chapter begins by offering detailed accounts of parties past, but presenting this in such a way as to establish a pattern: “There was music from my neighbor’s house through the summer nights”; “On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus”; “And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before”; “Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulp-less halves” (39). Nick uses the past tense for these observations, but shifts to the present suddenly with “By seven o’clock the orchestra has arrived” (40). The three following paragraphs detailing the “full swing” of the parties at Gatsby’s house are rendered in the present tense, but revert back to the past when Nick begins his account of his first being invited to attend. “Dressed up in white flannels [Nick] went over to his lawn a little after seven, and wandered around rather ill at ease”

(41). The verb tense remains in the past including Nick's remembrances of meeting Gatsby for the first time: "For a moment he looked at [Nick] as if he failed to understand. 'I'm Gatsby,' he said suddenly" (48). The blurring of the past, the present, and the anticipation of the future, causes the reader to assume a disjointed emotional response in that he/she is, like many of the characters themselves, unsure.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—1.1.6.

In keeping with the structuring of time in the examination of the first interstice of the novel, foreshadowing and flashbacks are literary devices utilized by Fitzgerald in these pages. However, the reader does not yet know that Myrtle's sharing with Nick her frame of mind when she first Tom is a form of foreshadowing. Because the reader does not yet know Myrtle's fate, her telling Nick that "You can't live forever; you can't live forever" (36) can only be stored away in the reader's mind until the reading of the subsequent chapters.

Allusions are another literary device used by Fitzgerald in these first pages. Tom misappropriates the title of Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*, instead asking Nick if he is familiar with "'The Rise of the Colored Empires' by this man Goddard?" (12). Myrtle purchases a *Town Tattle* magazine, a popular publication in the 1920s, at the train station in New York. In the apartment she shares with Tom more copies of the magazine are found on the end table as well as a copy of the novel *Simon Called Peter*. Robert Keable's novel was widely read in the early 1920s and controversial in that its protagonist is a Catholic priest who has an affair. That this novel is found in the love nest of Tom and Myrtle is significant, especially given Catherine's telling Nick that "It's really [Tom's] wife that's keeping them apart. She's Catholic, and they don't believe in divorce" (33). By

granting the readers insight into what his characters read, Fitzgerald adds complexities to those same characters in the minds of his readers.

Perhaps the most frequently utilized literary device found in this first interstice is Fitzgerald's use of similes. After Nick had moved to West Egg, he purchased "a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities, and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint" (4). When entering the Buchanan mansion, Nick observes that a "breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags" (8). Observing Jordan Baker, Nick remarks that he "enjoyed looking at her. She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage, which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet" (11). As Daisy and Jordan are sharing the secret about the butler's nose, Nick shares that Daisy's "voice compelled [him] forward breathlessly as [he] listened—then the glow faded, each light deserting her with lingering regret, like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk" (14). Daisy and Tom ask Nick about his rumored engagement, and again, aligning Daisy with the frailty of a flower, she protests "'But we heard it,' insisted Daisy, surprising [Nick] by opening up again in a flower-like way" (19).

Chapter II of the novel begins with a description of the "desolate area of land." Nick observes that "This is the valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills" (23). Later, in Tom and Myrtle's city apartment, Mr. McKee informs Nick that he "was in the 'artistic game,' and [Nick] gathered later that he was a photographer and had made the dim enlargement of Mrs. Wilson's mother which hovered like an ectoplasm on the wall" (30). As the time passes quickly in the apartment, Nick offers that the "late afternoon sky bloomed in the window for a moment like the blue honey of the Mediterranean" (34). Noting the time having elapsed from nine to ten barely without his noticing, Nick observes that "Mr. McKee

was asleep on a chair with his fists clenched in his lap, like a photograph of a man of action” (36).

The beginning of Chapter III utilizes still more similes. When describing Gatsby’s parties, Nick notes that in “his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars” (39). In this same description, Nick notes that “On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains” (39). In one of the three present tense sections describing Gatsby’s parties, Nick says that “Suddenly one of these gypsies, in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage, and moving her hands like Frisco, dances out alone on the canvas platform” (41).

Interlude

When Dudley Andrew notes that “adaptation is the appropriation of a meaning from a prior text” (29), he seemingly implies that the reader/viewer/listener’s prior association with a narrative is necessary before appreciating fully the encounter with the narrative being experienced presently. This line of thinking—even if not intentionally—strengthens the impetus to privilege the “original” narrative over the adapted one, thus inadvertently reinforcing fidelity criticism. However, the textus alleviates this issue in two important ways. Firstly, individual texts (threads) are added to the textus based on the creator of the framework’s encounter with each of the texts, as opposed to the chronological authorship of the texts, thereby de-privileging the hierarchical foundation on which fidelity criticism is maintained. Secondly, the textus not only allows for the inclusion of adaptations of the narrative, but can also house the “original” if and when the creator of the textus encounters it. However, the creator of the textus will

understand the “original” not in terms of its primacy, but insofar as it is able to offer another perspective of the thing that is being “read” multiple times in multiple media. That my encounter with Fitzgerald’s novel occurs prior to my experiences with adaptations of Fitzgerald’s text does not privilege his version in the textus. Had I encountered Jack Clayton’s film before Fitzgerald’s novel, Clayton’s film would have become my first thread.

Thread Two—Jack Clayton’s 1974 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—2.1.1.

Gatsby

Though his name is mentioned in passing between Nick and Jordan, and even Daisy asks at the mention of his name, “Gatsby? What Gatsby?” (7:12-7:14), Gatsby’s character is not introduced formally until more than thirty-five minutes into the film. While Nick (and the viewer) see a fair-haired man in a tuxedo standing in the dark of night on a balcony above the Sound clenching his fists, this figure has vanished when Nick, returning from his jaunt across the Sound to visit Tom and Daisy in East Egg, looks for him a second time. Again, the back of the same tuxedo-wearing man is presented, framed by French doors leading to the balcony on which he stands as he gazes across the dark waters and night sky at the green light flickering across the water. His persona through Interstice One is constructed by rumors offered by other characters at the party and at Tom and Myrtle’s apartment in the city. During the party scene Nick, having been asked to follow an armed guard into the mansion, is introduced to Gatsby’s character. After leading Nick into a room paneled with dark wood, the guard closes the heavy door behind Nick so that he is left to encounter Gatsby on his own. Framed by the large windows which look out on the water, Nick’s view of Gatsby is initially obscured by a heavy curtain, which he pulls back

to reveal an ill-at-ease Gatsby (Robert Redford), still dressed in his tuxedo. Nervously, Gatsby turns to face Nick and says, “How do you do, old sport. I’m Gatsby” (35:20-35:22).

Nick

Slender, handsome in a plain way with short brown hair slicked back and wearing a cream-colored linen suit and tie, Nick (Sam Waterston) makes his way across the Sound in a small motorboat following the opening credits. His journey is presented through voice-over—“In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since. Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, he told me, just remember that all the people in this world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had. In consequence, I’m inclined to reserve all my judgments” (3:44-4:05). While he is awkward maneuvering the boat, his demeanor with Daisy, Tom, Jordan, and others he encounters is confident. Though his voice-over suggests that he had contempt for the wealthy, Nick seems not to notice any of the servants who assist him during his visit to Tom and Daisy’s house, including the faceless man who takes his boat at the shore, the doorman who greets him at the door of the house to take his hat, or any number of servants who serve his meal at the table on the veranda.

In a vest and blue shirt with the sleeves rolled to the elbow, Nick prepares his own meal, steak and beer. As he sits, legs crossed on the front porch of his cottage, Nick’s voice-over offers a description of Gatsby’s parties and he smiles, almost enviously, looking at the grand display, tapping his foot to the beat of the music heard in Gatsby’s nearby yard. During his encounters with Jordan at Tom and Daisy’s as well as his time with her at Gatsby’s party, Nick’s demeanor with Jordan verges on flirtatious. At the apartment, he seemingly mocks Catherine as she takes him into her confidence about rumors she has heard concerning Gatsby. At the apartment, visibly sweating in his gray suit, he smiles as he watches Myrtle entertaining her

guests. He is portrayed as an observer. When Myrtle recounts how she met Tom, Nick is obviously enjoying himself, smiling in an approving, nearly envious, way. Following Tom's hitting Myrtle and causing her nose to bleed, no reaction is presented from Nick regarding the incident. When Nick meets Gatsby, he is anxious and sweating, as he has been guided by an armed body guard to the wood-paneled office believing he is in some sort of trouble. He is relieved rather than surprised by Gatsby's introduction.

Jordan

Jordan (Lois Chiles) is sensuous. Short, brown, wavy hair frames her long symmetrical face that is painted with heavy makeup. She leans up from the couch and stretches like a cat after a long nap in a sunny window and immediately springs to her feet to latch on to Nick's arm. Her voice is raspy and her words deliberate. She tells Nick that Tom has a girl in New York, and though she doesn't appear to mind this, she finds it distasteful that the mistress would interrupt dinner by calling. Nick hears her laughing at the party he attends at Gatsby's before he sees her. Though she is laughing and talking to another man at the time, when Nick approaches her, she leans against him and tells him how she had hoped he'd be there. Since Daisy (and the viewer) had seen Jordan cheat earlier while playing in a golf tournament, and since Daisy had told Nick Jordan would never marry a man who wasn't wealthy, her motives for flirting with Nick are unclear.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—2.1.2.

A director whose films were primarily adaptations of literary texts, Jack Clayton's canon is one seemingly preoccupied by the effects of the class system (*Room at the Top*, 1959), the supernatural (*The Bespoke Overcoat*, 1956; *The Innocents*, 1961; and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, 1983), and a woman's right to acquire agency in her life (*Room at the Top*; *The*

Innocents; *The Pumpkin Eater*, 1964; and *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, 1988).

Clayton's 1974 film, *The Great Gatsby*, combines all of these elements by illuminating already in Interstice One these seeming societal concerns. From the onset, Nick's voice-over confesses his character's distaste for the wealthy, but those characters that are financially less fortunate are signified as nearly invisible. The servants' faces are indeed cut out of the shots in many instances. For example, when Tom, Daisy, Nick, and Jordan are being served their dinner on the veranda, only the legs and arms of these characters are seen by the viewer. When Nick is seated on his porch observing the men and women setting up for one of Gatsby's many parties, the camera's distance is such that their faces are not distinguishable. The idea of the supernatural is exhibited almost immediately at the film's opening. Though the images onscreen render the expansive rooms of a mansion, the rooms are not inhabited, but the non-diegetic sounds are those of a boisterous party filled with muted laughter and music which seemingly blow through the house with the breeze, especially the piano music heard while the un-played piano is signified onscreen. Another aspect of the supernatural found in this interstice is the appearance of Gatsby's tuxedo-wearing character that is capable of vanishing in the blink of an eye. The idea of a woman's right to chart her own path is also introduced in this interstice. Of the three strongest female characters in the film (Daisy, Jordan, and Myrtle), Daisy is perhaps the only one still portrayed as a victim during this point of investigation. While Jordan is rendered as a female capable of duplicitous actions, capable of using her womanly wiles to cheat at the golf tournament and flirt with Nick despite the impossibility of forging a relationship with him, Daisy is visibly distressed by the prospects of Tom participating in an extramarital affair, but does not display a capacity to alter her situation. Myrtle, on the other hand, is actively attempting to alter her marital predicament by openly having an affair with Tom.

These aspects central to Clayton's canon are rendered in his *The Great Gatsby* using Nick as the narrator. Coupled with his voice-over which establishes him as the narrator of the unfolding presented onscreen, Clayton also includes multiple shot/reverse shots of Nick observing the action taking place around him and onscreen. Much of the action the audience sees is the action Nick experiences. For instance, when Daisy follows Tom inside after he has received his phone call during the dinner on the veranda, the audience does not know the specifics of what occurred inside the house, since Nick remained outside with Jordan. And again, before Tom strikes Myrtle, he follows her into the apartment's bedroom and slams the door. Neither Nick nor the audience is privy to any conversation that takes place behind that door. It is only after Tom and Myrtle re-enter the living room where Nick is seated on the arm of a chair that the action continues.

However, there are some areas where Nick's role as narrator of the film is called into question. Though having already established that Nick is seated on the front porch of his cottage observing the preparations for one of Gatsby's parties, the scope of what Nick can see from his vantage point is limited to the people setting up the tents, orchestra members tuning their instruments, women dressed in black and white maid uniforms busily dressing the tables. When the screen then fills with images of trucks delivering bouquets of flowers and crates of fruit before moving inside an enormous kitchen filled with chefs preparing the food for the party's guests, this causes the viewer to pause, however momentarily, to question how Nick, if he is the narrator and the one allowing the audience to accompany him on his journey, is capable of seeing these goings-on in the first interstice. Another example of an image being signified onscreen that Nick as narrator could not have seen is of Gatsby's back to the camera as he faces the sunset across the water (24:59-25:20).

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—2.1.3.

In their *Film Art: An Introduction*, film scholars David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson suggest that “any significant repeated element in a film [is] a motif. A motif may be an object, a color, a person, a sound, or even a character trait. We may call a pattern of lighting or camera position a motif if it is repeated through the course of a film” (37). Utilizing this notion of what constitutes a motif in film, some recurring elements evolve into symbols by taking on a meaning(s) greater than the thing itself presented. The first interstice of this second thread offers multiple possible motifs: the reference to birds or things capable of flight, the prevalent use of the color white, the setting sun and the allusion to the passing of time, the fake laughter of Daisy’s character, the flickering green light at the end of Tom and Daisy’s dock. However, of these motifs, only three have begun to acquire the significance of being referred to as symbols at this point of inspection: things capable of flight, the use of white, and the setting sun. While Nick’s initial voice-over is heard noting that it is merely “a matter of chance” (4:08-4:10) that he came to spend the summer in East Egg, an invisible wind blows his white hat from his head and into the murky waters made muddy by the grand sailboats he passes while traveling in the small motorboat across the Sound. Upon entering the Buchanan mansion, Nick is led into a room full of windows opened to allow the breeze to pass through, blowing their pale colored sheers in such a way as to cause them to sway, nearly dance. After hastily exiting the house with Tom to rejoin Nick and Jordan on the veranda, Daisy, her white scarf dancing in the wind as the sheers have previously, moves to the balcony’s ledge and stares intently across the yard: “Oh there’s a bird on the lawn. I think it must be a nightingale” (10:05-10:10), she remarks, though no bird is signified onscreen. After refreshing the seed in the birdfeeder on the porch of his cottage, Nick describes the comings and goings of those at Gatsby’s parties through voice-over, noting that

“men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars” (13:16-13:24). Diegetic sounds of birds chirping can also be heard during this scene. And when Nick is returning from Tom and Daisy’s as well as when Gatsby’s silhouette is facing the darkening Sound, ripples across the water signify the movement of the wind as well. The notion of movement versus things that remain fixed is signified then through these motifs of things capable of flight.

The color white, which usually signifies innocence in some capacity, is worn by Nick, Jordan, and Daisy upon the viewer’s first encounter with these characters. The room in which Jordan and Daisy recline on separate couches is all white as well. The characters who are introduced wearing colors other than white are Tom (vibrant blue polo shirt), Myrtle (a low cut frilly dress in a collage of purples and pinks), and George (dirty gray overalls and stained bluish gray shirt so that he blends in with the surroundings of his gray garage). Though not yet fully realized in this interstice, the juxtaposition of the characters’ portrayal as signified by the colors of clothing worn will lend itself to the irony of the film in its entirety.

The setting sun is first introduced in the same shot as the first image of the Buchanan’s green light. Though the significance of the green light is not apparent in this interstice, the recurrence of the sun setting as well as the characters’ numerous references to time come to symbolize the significance of the past along with an unattainable desire to recapture that past. After having spent the afternoon and evening at Tom and Daisy’s mansion, Nick sets back out in his motorboat across the Sound. The wide shot presents Tom and Daisy standing on the dock behind the green light, which is positioned at the dock’s end, and for Nick’s motorboat to maneuver the waters nearby as he begins his journey across the water toward the vibrantly red, orange, and black sky brought about by the setting sun (10:27-10:44). The speed of the sun’s

descent is also signified by the editing sequence presented by implying morning hours (Nick exiting his house in his robe and yawning) and the approach of evening 58 seconds later as Nick, having finished his supper, sits happily watching the circus-like party next door. The inexplicable compression of time is also signified onscreen in a cross-cutting of two scenes which seem to take place simultaneously. The sun is shining at the golf tournament/garden party scene, but when Gatsby's silhouette is framed by the French doors the viewer sees only his back as he faces the dark Sound's water rippling underneath the blood red hues of the setting sun.

Almost every character references time as well. Daisy references Tom's hurting her finger in the recent past. She also shares with Nick the account of the day her daughter was born. Myrtle recounts the day she met Tom, noting it was "the best day of [her] life." And Gatsby, following his awkward introduction to Nick in the paneled room overlooking the party below, mentions that he had tried to buy the cottage Nick lives in "once" (35:33). When Nick is leaving Tom and Daisy's, his voice-over informs the audience that "it had been a golden afternoon and I remember having the familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer. By the autumn my mood would be very different" (10:27-10:38). The blurring of past and present, actions that have occurred in the daylight and under the setting sun, creates a feeling of discontinuity. As Bordwell also asserted that the arrangement of "the story material [is also relevant to the creation of a theme or symbol] in order to achieve specific time-bound effects on a perceiver" (*Narration in the Fiction Film* xi), the motif and subsequent symbol of time is perhaps the most significant thus far in the examination of this interstice.

Trace Four—World and Setting—2.1.4.

The settings for this film during the first interstice can be divided into outdoor and indoor locations, with the majority of the scenes taking place in the outdoors. During the opening

credits, empty rooms that the viewer later learns are the rooms of Gatsby's mansion are toured by the camera along with a shot of his crystal blue swimming pool. The seemingly expansive waters of the Sound littered with grand sailboats is then presented for the audience as Nick makes his way to the Buchanan mansion. The dinner on the veranda is outdoors as well with its elaborate flower arrangements and thick stone railings. The exterior of Nick's cottage, specifically his front porch is also the setting for him to observe the party preparations going on next door in Gatsby's park-like yard. The golf tournament/garden party takes place outside and offers spacious green lawn scattered with well-dressed men and women (many accompanied by small dogs) sipping drinks and whispering jovially amongst each other. Most of the party scenes take place in the outdoors as well. Nick mingles through the colorful crowd of dancing strangers, moving up cascading stairwells that tier the large yard.

The indoor locations, while not as numerous, are surely important the viewer's understanding of the narrative thus far. The white breezy sunroom filled with white couches on which Daisy and Jordan recline seems an extension of the outdoors. The kitchen scene in the bowels of Gatsby's mansion presents a large working space filled with crates of fish on ice, men counting bottles of wine and cabbages, chefs basting a huge turkey and placing it in a similarly large oven as well as a whole pig roasting on a spit. Though there is an exterior shot to establish the shop's positioning in relation to the billboard containing the peeling eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, George Wilson's repair shop is primarily presented as an indoor location. The grayness seems to permeate the cluttered room and seems to fit in to the backdrop of the valley of ashes presented outside its dusty doors. Tom and Myrtle's apartment in the city is also an indoor location in the film. The compartmentalized space is tangled with a small crowd of people who fill the rooms so that the space creates nearly a claustrophobic reaction. The final

setting in this interstice also uses an indoor location. After the armed security guard asks Nick to follow him, he leads Nick to a small wood paneled elevator with mirrors. Once off the elevator, the two exit into a similarly darkly paneled hallway and the guard leaves Nick inside a room beside a mirror which hangs on the dark wood near Gatsby's office. The large windows in Gatsby's office are opened, their sheers blowing in the wind, causing the room to seem more spacious.

Though the majority of the film during Interstice One utilizes three-point lighting techniques which employs the use of a back light, a fill light, and a key light, there are a couple of instances where high-key lighting is used. In the close-up of Daisy as she reclines on the couch in her breezy sunroom she is dressed all in white with her arms behind her head. The sleeves of her dress have opaque sequins sewn on. The use of the high-key lighting here creates a near halo effect for her character and she sparkles. This same technique is used again on the close-up of Myrtle in the city apartment as Myrtle is telling someone about the first day she met Tom. The high-key lighting creates a twinkling effect in Myrtle's teary eyes.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—2.1.5.

Though the motivations of the characters' actions are still relatively unclear at this point of the film, which is to say that the story's unfolding has yet to render the significance of the actions, the ordering of the events is presented in a quasi-linear fashion resembling an account of Nick's remembrances of his summer in East Egg. Accompanying Nick on his journey that summer, the viewer is introduced to Tom, Daisy, and Jordan who live their days of leisure in the Buchanan's "glittering white palaces of East Egg" (4:29-:4:31). Though Gatsby's name is referenced in passing a tuxedo-wearing man is seen by Nick and only initially presented to the audience as someone who may or may not be Gatsby. Nick then observes one of Gatsby's many

parties being set up before going with Tom to the valley of ashes to visit the Wilson's at George Wilson's garage. Via Nick, the viewer then travels to Tom and Myrtle's apartment, Jordan's golf tournament, and finally to Gatsby's party to which Nick has been formally invited. Here Nick and the viewer are unceremoniously introduced to Gatsby, the man in the tuxedo keeping watch over the boisterous party taking place outside his window without him.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—2.1.6.

Utilizing the genre conventions of film, Clayton's *The Great Gatsby* employs several establishing shots introducing the viewer to the often elaborate settings in which the narrative unfolds. These establishing shots are used from the onset of the film to present the ornate rooms of Gatsby's mansion, communicating the enigma's degree of wealth. The Sound then is presented in an establishing/wide angle shot in order to show the distance between the Eggs, the distance between Gatsby and the Buchanan homes. Tom and Daisy's mansion is presented onscreen using a wide angle shot as well to similarly establish for the viewer the financial success of the Buchanans. Several wide angle shots are employed when presenting the party scenes as well. After establishing the locations and presenting the many varied groups of people gathered, a tracking shot of the party continues, pausing on a red and white tent with dancing silhouettes inside. This visual coupled with the voice-over of Nick's assertion that those who attended Gatsby's parties "conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with an amusement park" (13:48-13:52) permits the viewer the opportunity to vicariously experience the carnival-like party as well.

Winner of the 1975 BAFTA film award for Best Cinematography, the film utilizes the close-up especially well to further the viewer's understanding of the narrative. As mentioned in the discussion previously pertaining to the use of high-key lighting, both Daisy and Myrtle are

presented multiple times using close-up shots. Nick also is rendered using close-ups, often as reaction shots to offer the viewer the opportunity to gauge how he responds to the action taking place around him. The shot/reverse shot then is also employed for this reason. This strengthens the viewer's understanding that Nick is the one supposedly narrating the narrative as the camera relays the action, cuts to Nick for his reaction, then returns to the action.

Nelson Riddle's Academy Award-winning score, coupled with the inclusion of musical pieces popular during the 1920s including Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do" from 1923, which the audience hears during the film's opening sequence while the camera pans the framed pictures of Daisy found in Gatsby's ornate bedroom, reminds the viewer of the significance of the Jazz Age and the impact that music has on the characters themselves. Diegetic sounds also are used throughout this section of the film such as the chirping of birds, the sounds of water lapping against the shore, the orchestra tuning and playing their instruments at Gatsby's parties, the clinking of dishes in the kitchen during the food preparation for the party.

The editing techniques used in the film adhere to the conventions of Hollywood cinema in that the majority of the film utilizes the continuity editing system. Cross-cutting is also used so as to give the audience the idea that the actions taking place are occurring simultaneously despite the different locations. Dissolves are also used frequently to differentiate the passing of time. For instance, using the constant of the dog on the bed in Tom and Myrtle's city apartment, the screen dissolves to focus on the face of another dog being held by a woman in a large hat who is attending the garden party/golf tournament. Editing is also integral to compressing the time in certain sequences. An example of this is when Nick exits the front door of his cottage dressed in his robe and yawning, which signals to the viewer that this action takes place in the morning hours. However, during the following sequences of shots, only 58 seconds pass until

Nick is frying a steak in a cast iron skillet and, dressed now in a shirt, vest, and slacks, carries his plate out into the dark night to eat his dinner on the porch.

Interlude

As Robert Ray notes that in understanding “even a single adaptation [. . .] requires that a reader participate [. . .] in that lexicon whose signifiers he or she has necessarily encountered elsewhere” (41), the “elsewhere” does not necessarily refer to prior experiences with the narrative being adapted, although it easily could. The “elsewhere” could also refer to previous life experiences or encounters with which the “reader” of the narrative was involved prior to taking up the text, as memories of those associations interplay with each new “reading” of the narrative. While mapping the exhaustive list of memory association would prove to be impossible, the role it plays in understanding adaptations is worth mentioning, especially since the textus is built by one creator whose recollections of personal life events are often blurred with his/her interpretation of how specific points of inspection of the narrative are signified throughout the threads included by this same creator to the framework of the textus. Indeed, while examining Simon Levy’s presentation of *Interstice One*, the creator of this textus may not be able to differentiate between the “elsewhere” of the previous two threads or her own life experience when she recognizes certain attributes extracted through the examination of the thread’s traces.

Thread Three—Simon Levy’s 2006 Stage Play:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—3.1.1.

Gatsby

Jay Gatsby’s character is described as “a romantic idealist, with a disarming smile” (5). While the clothing of the other characters is not described in the stage directions, Gatsby is

described as remaining “distant and mysterious, wrapped in mist, staring off into a blinking green light, dressed in a white tuxedo [. . .] It’s important he be insubstantial, ghostly, an illusion” (9). Following Nick’s receipt of the invitation to attend one of Gatsby’s parties, the stage directions note that “Out of the mist, Gatsby and his garden appear. He looks around at his world, charming and dangerously sexy. He approaches Nick and speaks in a slightly affected manner, picking his words carefully” (20). Still not knowing Gatsby’s identity, Nick mentions to this character capable of appearing out of mist that he has yet to meet the host of the party. To this Gatsby announces, “I’m Gatsby” (21).

Nick

Nick Carraway, a “Midwestern, with a kind face and gentle manner” (5), establishes at the play’s onset that he will serve as the narrator of this narrative. The stage directions note that “Nick Carraway appears at the back of the stage, suitcase in hand. He weaves his way through the mist and the dancers, unnoticed. He reaches the front of the stage just as the music and dancing reach their climatic frenzy” (9). Facing the audience, then, a spotlight shines on Nick’s character as he begins:

NICK: (*To audience*) In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since. “Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone,” he told me, “just remember that all the people in the world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had.” He didn’t say any more, but we’ve always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that [. . .] Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this story, represented everything for which I had an unaffected scorn. But if personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there

was something...gorgeous about him...some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life. He had an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person...and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. (10)

The stage directions do not suggest Nick's actions while delivering the above lines, which are the first the audience hears from any of the characters. Nor do the stage directions suggest any reaction from Nick's character following his introduction to Gatsby.

Jordan

Described as "Daisy's friend, with an athletic, almost masculine, body" (5), Jordan Baker's character thus far serves the purpose of filling in the gaps of the narrative for Nick and the audience. She is the one who engages Nick in conversation regarding Gatsby in Daisy's presence as well as the character who informs Nick that Tom has a mistress in New York. Capable of "cuddling like lovers" with Daisy on the couch, Jordan, who spent her girlhood with Daisy in Louisville, "is almost mannish, athletic, emancipated and self-assured" (10). At Gatsby's party "Jordan appears, dressed like a flapper, drink in hand" and finds Nick just before he is introduced to Gatsby.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—3.1.2.

Having adapted two other Fitzgerald novels to the stage, *Tender Is the Night* and *The Last Tycoon*, Simon Levy's voice is present in his adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* in the form of the "Adaptor's Note" found at the beginning of the printed script as well as in the stage directions of the play. As the dust jacket of the printed play notes that this adaptation has been "approved by the Fitzgerald Estate" the presence of Fitzgerald as co-author is also referenced. Levy's "Adaptor's Note" note:

The described stage setting is the idealized vision of the play played out against a larger-than-life mythic backdrop where spectacular production elements substitute for the lyric beauty of Fitzgerald's descriptive prose; however, symbolism and metaphor, which are central to the novel, may be realized in many ways, and I leave it to the imagination of the directors to tell the story as simply or elaborately as they choose. It's my intention that scenes overlap, linger, even play simultaneously sometimes so we play freely with time and space. After all, this is a memory, a dreamscape. If possible, it would be exciting to have a live musician (sax, clarinet) to represent the passion and sound of the Jazz Age, as music is integral to the telling of this story. One should approach this play the way you would a musical [. . .] The action of the play is fluid. Set pieces and furniture, like the people, appear and disappear, impressionistic, like a fairy tale. The weathered, partially-destroyed billboard of the faceless Dr. T. J. Eckleburg and his gigantic eyes framed by a pair of enormous yellow spectacles passes judgment on the action of the play. Throughout, the eyes change color. This is a fable—of America, of the Jazz Age, of enchantment and illusions, of a world where love and dreams are pursued and betrayed. (3)

Levy also forces the reader to draw comparisons between Daisy's character and that of Fitzgerald's wife, Zelda. During Nick's opening soliloquy where he addresses the audience directly in a postmodern way, Daisy's character "rushes onstage" and Levy notes to his reader that Daisy "is a classic manic/depressive much like Zelda Fitzgerald" (10).

Though Levy's voice is present in the reading of the play, Nick's role as narrator is solidified by his ability to address the audience as well as dictate the action onstage as his

remembrances of that summer shift. In addition to his opening statement which clues the reader into the fact that the action which is to follow is based on his past encounters with the characters onstage, Nick addresses the audience two more times during this interstice. After telling Daisy goodnight following his initial visit with her at her mansion, Nick looks across the stage at a partially obscured image of Gatsby and addresses the audience.

NICK. *(To audience.)* Yes—Gatsby turned out all right at the end. But it's what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that's been haunting me...and haunts me still. (15)

Following Tom's striking Myrtle in the city apartment, Nick once again transitions the reader by addressing the audience directly.

NICK. *(To audience.)* Oddly, I began to like New York. *(Joyous dance music. Party lights fill the stage, twinkling mysteriously through a mist and a sky full of stars.)* And all the while there was music from my neighbor's house. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. And then early one Saturday morning a chauffeur crossed my lawn and gave me a surprisingly formal note—the honor would be Gatsby's, it said, if I would attend his little party that night. *(Out of the mist, Gatsby and his garden appear. He looks around at his world, charming and dangerously sexy. He approaches Nick and speaks in a slightly affected manner, picking his words carefully.)*

Both of these short speeches by Nick not only compresses time, but also grant the reader a moment to shift to another location, another point in the forward moving narrative.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—3.1.3.

As previously stated in Levy's "Adaptor's Note," the "symbolism and metaphor, which are central to the novel, may be realized in many ways, and [Levy leaves] it to the imagination of directors to tell the story as simply or elaborately as they choose" (3). However, certain elements are noted as recurring in this interstice, which add to the reader's understanding of the narrative: the presence of mist onstage and the changing eye color of the ever present billboard which is capable of passing "judgment on the action of the play" (3).

Trace Four—World and Setting—3.1.4.

Though instructed by Levy to render the story as "simply or elaborately" (3) as the directors so choose, there are certain aspects of the play's set which are inherent to the production. The use of a flashing green light is referenced when introducing Gatsby's character and again after Nick has told Daisy goodnight and before he accompanies Tom to Wilson's garage. The importance of a phone ringing is significant, but the phone is not signified onstage, as only its ringing is heard. Gatsby is "still not completely visible, more shadow than substance, staring out at the blinking green light" (15). Gatsby being "dressed in a white tuxedo" and "wrapped in mist" (9) is specified. However, though the stage directions note that "The Buchanan house forms around" Nick, Daisy, Tom, and Jordan, the physical set which makes up this house is not described for the reader (10). As Tom and Nick are about to encounter George and Myrtle Wilson, "The eyes of Dr. Eckleburg glow ominously in the valley of ashes" and "A yellowish sign appears: 'Wilson's Garage. Repairs. Cars bought and sold'" (15). However, no other description of the garage or the set's representation of the valley of ashes is rendered in the script. Without noting any details, the reader only learns that following the exchange in Wilson's garage, "the valley of ashes disappears as Tom and Myrtle's gaudy New York

apartment forms around Nick and Tom” (17). And again, following the physical altercation between Tom and Myrtle, Nick begins to address the audience once more. “Out of the mist, Gatsby and his garden appear. He looks around at his world, charming and dangerously sexy” (20), but the description of the garden or his charming and sexy world is not present.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—3.1.5.

This interstice ends two-thirds of the way into Act I of the two act play. Though informed that the set, and thus, the scenes change at various points throughout this interstice, the scenes are not stipulated. Differentiating between the plot and the story is difficult at this stage initially, as the actions of the characters, with the possible exception of the exchange between Myrtle and Tom, are not yet clearly motivated for the reader. When the lights go up at the beginning of the play, “All the characters are onstage, dancing, wild and uninhibited” (9), but the reader is not yet privy to why this is occurring or able to piece together how this plays into the trajectory of the characters. While Nick’s opening soliloquy informs the reader of a piece of advice his father had given him in his youth and comments on the effects a man named Gatsby has had on him in, the reader still does not know that the action which is to unfold is but a memory of his past experiences with these characters. Nick’s acknowledges that “Yes—Gatsby turned out all right at the end” (15). This seems to imply that Nick is aware of Gatsby’s ending, which would cause the reader to conclude that perhaps the action being presented as occurring presently is something which occurred in the past. Again, the hints of nonlinear time are present when Nick uses the past tense of his verbs when addressing the audience following Myrtle and Tom’s altercation.

NICK. (*To audience.*) Oddly, I began to like New York [. . .] And all the while there was music from my neighbor’s house. In his blue gardens men and girls

came and went like moths among the whispering and the champagne and the stars. And then one early Saturday morning a chauffeur crossed my lawn and gave me a surprisingly formal note—the honor would be Gatsby’s, it said, if I would attend his little party that night. (20)

Since the following action is indeed the party at Gatsby’s, the reader is finally able to understand that each time Nick notes a memory, the action which is to follow is an account of that memory.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—3.1.6.

The genre conventions of reading the play and viewing the play unfold onstage as an audience member differ. While this inspection is of the written script, the mentioning of the absence of the fourth wall is necessary. Regardless of whether the narrative is being viewed or read, the acknowledgement of the audience by Nick, who addresses the audience directly on multiple occasions, removes this fictive construct. Other conventional deviations found in this interstice of the play are the minimalist descriptions of the set and the absence of defined scenes. The staging and blocking of the characters is not specified, nor is the costuming, aside from the stage directions’ stipulation that Gatsby’s character be dressed in a white tuxedo, and are left up to the discretion of the play’s director, or in this case, the imagination of the individual reader of the written script.

Interlude

When Bluestone wrote his seminal *Novels into Film*, he pitted two schools against each other—film studies and literary studies: “Differences in the raw materials of novel and film cannot fully explain differences in content. For each medium presupposes a special, though often heterogeneous and overlapping, audience whose demands condition and shape artistic content” (31). But one of the many ideas omitted from Bluestone’s assessment of adaptation

studies is that narratives can be adapted to media other than novel and film, such as Levy's stage play investigated above. Though Bluestone also asserts that "Changes are *inevitable* the moment one abandons the linguistic for the visual medium" (6), the changes in the way(s) in which the narrative is signified do not necessitate a change in the narrative itself. Though the presentation of Levy's *Interstice One* is different from both Fitzgerald's novel and from Clayton's film, *what* is presented is of greater significance than *how* it is rendered. In this way, though Levy's thread is an examination of the written drama as opposed to the performed, the play's formatting as well as the innate genre expectations of its reading audience differ from those expectations of the same audience when "reading" other adapted media, but this in no way dictates that "changes are inevitable" in the narrative's presentation of the traces being examined across the different threads. The paradigm of novel to film has been heavily analyzed in the compare-and-contrast assessments that typify adaptation studies, with far less attention given to other media. By contrast, the inclusion of other forms of adapted media is welcomed in the formation of any given textus, since the textus is a unified construct, created by one student of adaptations, that affords a space to house each encounter by that person with multiple adaptations of the same narrative in any conceivable form of adapted media. That no thread (text) is privileged based solely on the date of its creation adds significant value to the framework as a mode of engaging with adaptations.

Thread Four—Elliott Nugent's 1949 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—4.1.1.

Gatsby

Jay Gatsby (Alan Ladd) is introduced early on in the film. During the montage of events rendered onscreen and narrated by the voice-over of older Nick's character, Gatsby is seen in the

front seat of a moving car shooting a gun out the passenger's side window at men in another nearby vehicle. After killing the other men, Gatsby exits the vehicle in a darkened alleyway and, wearing a trench coat and hat to one side, turns to face the camera just as the voice-over of the older Nick continues to introduce Gatsby: "And out of the twenties and all they were came Jay Gatsby who built a dark empire for himself because he carried a dream in his heart" (3:50-4:03). Accompanied by two other men, Gatsby drives a convertible through the valley of ashes, stopping at Wilson's Garage for gas. Here he tips George generously as George does not have change for the twenty dollar bill Gatsby has given him, and receives directions to West Egg, his destination. Once inside the enormous mansion, Gatsby makes plans to purchase and redecorate the newly acquired home which is across the Sound from the Buchanan home. Requesting the same interior designer as used by the Buchanan's, Gatsby saunters around the ballroom rattling off orders for improvements: "I want murals on the walls, all over the walls, big murals. Antiques, lots of antiques. And new carpets all over the house" (7:46-8:55). In this way, his propensity to blur the past with the present is signified as he desires new murals and new carpets and as many antiques as money can buy. After being informed of Nick's presence at the party, Gatsby, wearing a black tuxedo, approaches Nick and inquires about whether or not he is enjoying the party. When Nick, not knowing the man with whom he speaks is Gatsby, tells the stranger that "This Gatsby must be quite a character" (12:49-12:51) and he doubts Gatsby knows for himself why he hosts the elaborate parties. Gatsby, without hesitation, informs Nick that he thinks Gatsby does understand the purpose of the parties. "You see, I'm Gatsby" (13:08-13:10). This completes the audience's encounter with his character in Interstice One.

Nick

Nick (Macdonald Carey), wearing heavy makeup meant to add age to his character, is one of the first two characters signified on the screen during this interstice. Wearing a suit of the 1940s with a raincoat draped over his arm, Nick and a female character (presumably his wife, though her name is not given at this point), make their way down a path in cemetery in the autumn. Nick announces that “It’s been a long time, twenty years” (1:09-1:11) Once they pause beside a gravestone, Nick’s aged character is contemplative and tells his female companion that he “likes [Gatsby] for what he might have been” (1:30-1:32) before reciting the bible verse he claims responsibility for placing on the tombstone of Jay Gatsby: Proverbs 14:12: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (2:01-2:15). Though Nick’s name is mentioned initially during a meeting between Gatsby and the real estate agents who are selling Gatsby his mansion—“Mrs. Buchanan’s second cousin. Another young college man named Nick Carraway. Stocks and bonds, but strictly small time” (7:08-7:16)—his character is presented as younger when signified on the screen now, reinforcing the idea that the older Nick has taken the audience back in time in his memory to the year 1928. Dressed in a dark suit and striped tie, Nick wanders around the party, inquires about his host, and, not knowing that the man with whom he is speaking is Gatsby, he confides that, while enjoying the party’s atmosphere, he believes that “This Gatsby must be quite a character [. . .] Well, I’m his neighbor and I’ve listened to these goings-on going on two weeks wondering what it is that makes a man live like this. Thought I’d come over and find out myself” (12:49-13:02). His character is far from being developed in this interstice and seems only a minor character thus far.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—4.1.2.

The backdrop of the film's opening credits presents the first images onscreen: a bound novel, the words "The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald" on its dust jacket and a pair of black rimmed reading glasses placed at the bottom of the novel. In this way, the notion of Fitzgerald as supposed author is at least introduced. Though initially the film was intended to be directed by John Farrow (father of Mia Farrow who would later star as Daisy in the 1974 adaptation), who had worked with Alan Ladd on previous films (*Calcutta*, 1947; *Beyond Glory*, 1948; *Two Years Before the Mast*, 1946; *China*, 1943), Farrow reportedly quarreled with Paramount over casting (*Sunday Mail*) and was replaced by Elliott Nugent, who had previously worked with Ladd when he played a minor character opposite Bob Hope in the 1947 film, *My Favorite Brunette*. Nugent's personal battles with depression and alcohol abuse resemble Fitzgerald's own struggles and are articulated in his autobiography, *Events Leading up to the Comedy* (1965), including his contemplations of suicide. Authorship of this film, in this interstice in particular, is vague at best. Even Nick's role as narrator is not blatantly obvious from the film's onset. Though his character is introduced to the audience first and his voice-over seemingly narrates the initial montage, the narrative presented onscreen does not include Nick as a participant or an observer. He would not have been privy to Gatsby's shooting the gangsters in the passing car or Gatsby's remodeling plans for his new mansion. He would not have known Gatsby was down near the dark shore of the Sound prior to his manservant informing him of Nick's arrival to the party.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—4.1.3.

The brevity of this interstice offers very few instances of repeated patterns of meaning or expression. During the opening montage, Nick's voice-over narrates the images onscreen. As a

stoplight turns green and the sign built into the post moves to render the word “Go” the voice-over notes that during 1928 “fortunes were made overnight. Yes, the go signals were up. All the lights were green and young America went joyriding on homemade hooch” (2:35-2:44). The Buchanan’s green light is referenced by the real estate man during his meeting with Gatsby as well: “At night you can see the green light of their dock. It blinks” (6:50-6:53. And a flashing light (though not rendered as green given the adaptation’s being shot using black and white film) is presented beyond Gatsby’s reach across the Sound when his character stands with his back to the camera as he faces the Buchanan mansion (9:48). The eyes on Dr. T. J. Eckleburg’s billboard are also referenced. The man in the backseat of the car while Gatsby stops for gas in the valley of ashes brings attention to the billboard noting that the billboard looks “Like God bought himself a pair of eyeglasses” (4:52-4:54). However, Gatsby does not seem interested in the significance the eyes have, remarking that the eyes are just “painted that way. It’s what you call an optical illusion” (5:00-5:03). Money is mentioned several times throughout this interstice, though. First the man in the passenger’s seat beside Gatsby when they stop for gas, Myron Lupus, notes that \$200,000 is a great deal of money to pay for a house (4:35-4:37). Again, when George is not able to offer change for Gatsby’s twenty dollars, money is mentioned. And when Gatsby is planning his remodeling of the house, he notes that he “wants the best money can buy” (7:38-7:40).

Trace Four—World and Setting—4.1.4.

Filmed entirely in Paramount’s Hollywood studio, the sets of this interstice appear theatrical in nature. Though intended to be a supposed outdoor location, the initial set of the graveyard is framed by faux trees and scattered leaves; and the action unfolds with a painted two-dimensional screen of clouds as its backdrop. Gatsby’s mansion, prior to being remodeled, is

a large cathedral-sized room decorated with disproportionally small furniture pieces and an ornate grand piano. The large hanging portrait of a man in uniform seems at home on the expansive wall beside the row of French doors which overlook the Sound. Outside these opened doors is a tree on a painted backdrop. When Gatsby's character is first shown on a balcony near the water and dreamily staring off across the way toward the Buchanan mansion, the set is a combination of painted backdrops and three-dimensional objects including a small row boat anchored in a similarly small pool of dark still water. Drying vines seemingly wither on the sides of the faux stone railings of the balcony. The next time Gatsby is presented on the balcony, a large motorboat is docked in place of the rowboat; the vines have been removed from the sides of the tiered balcony and a screen behind Gatsby's character shows the movement of moonlit water. The party set is more elaborate, but still reminiscent of a theatrical production. The ballroom previously depicted is transformed by murals painted on the wall. A stage has been constructed on the right side of the ballroom to hold a full orchestra and singer performing music not from the 1920s, but from the 1940s. The costuming is also that of the 1940s, as the short dresses of the flappers are not presented, but instead the women wear more conservative dresses below the knees. The swimming pool is seemingly in a space that is partially indoors and outdoors. Women in bathing suits frolic in the water and sit on the side of the pool laughing and swinging their legs on the pool ledge's sides. Gatsby is dressed in a tuxedo and Nick wears a suit. The use of black and white film does not present varying shades of color, but the use of lighting is significant. This interstice is presented as relatively dark in places, the scene where Gatsby is near the Sound particularly. A grayness permeates the set so that the viewer must nearly strain to see the characters and their environments clearly.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—4.1.5.

The scenes of this interstice dissolve into one another without necessarily being motivated in their transitions. The montage which is instigated by Nick's remembrances of what constitutes the year 1928 are often superimposed and take on the quality of a newsreel. The plot lacks motivation as well thus far and simply seems to be the exposition of a story mapping out the sequential order of occurrences. This happens and then that happens, but the prior actions do not necessarily seem to cause the subsequent actions. The order of occurrences thus far is this: Nick and his wife visit Jay Gatsby's grave; Gatsby shoots some men in a passing vehicle causing them to wreck; Gatsby, accompanied by an entourage of two other men, travel through the valley of ashes to West Egg to purchase a large house across the Sound from the Buchanan mansion; Gatsby hosts a party and, having previously invited Nick, introduces himself to Nick at this party.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—4.1.6.

Reminiscent of the 1932 *Scarface*, this interstice of the adaptation seemingly possesses the qualities associated with the conventions of the gangster film and adhere to the post-war aspects of the film noir, including the presentation of Gatsby as a bootlegging thug from the onset. Though often the camera angles used in film noirs are askew in order to offset the viewer, the camera angles in this interstice are predominately medium shots, with the exception of several wide-angle establishing shots. The first establishing shot is inside Gatsby's mansion prior to the remodel. This offers the viewer the opportunity to see the expansiveness of the room and absorb what such a room would cost. The next wide angle shot is of Gatsby on the balcony overlooking the Sound. This view gives the audience the opportunity to see how small Gatsby is compared to the vast hardscape around him, a telling insight into his personality and his future

trajectory as a character. The final wide angle shot is an overhead shot of the party scene. This sequence opens with the aerial view of the party's orchestra, closes in on the couples dancing and then a tracking shot pans the party until finding Nick's character before cutting to Nick observing a woman performing a dance for a group of men gathered around her. Though Al Jolson's 1928 song, "There's a Rainbow Round My Shoulder," is included in this interstice when the female singer is performing during the party scene, the music of the film is not necessarily identifiable as being from the 1920s. Though the Jazz Age is referenced by older Nick's voice-over at the beginning of the film, and despite the use of upbeat saxophone and trumpet music being played during the opening montage, the film's music director, Robert Emmett Dolan—having produced stock music for previous film noirs including George Marshall's *The Blue Dahlia* (1946)—incorporates diegetic gunshots, screeching tires, laughing men and women along with the music of suspense. Indeed, the music heard often clues the viewer as to how he/she should understand the action unfolding onscreen. In the cemetery, the music is respectful in keeping with music of a funeral. When Gatsby is first introduced the music is chaotic and unsure. When Gatsby is standing on the balcony near the water, the music is slow, thoughtful, rendered using the sounds of soothing stringed instruments. When Nick and Gatsby are conversing at the party, the diegetic music is gay and light, but not overly boisterous.

Interlude

Recalling Bluestone's assertion regarding the inevitability of change when transferring the written word to film, it seems worth noting—following this examination of Nugent's adaptation—the change in Gatsby's characterization, which is in keeping with the genre conventions of the film noir, a genre which was flourishing at the time of Nugent's film's release. However, the changes in the ways in which Gatsby's character is represented are not

due to his character being signified through the use of film or any other media, but rather, just as Frye noted, because “Each generation rewrites the stories of the past in ways that make sense for it” (691). The generation of Nugent’s audience had come to expect a mysterious character to be portrayed in film noir. Similarly, the audience of Baz Luhrmann’s generation expects a film filled with computer generated images and the signification of seemingly impossible feats made possible through the rendering of the narrative using CGI.

Thread Five—Baz Luhrmann’s 2013 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—5.1.1.

Gatsby

Though not clearly presented until thirty minutes into the film, his character is implied through Nick’s voice-over noting his presence, while a hand bearing a large pinky ring is often visible, indicating the wearer of the ring is, indeed, Gatsby. That same ring is seen on the hand holding a silver serving tray above Nick’s head as Nick ascends a staircase during the party he attends at Gatsby’s mansion. Like an choreographed dance, the ringed hand passes the empty tray to a butler and the man whose hand bears the ring remains a mystery as only his black-suit-covered arm and hand are visible to the viewer while he begins talking to the slightly intoxicated Nick. With his back to the camera, he takes a martini from a tray beside him and, just as the previously promised fireworks begin in the background, Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) turns to greet the camera. With his short brown hair parted to the side and slicked back with precision, and wearing a pristine white shirt and fitted tuxedo, the symmetrically chiseled face of Gatsby smiles directly at the audience as though he knows the answer to some riddle not yet posed. He raises his glass to the air in a near cartoonish manner as he introduces himself: “I’m afraid I haven’t been a very good host, old sport. You see, I’m Gatsby (29:46-29:55).

Nick

Having just been told that “rich girls don’t marry poor boys” (29:17-29:20) Nick (Tobey Maguire), clumsily makes his way up the outside staircase of Gatsby’s mansion in a failed attempt to regain Jordan’s attention. Dressed in a navy suit, white shirt with striped maroon bowtie, his brown hair nearly tangled from sweat or the wind, Nick is distracted from his pursuit of Jordan by a man who inquires about his service in the war. Seemingly proud of his receiving an actual invitation to the party, Nick reaches in his pocket and shows the man the hand-signed card. Oblivious to the identity of the man with whom he speaks, Nick recounts to him the rumors he has gleaned from his time at the party: “They say he’s third cousin to the Kaiser and second cousin to the devil” (29:40-29:46). Following Gatsby’s elaborate introduction, Nick’s expression is one of humiliated shock, though his voice-over suggests his impression Gatsby. In a reverent voice, Nick as voice-over narrator notes that Gatsby’s “smile was one of those rare smiles that you might come across four or five times in life. It seemed to understand you and believe in you just as you would like to be understood and believed in” (30:02-30:14).

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—5.1.2.

As director and co-author of the film’s screenplay, Australian director Baz Luhrmann exemplifies what it is to be an auteur, and his previous films, including *Moulin Rouge!* and *Romeo + Juliet*, possess qualities also present in this adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*. His use of computer generated imaging (CGI) to create elaborate sets, his movement of the camera to offset his audience, his usage of vibrant colors and over-the-top costuming are all so apparent in his films that a viewer of any one of them would be struck with his signature directorial style.

The narrative itself leaves little doubt as to the identity of the narrator of this film. Nick’s character is initially introduced to the audience as a patient in a mental institution. This same

audience is privy to having signified onscreen Nick's medical chart, which suggests that he suffers from among other ailments, alcoholism and severe anxiety. The narrative, then, unfolds as he first begins to share his remembrances of that summer of 1922 with his haggard-looking physician. This same physician instructs him to write down his remembered experiences as a form of catharsis. While the audience is visually able to see Nick during the writing process, his voice-over also narrates long passages as he describes the action being played out onscreen.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—5.1.3.

While the significance of the green light has yet to be blatantly established, its physical recurring presence onscreen thus far is undeniable and is implied during the interstice of Gatsby's introduction. As Nick is a link to Daisy, the fireworks exploding behind Gatsby's perfectly centered face when he turns to greet Nick and subsequently the audience are primarily green, mirroring the flicking green light at the end of the Buchanan's dock.

Trace Four—World and Setting—5.1.4.

Filmed primarily at the Sydney Polo Club in Australia, this interstice takes place in an outdoor location. The setting is chaotic and gaudy and over-the-top. The crowded frames signifying the party scene, where this interstice occurs, are filled with primary-colored confetti, suffocating swarms of jerking men and women wearing colors similar to the confetti, acrobats swinging from trapeze, musicians swaying to the beat of their own making, men and women in the black and white swimsuits of prisoners diving into the oval Caribbean blue swimming pool, an anemic looking organist oblivious to the crowd behind him pounding away at the cathedral style organ as though composing his own masterpiece. Though the majority of the character shots use three-way lighting, Gatsby's character is kept in the shadows. And out of the chaos, a man dressed in a black tuxedo, nervously fidgeting with the large emblem of a ring on his pinky

finger, emerges from his shadows to bring a momentary respite, a pause. The use of diffused high key lighting is employed for Gatsby's introduction as the fireworks light up the dark night sky behind him.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—5.1.5.

As previously mentioned when discussing Nick's role as the narrator, the narrative unfolds in bits and pieces as Nick recalls his experiences in Long Island while a patient in a menacing mental institution. Leading up to this interstice, Nick is introduced to the audience in the asylum, recalls his eagerness to excel in the world of finance as a stockbroker, and introduces the audience to his beautiful cousin, Daisy, and her less-than-gentlemanly husband, Tom. Nick accompanies Tom to Wilson's garage where Nick and the audience encounter George and Myrtle in the gruesomely rendered valley of ashes. Nick then sits patiently in the living room of the red and pink and orange city apartment while Tom and Myrtle can be heard fornicating loudly behind the closed bedroom door. Noticeably uncomfortable in such a predicament, Nick tries to leave the apartment, but is caught in the web of eccentric partygoers and becomes intoxicated in order to remain in the apartment with such a strange group. Next Nick tells his therapist that he is special, since he was the only person who was officially invited to attend Gatsby's party. His remembrance is signified on the screen, then, as he awkwardly observes the circus around him, encounters Jordan who slinks around like a thin cat in heat, dances with him, and leaves him. Confused by his surroundings, Nick begins talking to a man in black who remarks that Nick looks familiar to him. After sharing with this still stranger the rumors he has heard concerning the host of the party, Nick and the audience are introduced to Gatsby.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—5.1.6.

Heavily reliant on CGI, this thread is able to render Gatsby's introduction using extraordinary sets and special effects added to the film in post-production. The fireworks exploding in sync with Craig Armstrong's soundtrack offer the audience a sense of awe when coupled by the camera's film speed in rendering the scene. In this way, the genre conventions of film aid the audience in being introduced to a Gatsby of excess who is cognizant of timing.

Interlude

When Hugh Dalziel Duncan notes that "literature is assigned the task of creating and sustaining communal symbolic characters who must become part of the experience of every individual who is to take part in this society" (5), he could not have anticipated the impact his assertion would have on the conceptual framework of the textus. If "narrative" is substituted for "literature," the meaning of Duncan's statement rings true to the application of the textus in that each encounter with each of the structure's threads signifies characters who not only bear out the narrative but who "become part of the experience" as a whole. Kamilla Elliott uses the phrase "reciprocal looking glasses" (209) when discussing the possibilities of reading novel-to-film adaptations, and the catchphrase is equally applicable when reading multiple adaptations of the same narrative regardless of form. When applying the textus, this framework encourages its creator to look back at previous encounters with the adapted narrative as well as to anticipate future threads, all the while isolating specific moments of inspection so as not to blur the documentation of the multiple experiences.

The examination of the ways in which the traces of the five threads render Interstice One permits the extraction of specific criteria from the adapted narrative despite the different media. Seeking out the ways in which the threads render Gatsby's introduction to Nick and the

audience, the creator of this textus has noted that Fitzgerald's Thread One does not formally introduce Gatsby until page 48 of the novel, though his character is given ambiguous introductions through the presentation of other characters sharing rumor and innuendo about him. Clayton's film similarly makes the audience wait to meet Gatsby formally, with more than half an hour passing before Gatsby's character is signified onscreen. The mysterious nature of Gatsby is further presented in Levy's stage play, which offers a Gatsby capable of seemingly appearing out of thin air, as is detailed in Levy's stage directions. Nugent's Gatsby deviates from the previous threads' introductions of the character, in that he is introduced through visual images and voice-over prior to the party scene. Baz Luhrmann's final thread heightens the mystique of Gatsby's character by similarly withholding his formal introduction until nearly 30 minutes into the film. Using conventions specific to each of their forms, these five threads do embody the interstice "I'm Gatsby" differently, yes, but all still render Gatsby's introduction, which is what is being sought in the examination. The ways in which each of the threads present the introduction—the ways being the traces determined by the creator of the textus prior to the inclusion of the threads—may, and probably must, differ, but *what* is signified is the information which will be overlaid later to determine whether or not the essence of that moment of the narrative is maintained. Prior to this new model of engaging with adaptations, only structuralist models relevant to film and novel were available for the reader/viewer/listener to utilize when encountering multiple adaptations of the same narrative.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERSTICE TWO

In his “Being Adaptation: The Resistance to Theory” Brett Westbrook asks why members of academia are still reluctant to seek out theoretical models for reading adaptations: “Given the receptivity in the academy to both theory and film studies as academic fields, and given the openness of film studies to theory, why then does film adaptation studies resist the theory?” (25). Westbrook attempts to partially answer his question, noting that “Part of the resistance to theory may involve this reliance on not just one, but two texts, despite the fact that the notion of ‘text,’ of ‘a’ text as monad, has been thoroughly, excruciating, exploded by critics from across the academy” (26). The nature of the text as something plural, as intertextual, may have been widely accepted, but as Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins note in their coauthored “Introduction: New Beginnings for Adaptation Studies,” a “text cannot simply evoke the ‘real thing,’ but rather creates a *represented* thing” (17). Perhaps it is theorizing the thing that is represented that has precipitated such a standstill in the theoretical progression of adaptation studies. Perhaps a systematic model for engaging with adaptations has not come to fruition because, again as Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins assert, “scholars in adaptation studies continue focusing on the issues of ‘fidelity’ to a precursor text as a means to understand an adaptation’s scope and worth” (11-12). Whatever the reason, members of academia have accepted “that the field of adaptation studies is built on a comparison” (Westbrook 29), rather than seeking a framework which would permit multiple adaptations of the same narrative to be examined regardless of each embodiment’s presented form. The textus may be used not only by scholars, but also by filmgoers, readers, participants, listeners—anyone who actively engages with adapted media. Its structure may be adapted to fit the needs of the one creating it. If a movie-lover sets

aside an entire weekend to binge view *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations, he/she can isolate prior to his/her viewing experience what criteria will be examined and to what end. Therefore, while as the creator of this textus of *The Great Gatsby* I have isolated three interstices and six to seven traces to examine in five separate threads, the creator of the *Pride and Prejudice* textus may only be interested in the characterization of Mr. Darcy and may, then, construct a framework containing the traces necessary to present Mr. Darcy's character. One of the more important benefits of the textus is that by utilizing it as a model for engaging with adaptations, the creator of the textus acknowledges the multiplicity of texts, thereby alleviating, fully theoretically academia's preoccupation with pitting one singular text against one singular adaptation of the same narrative.

Using this model, the creator of this textus has isolated Interstice Two as being the point in the threads which renders the reunion of Daisy and Gatsby. The point of investigation for this interstice is the passage where "Daisy put her arm through [Gatsby's] abruptly" (Fitzgerald 93). This moment signifies the climax of Fitzgerald's Thread One in that Gatsby, who has sought Daisy's acceptance for years, seemingly acquires her attention, if not her full affection. She reaches out to him in this instance as opposed to his continually pining after her. This demonstration of Daisy's acceptance of Gatsby causes Gatsby to seemingly withdraw once again into the past, according to Nick's account of the incident. Rather than rejoice in Daisy's physical closeness, Nick notes that Gatsby seems preoccupied by the notion that "[h]is count of enchanted objects had diminished by one" (93), thus marking the beginnings of the narrative's falling action. Clayton's Thread Two approaches the interstice differently. After Daisy and Gatsby meet at Nick's cottage, they proceed on a tour of Gatsby's mansion. This action involving Daisy, Gatsby, and Nick is interrupted in this interstice by scenes presenting Jordan and Nick returning

to the valley of ashes in order for Jordan to stop at Wilson's Garage to get fuel for the car she drives recklessly. The subsequent scene presents a quick montage of Myrtle and Tom in the bedroom of the city apartment. The action then returns to Gatsby and Daisy who sit in a symmetrically framed shot across from one another, both wearing white. This scene dissolves into another room in Gatsby's house. While sitting opposite Gatsby, Daisy, dressed in the same clothes as the previous scene but without her hat, turns the pages in the album Gatsby has kept chronicling her life through newspaper clippings. She asks Gatsby, dressed in white sweater and slacks, to come sit beside her. When he remains seated in the chair across from her, she reaches her hand out to him, holding it out before him. He leans forward in such a way that the audience believes he may take her hand. The camera closes in on the two hands just as Gatsby withdraws, his fingers not touching Daisy's.

The interstice for Levy's Thread Three is signified when Daisy "*throws her arms around* [Gatsby] *and they kiss, deep and passionately, laughing and crying*" (33). This is the point in the narrative which aligns with the interstice, "Daisy put her arm through his abruptly" (Fitzgerald 93) since this is the moment when Daisy first touches Gatsby again in the present. Nugent's Thread Four does not present Daisy putting her arm through Gatsby's. Instead, she moves toward Gatsby and reaches her hand out to him when she first sees him again in Nick's cottage. Gatsby follows Daisy's lead and walks toward her, taking her hand, holding it, staring into her eyes, transfixed. In this way, Daisy is still the first to touch Gatsby and does so much more quickly than in other threads, so that this point of investigation only includes the scene in the cottage. Leading up to this space of examination, it is worth noting that Nick has not arranged the meeting between Daisy and Gatsby; Jordan Baker brings Daisy to Nick's cottage without Nick's approval after making an arrangement with Gatsby. In exchange for ensuring that Daisy

meets Gatsby at Nick's cottage, Jordan asks that he give her his car, which Gatsby does willingly. In Luhrmann's Thread Five, this interstice offers two possible renderings of "Daisy put her arm through [Gatsby's] abruptly" (Fitzgerald 93). The first is presented when Daisy, joining Gatsby on the terrace outside Nick's cottage, places her hand over Gatsby's hand. The second possibility is signified when Daisy puts her head in Gatsby's lap as they both sit on the bed, scattered with brilliantly colored shirts, and Gatsby points through the room's French windows at the green light opposite his house.

Thread One—Fitzgerald's Novel:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—1.2.1.

Gatsby

Having concocted a "chance meeting" with Daisy at Nick's cottage, Gatsby's previously cool, mysterious demeanor is complicated by perceptible emotion. Nick notes that Gatsby "in a white flannel suit, silver shirt, and gold-colored tie" (84) "literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room" (89) of Nick's house because of Daisy's presence. Gatsby who, just moments earlier, had reclined "against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease" (86), is now "like an ecstatic patron of recurrent light" (89). He emerges in this scene, however momentarily, from the shadows of the previous chapters, in order to showcase his wealth for Daisy in the hopes of her acceptance of him. While accompanying Daisy and Nick on a tour of his "splendid" (90) house, Gatsby "revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response from [Daisy's] well-loved eyes" (91). During this interstice, Nick notes that Gatsby "had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third" (92). "After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea so long,

dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock” (91-92). Following Gatsby’s overt display of emotion, after he had “sat down and shaded his eyes and began to laugh” (91), Gatsby, Nick, and Daisy stand “in a row looking at the corrugated surface of the Sound. ‘If it wasn’t for the mist we could see your home across the bay,’ said Gatsby. ‘You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock’” (92). This interstice occurs just then as “Daisy put her arm through his abruptly” (93), but Nick notes that Gatsby seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one. (93)

Nick

This interstice permits Nick’s character to continue his role as narrator of the unfolding story as well as introducing him as an active participant in Gatsby’s quest to obtain Daisy’s affection once more. Nick’s complicity in arranging the meeting with Daisy and Gatsby creates a bond between him and Gatsby as Nick is able to observe fleeting moments of inconsistencies and vulnerabilities present in Gatsby’s character during this orchestrated rendezvous. Nick, who had just spent an evening with Gatsby, which had made him “light-headed and happy” (83), is anxious when Gatsby arrives again to his cottage following Daisy’s arrival. “Aware of the loud beating of [his] own heart” (86), Nick remains near the door, granting Gatsby and Daisy privacy for their reunion. After Gatsby causes the “defunct mantelpiece clock” (86) to topple over,

Gatsby “caught it with trembling fingers and set it back in place” (86), but Nick’s “own face had now assumed a deep tropical burn” (86). Perhaps sensing his need to leave Gatsby and Daisy alone even longer, Nick “made an excuse at the first possible moment, and got to [his] feet” (87). Seemingly dependent on Nick for strength, Gatsby follows Nick to the kitchen and seeks reassurances from him about being in the cottage with Daisy. In big-brother fashion, Nick does reassure Gatsby before chastising him: “‘You’re acting like a little boy,’ [Nick] broke out impatiently. ‘Not only that, but you’re being rude. Daisy’s sitting in there all alone’” (88).

Once Nick returns to the cottage after having left the two in privacy, “Daisy went upstairs to wash her face—too late [Nick] thought with humiliation of [his towels]” (89). The *things* associated with Nick, if only in his character’s mind, are inferior to the things of those whose company he keeps. In this way, Nick seems insecure at moments during this interstice. When Gatsby suggests that Daisy and Nick accompany him next door to tour his house, Nick hesitates, asking “You’re sure you want me to come?” (89).

Before accompanying them on the tour, Nick points out an inconsistency in Gatsby’s story of his past. After Gatsby informs Nick that it had taken him “just three years to earn the money that bought” (90) the grand house, Nick prods Gatsby by saying that he “thought [Gatsby] inherited [his] money” (90). Acknowledging that Nick’s commentary shapes the reader’s understanding of the narrative, his asides end this interstice, suggesting that Gatsby’s “count of enchanted objects had diminished by one” (93), since for now the chase is over; Gatsby seemingly has Daisy once more.

Daisy

Daisy is still rendered through the eyes of Nick in this interstice, but this point of inspection also offers several instances of Nick communicating to the reader what he presumes

Gatsby is feeling when Gatsby too is looking at Daisy. Thus, Daisy's character is not only physically described, but her characterization seemingly grows more complex through Nick's account of Gatsby's response to having her near him. Upon arriving at Nick's cottage and stepping out of the car, "Daisy's face, tipped sideways beneath a three-cornered lavender hat, looked out at [Nick] with a bright ecstatic smile" and the "exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain" to Nick (85). While an account of the actual meeting of Gatsby and Daisy is not presented in the novel, Nick does offer that from his vantage point outside the room still near the door where Gatsby entered the cottage, he "heard a sort of choking murmur and part of a laugh, followed by Daisy's voice on a clear artificial note: 'I certainly am awfully glad to see you again'" (86). The strain which accompanies awkwardness is detailed by Nick during the encounter, and initially Daisy is aligned with Nick rather than Gatsby: "Gatsby got himself into a shadow, while Daisy and [Nick] talked, looked conscientiously from one to the other of us with tense, unhappy eyes" (87). What causes Daisy's eyes to be unhappy is never articulated and is soon forgotten. After leaving the cottage to offer privacy for Daisy and Gatsby, Nick offers that upon returning the couple is "sitting at either end of the couch, looking at each other as if some question had been asked, or was in the air, and every vestige of embarrassment was gone. Daisy's face was smeared with tears" (89). When she speaks her "throat, full of aching, grieving beauty, told only of her unexpected joy" (89). Once inside Gatsby's mansion, Nick watches Gatsby, who watches Daisy. Nick notes that Gatsby "hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy, and [he thinks Gatsby] revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes" (91). Seemingly overcome by the sheer extravagance the number of shirts owned by Gatsby represents to her, "with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily. 'They're such beautiful shirts,' she sobbed, her voice muffled

in the thick folds. ‘It makes me sad because I’ve never seen such—such beautiful shirts before’” (92). Though one is left to speculate what motivates Daisy to do so, she “put her arm through [Gatsby’s] abruptly” (93). This concludes this interstice and suggests that Daisy has in essence joined Gatsby once again.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—1.2.2.

As noted above, Nick continues his role as narrator of this interstice, as indeed he is the supposed narrator of the entire novel. Until now, however, he has only been able to offer the reader insight into either Daisy’s character sans Gatsby or Gatsby’s character sans Daisy. This interstice permits Nick to offer commentary regarding the interactions between the two as well as their reactions to one another. Perhaps the most significant articulation by Nick as narrator comes in the very paragraph signifying the climax of the novel and the interstice being investigated here.

After Daisy places her arm through Gatsby’s, Nick comments that Gatsby “seemed absorbed in what he had just said” (93), which referenced the green light placed at the end of Daisy’s dock on the Sound. Remembering that he cannot know with certainty anything that the other characters are thinking or feeling, as he is an active participant as opposed to a third person or omniscient voice, Nick notes that “Probably it had occurred to [Gatsby] that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever” (93). The use of the word “probably” reminds the reader that Nick is not all-knowing. What follows this is Nick’s commentary, which in itself is what causes the reader to pause and recognize this as the beginning of the narrative’s denouement: “Compared to the great distance that had separated [Gatsby] from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one”

(93). In this way, Gatsby seemingly realizes that in essence his chase is over; he has obtained that closeness which had driven him for so many years. According to the narrator, Gatsby does not seem to relish in any way the fact that Daisy is indeed touching him, entwined with him physically; instead, he seems lost once again in that space of memory where the past and the present resemble one another, but do not yet align completely.

Though Nick's role in this interstice is significant, Fitzgerald's voice also presents itself to the reader familiar with prior works by the author. While seemingly only meant to offer an aside to mark the passing of time while Nick is outside the cottage to offer Gatsby and Daisy privacy, Nick notes that outside "Once more it was pouring, and [his] irregular lawn, well-shaved by Gatsby's gardener, abounded in small muddy swamps and prehistoric marshes. There was nothing to look at from under the tree except Gatsby's enormous house, so [Nick] stared at it, like Kant at his church steeple" (88). As Horst Kruse notes in his "'The Great Gatsby': A View from Kant's Window—Transatlantic Crosscurrents," Fitzgerald was not only familiar with the works of philosopher Immanuel Kant, but had also included references to Kant in his previous published texts:

Three references to Kant occur in [Fitzgerald's] work prior to *The Great Gatsby*, one as early as 1915 in his short story "The Ordeal" (where Kant is mentioned along with Thomas Henry Huxley, Nietzsche, and Zola as crying *non serviam* [. . .] another one is "Benediction," developed out of the earlier story and published in 1920 where the thick volumes of Kant are read along with those of Thomas Aquinas, Henry James Sr., and Cardinal Mercier by the seminarians [. . .] and one in chapter 3 of book 1 of *This Side of Paradise*. (73)

In this way, Fitzgerald's voice overshadows the narrator's for a brief moment in this interstice, as the reader of the author's previous works recalls Fitzgerald's admiration for Kant as well as other philosophers.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—1.2.3.

In this interstice, the inclusion of three symbols seems to impact the reader's understanding of the trajectory of the narrative: the clock, the mention of the owl-eyed man again, and the spoken reference of the green light.

When Nick enters the cottage's room now housing Gatsby and Daisy for the first time, he notes that "Gatsby, his hands still in his pockets, was reclining against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease, even of boredom. His head leaned back so far that it rested against the face of a defunct mantelpiece clock, and from this position his distraught eyes stared down at Daisy" (86). That Gatsby assumes his position beside a clock that is no longer functioning seems fitting, as Gatsby's character struggles with the blurring of the past and present. The clock is granted motion once again when Gatsby informs Nick that he and Daisy have known one another before, in the past: "Luckily the clock took this moment to tilt dangerously at the pressure of [Gatsby's] head, whereupon he turned and caught it with trembling fingers and set it back in place" (86). In this way, Gatsby, whom Nick describes later in the interstice as someone "running down like an overwound clock" (92), fast-forwards time or restarts time by presenting the clock motion. Gatsby apologizes to Nick about the clock; Nick announces that it is "an old clock" before noting as narrator that he thinks they "all believed for a moment that [the clock] had smashed in pieces on the floor" (87). Thus, time seems no longer to matter. The events that follow (the tour through the expansive rooms of Gatsby's house, the shower of shirts Gatsby throws on his bed to signify his wealth) are the only moments in the

novel where Gatsby's character is able to enjoy his life in the present tense. Not until the end of this interstice when Gatsby is forced to recall his life during his pursuit of the green light does the (if only metaphorical) presence of what the clock represents seep back into Gatsby's persona.

Recalling Nick and Jordan's earlier encounter with the "stout, middle-aged man, with enormous owl-eyed spectacles, [who] was sitting somewhat drunk on the edge of a great table, staring with unsteady concentration at the shelves of books" (45), Nick as narrator mentions this character again while Gatsby, Daisy, and he "wandered through Marie Antoinette music-rooms and Restoration salons" (91) during the tour of Gatsby's mansion. Nick "felt that there were guests concealed behind every couch and table, under orders to be breathlessly silent until [they] passed through. As Gatsby closed the door of 'the Merton College Library' [Nick] could have sworn [he] heard the owl-eyed man break into ghostly laughter" (91). Since this still unnamed character is the one previously responsible for warning Nick and Jordan that "if one brick was removed the whole library was liable to collapse" (46), his "ghostly" presence here is symbolic and serves as a reminder that collapse of any sort is always a possibility.

Not only does Gatsby's reference to the green light cause his character to seemingly retreat inside himself, the mentioning of the green light reminds the reader of Nick's prior account of Gatsby who had been then merely a "figure [who] had emerged from the shadow" and "stretched out his arms toward" the green light across the Sound. The yearning implied in this description of a mysterious figure whom the reader later learns to be Gatsby surely is recalled when Gatsby himself stands in his house beside Daisy "looking at the corrugated surface of the Sound" and tells her that she "always [has] a green light that burns all night at the end of [her] dock" (92). Had this been the first reference to the green light, its significance would be lost entirely. But by allowing both Gatsby and the reader the opportunity to remember Gatsby's

previous interaction with the thing he longed for, his character's motivation is more easily defined.

Trace Four—World and Setting—1.2.4.

The interstice begins in Nick's cottage and moves through multiple rooms of Gatsby's house to his bedroom, to the window of his bedroom from where the characters can peer across the Sound to view the Buchanan mansion.

The interior of Nick's cottage is described using little detail. The narrative notes the presence of a mantelpiece in the living room. There is also reference to a kitchen, though no detail is offered. Outside the cottage is "a huge black knotted tree" (88) and prior to the characters' departure for Gatsby's mansion, "Daisy went up-stairs" in Nick's cottage "to wash her face" (89), informing the reader that the architecture of the cottage possesses a second story. In contrast, Gatsby's house is described in much more detail. Entering "by the big postern" Nick as narrator offers the following account of the exterior of Gatsby's home: "With enchanting murmurs Daisy admired this aspect or that of the feudal silhouette against the sky, admired the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate" (90). After ascending the "marble steps" (90), the three

wandered through Marie Antoinette music-rooms and Restoration salons [. . .] went upstairs through period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk and vivid with new flowers, through dressing-rooms and poolrooms, and bathrooms, with sunken baths [. . .] Finally [they] came to Gatsby's own apartment, a bedroom and a bath, and an Adam study, where [they] sat down and drank a glass of some Chartreuse [Gatsby] took from a cupboard in the wall [. . .] His bedroom

was the simplest room of all—except where the dresser was garnished with a toilet set of pure dull gold [. . .] [Gatsby] opened [. . .] two hulking patent cabinets which held his massed suits and dressing gowns and ties, and his shirts, piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high [. . .] After the house, [they] were to see the grounds and the swimming pool, and the hydroplane and the mid-summer flowers—but outside Gatsby’s window it began to rain again. (90-92)

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—1.2.5.

This interstice is found in Chapter V of the nine chapter novel. What signifies the interstice, “Daisy put her arm through his abruptly,” comes on page 93 of the 180 page-manuscript, almost exactly halfway through the text. The use of white space is used once during this interstice to signify the elapse of time, though the action taking place directly before the white space (the scene where Gatsby throws his many shirts in front of Nick and Daisy) and the action taking place afterwards (Gatsby, Daisy, and Nick stand at Gatsby’s bedroom window watching it rain) take place supposedly on the same day.

The plot is seemingly simple enough. Having agreed to arrange a chance meeting for Daisy and Gatsby at his house, Nick welcomes Daisy to his cottage on a rainy day, leaves in order to give the two privacy, and returns to announce the emergence of the sun. The three characters tour Gatsby’s house in order for Gatsby to impress Daisy by his wealth. Both Daisy and Gatsby seem initially happy to be together again. Daisy links her arm through Gatsby’s and Gatsby seems to focus on the past rather than Daisy’s presence beside him as the interstice concludes.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—1.2.6.

The diction utilized throughout this interstice increases the reader's appreciation of the implied symbolism as well as aiding the reader in recognizing the turn the characters' trajectories have made to this point. The author's word choice also subtly aligns certain characters with one another, especially Daisy with Gatsby.

The symbol of the clock is described as "defunct" which could imply that it is no longer functioning or that the time the clock represents no longer exists. Nick uses the words "feudal silhouette" (90) when describing Gatsby's mansion. Referencing the medieval notion of feudalism aligns the structure that represents Gatsby (his house) with the social system of the past. The rooms in which Daisy, Gatsby, and Nick pass through are "Marie Antoinette music-rooms and Restoration salons" (91). While recognized styles of interior design, especially found in homes of the wealthy, the presence of the words "Marie Antoinette" and "Restoration" harken back to the past, yet again aiding in the reader's understanding of Gatsby's inability to relinquish the past.

As noted in Chapter II, Daisy's character is often connected to birds or things capable of flight. In this interstice birds are also directly and indirectly referenced. When Gatsby arrives a second time to the front door of Gatsby's cottage, Nick tells that Gatsby "turned sharply as if he were on a wire" (86) much like a bird in flight. To continue this alignment of Gatsby and Daisy, then, Nick notes that while he is following Daisy and Gatsby up the entrance to Gatsby's mansion that he hears "no sound but bird voices in the trees" (90). In this way, the reader is left to understand that Daisy and Gatsby are talking to one another perhaps and they are indeed the birds referenced. The diction again strengthens the notion of Gatsby and Daisy possessing similar character traits when Nick notes that "Daisy's voice on a clear artificial note" speaks to

Gatsby (86). And Gatsby is described as “reclining against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease” (86). That both are capable of being “artificial” and “counterfeit” parallels the two characters.

Having previously noted Fitzgerald’s use of symbolism with the recurrence of the owl-eyed man, and recalling this character’s warning regarding the removal of any brick from a structure causing its possible collapse, Fitzgerald’s word choice to describe the shirt scene in this interstice seems extremely significant. Opening the cabinets to reveal his extravagant clothing, Gatsby’s shirts are “piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high” (92). That Gatsby not only removes one of these shirt-bricks, but dozens of them all at once in the subsequent paragraph, signifies the beginning of the climax for the entire narrative. Had Fitzgerald not offered the warning about the bricks earlier and had the author not used the same word “bricks” here to describe the structured ordering of shirts, the significance of the comparison would easily have been lost.

Interlude

Again, though the creator of this textus first encountered Fitzgerald’s novel, placing the novel as the first thread in the textus still does not privilege it, as the purpose of utilizing the textus is to hone in on specific points in the same adapted narrative in search of the presence of an essence. Still, according to Westbrook, Bluestone and other scholars “have used film adaptations as a means to solidify the importance of the novel, to teach an aspect of the novel, to denigrate film as a medium” (38). Westbrook argues that “Given its persistence, and that comparisons seem irresistible when discussing two texts, film adaptation studies as a whole must examine why the fidelity issue recurs and then theorize a way to account for this impulse to not just compare, but to prefer one ‘text’ over the other” (38). Because the textus does not encourage one text to be weighted more than another, the impulse to privilege the written word is

lessened. In this way, examining Clayton's presentation of Interstice Two in the following section is just as important as isolating the traces in Fitzgerald's novel above.

Thread Two—Jack Clayton's 1974 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—2.2.1.

Gatsby

With sweat on his forehead, Gatsby (Robert Redford) appears anxious, introspective. Wearing a fitted off-white suit with a silvery blue shirt and gold tie, he paces the floor in the living room of Nick's cottage before sitting finally beside the fireplace. After announcing that he should leave because he believes Daisy will not come, Gatsby, staring down at his feet confides in Nick and the viewer that "This is a mistake. This is a terrible mistake" (50:29-50:36). With childlike awe, he stares speechless at Daisy when their eyes meet. Once inside his room, he maintains the actions of a child in that he openly seeks Daisy's validation by showing her (and Nick and the audience) his slew of multicolored shirts stacked on shelves inside his closet. He brags to her about having his shirts sent to him by a man in England who is mindful of the current fashion trends. Upon seeing her glee, he throws the shirts one by one up in the air and lets them fall down on Daisy and Nick like rain. When Daisy begins to cry, Gatsby is startled and seemingly does not know how to react. Daisy begins to laugh once more then, and Gatsby too chuckles, obviously relieved. While seated across from Daisy, Gatsby, wearing a white sweater and slacks, sits with his hands crossed under his chin in a dark leather chair. Daisy asks him why he sits so far away from her. He responds: "I find it difficult [. . .] It's been a very long time since I've been able to look at you" (1:03:09-1:03:19). This causes Daisy to reach her hand out to him. He leans forward as though prepared to touch her, but stops short.

Nick

During the cottage scene, Nick (Sam Waterson) wears a three piece light brown suit, French blue shirt and blue tie. A pocket watch hangs from his vest's button, though he does not refer to it. While he does not have any sections of voice-over in this interstice, Nick's character is allowed moments of contemplation. The camera closes in on his face which is presented as sympathetic and lost in thought, though those thoughts are not verbally shared. He seems cautious when he reenters the cottage after having smoked a cigarette outside in order to give Daisy and Gatsby some privacy. When Gatsby suggests Nick and Daisy go with him to his house next door, Nick's feelings of being the third wheel present themselves when he asks, "You sure you want me to come?" (54:18-54:20).

Inside Gatsby's room, Nick, hands in pant pockets, seems initially shocked by Gatsby's pulling his shirts from the closet and tossing them in the air to fall on both Nick, Daisy, and the floor. But in a seemingly forced fashion, Nick smiles and joins in with the festivities as he reaches out to catch the shirts flung in his direction. When Daisy begins to cry, Nick walks to the door and stares blankly at Gatsby and Daisy, grins as though somehow happy for them, then exits the room, once again leaving Gatsby and Daisy alone. Though Nick appears again with Jordan and again working on his bicycle, he does not reappear in this interstice during the interactions between Daisy and Gatsby.

Daisy

Wearing a partially sheer flowing lilac colored dress with large matching hat, Daisy (Mia Farrow) acts giddy and childlike when she arrives at Nick's cottage. When she sees Gatsby in the mirror behind her, she becomes, if only for a moment, self-conscious and demure. Having left Gatsby and Daisy alone together, Nick reenters to find Daisy crying, but she quickly returns

to the school-girl demeanor she possessed earlier when she stretches out her hand to Nick and announces: “Oh, Nick, darling, I feel like today’s someone’s birthday. Let’s have champagne” (54:06-54:14).

Inside Gatsby’s room, Daisy perpetuates her persona of liveliness when she giggles as Gatsby tosses his shirts in the air. Lacking any visible signs of motivation, though, Daisy takes a pink shirt, folds it like a handkerchief, sits in the chair facing Gatsby and begins crying into the garment. Just as quickly as Daisy began crying, she raises her head, her face and eyes noticeably free of shed tears, and smiles before giggling once again like a schoolgirl.

In the scene where Daisy and Gatsby sit opposite one another while Daisy peruses the scrapbook Gatsby kept chronicling Daisy’s life over the years he was apart from her, Daisy’s character is only visible in medium to close-up shots, thus only her white blouse and pearls and golden hair can be seen onscreen. She seems pleased as she recalls her life as she looks at the pictures of herself in the album. Without any apparent motivation, Daisy softly commands: “Come and sit by me, Jay” (1:02:58-1:03). When Gatsby doesn’t react, Daisy tilts her head to one side and with inquisitive intonation asks, “Why do you stand or sit as far away from me as possible?” (1:03:03-1:03:06). With her blue eyes wide, she peers across to Gatsby and reaches her hand out in front of her for him to take. He does not take it.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—2.2.2.

Having already established that director Jack Clayton’s films are primarily adaptations, his filming of *The Great Gatsby* seemingly falls short of classifying him as an auteur when using Andrew Sarris’ definition of what constitutes an auteur:

The three premises of the *auteur* theory may be visualized as three concentric circles: the outer circle as technique; the middle circle, personal style; and the

inner circle, interior meaning. The corresponding roles of the director may be designated as those of a technician, a stylist, and an auteur [. . .] How do you tell the genuine director from the quasichimpanzee? After a given number of films, a pattern is established. (133)

In this way, Clayton has not established a directing pattern which allows his audience to identify him as the director of his films. *The Great Gatsby* is no exception. This interstice utilizes sound and cinematography, but only in as much as these filmic techniques are a part of the media form itself rather than techniques used uniquely to a specific director. Aside from dialogue, the diegetic sounds present in the scene set in Nick's cottage are the rain, the back and forth ticking of the clock's pendulum in Nick's living room, the outside chirping of birds, the honking of Daisy's car and the screeching of the car's brakes. The non-diegetic sound comes in the form of the soundtrack as it swells when Gatsby and Daisy first see one another. Inside Gatsby's mansion, Daisy's voice seemingly echoes in the ballroom. Again, other than dialogue, the diegetic sounds heard in this sequence are the piano music and "Aint We Got Fun" being sung, the clicking of footsteps as Daisy, Nick, and Gatsby ascend the elaborate marble steps, the popping of the champagne bottle, the ringing of a telephone, the pitter patter of rain. The soundtrack blends in with the sounds, the melody of "What'll I Do" recurring in moments of supposed intimacy between Daisy and Gatsby.

The majority of the scenes in this interstice are filmed using tightly framed medium shots. The close-ups used in Nick's cottage are of Gatsby's apprehensive face as he awaits Daisy's arrival and Daisy's face as she sees Gatsby in the mirror and turns to face him. A tracking shot is used to follow Nick and Gatsby as they leave Nick's cottage and make their way across the lawn to Gatsby's. Another tracking shot is used inside Gatsby's house as Nick,

Gatsby, and Daisy enter and stroll through the dining room. A high angle shot presents for the audience the expansive marble staircase inside the house. Medium shots are again utilized until zooming in for a close-up of Nick's face to show concern while Gatsby is on the phone talking business. A close-up of Daisy's eyes as she looks out the French windows at the rain dissolves into another tracking shot following the three characters into Gatsby's bedroom closet.

Following the montage of scenes which suggest the passage of time (Jordan and Nick purchasing gas for the car; Myrtle and Tom laughing in bed), a reestablishing shot is used presenting the outside of Gatsby's mansion once more. This dissolves into a symmetrically-framed slightly low angle shot of Daisy and Gatsby. The shot-reverse shots presenting their conversations are rendered using close-ups of each while speaking. An over the shoulder medium shot is used to introduce the scene where Daisy reaches her hand out for Gatsby to take. A close-up of the two un-touching hands is used to conclude this interstice.

The role of Nick as narrator is also challenged in this interstice. While the use of voice-over in the previous interstice establishes Nick as the narrator of the action which is to unfold, much of the narrative found in this point of investigation takes place while Nick is not present, thus forcing the audience to question how these scenes can be rendered if the narrative is based upon Nick's remembrances of that summer.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—2.2.3.

This interstice lacks the inclusion of repeated patterns of meaning and expression other than a recurrence of the orchestration of Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do" presented via the film's soundtrack at moments when Daisy and Gatsby look at one another. In fact, the presence of the clock which has been of importance in other threads loses its significance in the interstice of this thread in that it is signified onscreen as still in working order. In Nick's cottage the clock on the

mantelpiece is present and Nick and Gatsby both refer to it (as does the audience while it assumes its role as part of the *mise-en-scène*) to tell them that it is nearly four o'clock, the time Daisy is to arrive. The clock's swaying pendulum is also a part of the diegetic sound and its presence remains even while Daisy and Gatsby are in the living room together. While the sheer extravagance of Gatsby's mansion is signified onscreen, the abundance of the objects seems superfluous as opposed to bearing any significant meaning, thus the camera's eye does not focus in on any one point of reference.

Trace Four—World and Setting—2.2.4.

This interstice is comprised of both indoor and outdoor scenes. The indoor scenes take place inside Nick's cottage (entryway, living room), inside various rooms of Gatsby's mansion (ball room, dining room, marble staircase, Gatsby's sitting room, Gatsby's mirror-walled dressing room). The scenes filmed outdoors are: Daisy driving her large white convertible to the front of Nick's cottage; Nick's meandering through his damp side yard to offer Daisy and Gatsby privacy; Nick on his front porch before reentering the cottage; Gatsby sitting on the porch rail while he and Nick wait for Daisy to join them so that they can make their way across the yard to Gatsby's house.

The set for Nick's cottage assumes the realistic quality of a near suffocating space cluttered with furniture, elaborate bouquets of white roses, oversized silver serving tray and service, mantelpiece clock with swaying pendulum. In contrast, the rooms of Gatsby's mansion are enormous, presenting large objects such as the grand piano to appear small in the expansive space surrounding them. Aside from the natural light which filters in through the many opened windows throughout, the lighting utilized in both Nick's cottage and Gatsby's mansion is soft back lighting with some up-lighting, casting a shadowy ambience not found in the use of hard

lighting or three-way lighting. The film is rendered using color, though the colors are muted throughout this interstice, heavily reliant on the color white.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—2.2.5.

The plot is rendered in choppy pieces in this interstice, interposed with a montage which allows the audience to somehow morally justify the actions of Daisy and Gatsby. Daisy arrives at Nick's cottage believing she has been invited there without Tom because Nick is secretly in love with his cousin. Seemingly still not realizing the two have known one another previously, Nick introduces Gatsby to Daisy. Transfixed with one another, they inform Nick that they knew each other years ago. Nick smokes a cigarette outside and watches birds eating seed off a birdfeeder until, clearing his throat to announce his presence, he rejoins Gatsby and Daisy. The three stroll next door to Gatsby's mansion and tour his expansive house. As they enter through a side French door, the frames are overlaid to present a simultaneous tracking shot of the three characters walking already through the house. They drink champagne while Gatsby takes a business call before moving into Gatsby's dressing room to have his shirts rain down on them. Nick leaves Gatsby and Daisy in the dressing room after pausing in the doorway to stare thoughtfully at their awkwardness with one another. The scenes which interrupt Daisy and Gatsby's reunion are of Jordan driving Nick through the valley of ashes to stop for gas at Wilson's Garage. As George Wilson pumps the gas, in a strong armed, overly obvious fashion, after Nick chastises Jordan for being an irresponsible driver, she casually responds: "Let the other people be careful. It takes two to make an accident" (59:56-1:00). A jump cut then is followed by a montage of shots of Myrtle and Tom laughing and frolicking together in their colorful apartment bedroom before fading out and fading in to a reestablishing exterior shot of Gatsby's mansion followed by a dissolve into a ballroom. Under the chandelier-covered ceiling,

Gatsby and Daisy sit opposite one another remembering their time together in Louisville before the war. Following multiple shot-reverse shots offering close-ups of Daisy and Gatsby as they converse, a dissolve then offers an over the shoulder shot of Daisy holding an album full of newspaper clippings benchmarking her life, with Gatsby sitting just beyond her in a leather chair. She asks Gatsby to join her on the couch. When he refuses, she reaches her arm out toward him; he leans forward as though he may take her hand, but withdraws and does not touch her. The inclusion of the montage of Tom and Myrtle seemingly justifies Daisy and Gatsby's actions. Jordan's reference to how many participants is necessary to cause an accident also foreshadows the narrative's ending.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—2.2.6.

Whereas the previous interstice of this thread utilized multiple establishing/re-establishing shots as well as various loosely framed wide-angle shots, this interstice is somewhat monotonous in its use of medium shots. Similarly, whereas seamless editing is often utilized in the interstice prior to this, fade-ins/fade-outs are used as well as numerous dissolves in order to signify the passage of time perhaps. The most significant genre convention utilized to heighten the viewer's understanding of the narrative found in this interstice comes in the form of the film's Oscar-winning soundtrack. Since this interstice presents the reunion of Daisy and Gatsby, the inclusion of Nelson Riddle's adaptation of Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do" comes to be recognized as a thematic hymn of sorts, signifying the still unspoken intimacy shared between the two characters.

Interlude

Though as is demonstrated already through the examination of the traces for the first two threads of Interstice Two, the ways in which the narrative is presented has changed dramatically,

but this moment of inspection is relatively unchanged. Dudley Andrew notes that “One would have to hold that although the material of literature (graphemes, words, and sentences) may be of a different nature from the materials of cinema (projected light and shadows, identifiable sounds and forms, and represented actions), both systems may construct in their own way, and at higher levels, scenes and narratives that are indeed commensurable” (32). That through the application of the textus I have been able to extract information from the novel which is proportionate to the information extracted from Clayton’s film using the same criteria exemplifies the value of such a model as the textus. That the creator of this textus may also utilize the same criteria to examine a drama is also significant and extremely useful for those who wish to engage with adaptations constructively.

Thread Three—Simon Levy’s 2006 Stage Play:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—3.2.1.

Gatsby

There are two Gatsby characters signified during this interstice: the Gatsby of 1917 and the Gatsby of five years later. While Jordan is relaying the story of Gatsby and Daisy’s love affair that took place in Louisville in 1917, the stage directions note that “*Gatsby appears in uniform [. . .] Gatsby takes Daisy in his arms and they dance, lost in each other*” (28). In the action of the play taking place in 1922, as Gatsby waits in Nick’s cottage for Daisy to arrive, his character “*paces, looking extremely nervous. He wears a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold tie, and is carrying a leather-bound album*” (30). Gatsby is to appear “*anxious*” as he “*fidgets, panicking*” until he sees Daisy and is then “*enchanted by the awkwardness between them*” (30). He “*stares at [Daisy] as if she were a dream*” (31). After Gatsby “*takes Daisy to window*” (32), to point out for her his mansion across the water he asks her if she likes his house.

GATSBY. See how the whole front of it catches the light?

DAISY. Oh, Jay, it's splendid. (32)

In this way, Gatsby seeks Daisy's approval, thinking the grandeur of his possessions may warrant affection from Daisy.

Nick

Very little description is offered to detail Nick's character. Though when Gatsby and Nick are meant to be in Gatsby's hydroplane their characters enter "*wearing aviator goggles and caps*" (25), the reader of the play is not made aware of any description of their clothing. During a conversation between Nick and Gatsby regarding where Gatsby lived during his formative years, the stage directions note that a "*manservant appears to help them change clothes*" (25), but no mention is made as to what clothes Nick and Gatsby change into. The only direction offered for Nick is that after Gatsby shows Nick the medal from Montenegro, "*Nick has to stifle a laugh*" (26). Nick's character, then, having been given no opportunity for offering asides or commentary regarding the affairs of the other actors onstage, is merely relegated to being a minor character in this interstice.

Daisy

Similar to Gatsby, there are two Daisy characters signified during this interstice: the Daisy of 1917 and the Daisy of 1922. As Jordan recounts the affair of 1917 between Gatsby and Daisy, "*Daisy appears in a 1917 dress, laughing and flirtatious*" (28). Simultaneously acting out the narrative as Jordan unfolds the actions verbally to Nick, Daisy is wrapped in a rope of pearls by Tom "*as if he were imprisoning her*" before sinking "*to the floor drinking from the champagne bottle*" (28). Quite different from previous speech patterns or subsequent patterns

found in this interstice, the 1917 Daisy assumes a Southern dialect found in the written words she delivers.

DAISY. (*Waving a letter.*) 'Gratulate me, Jordan.

JORDAN. And as drunk as a monkey. She had a bottle of champagne in one hand and a letter in the other.

DAISY. Never had a drink before but, oh, how I do enjoy it.

JORDAN. I was scared, I can tell you; I'd never seen a girl like that before.

DAISY. Here, dearis. (*She unwraps the pearls.*) Take 'em downstairs and give 'em back to whoever they belong to. Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mine. Do you hear me?! Say "Daisy's change' her mine!"

JORDAN. I didn't know what to do. I locked the door and got her into a cold bath.

DAISY. The dearest heart of all. D'YOU HEAR ME?! The dearest heart of all! (28-29)

The 1917 Daisy exits and when she reenters with Nick, she is not described; the only note being that she and Nick reenter "*both under an umbrella*" (30). She and Gatsby "*sit on the couch like teenagers on a first date*" (31), and while looking at the photo album Gatsby has kept to document their years apart in the form of newspaper clippings about Daisy, she appears slightly overwhelmed by something.

GATSBY. They're newspaper clippings from the last five years.

DAISY. My debut! ... Chicago! ... Oh, look at that silly hat ... Even Europe. (*She stops at a photo of Tom.*)

GATSBY. He's a good polo player.

DAISY. Yes, Tom has a knack for winning. (*Turning to him.*) Jay, I tried to wait, really I did, but—

GATSBY. Look at this. (*He turns to the last page. She looks at it and begins to cry.*) (31)

After Gatsby shows Daisy and Nick the number of expensive shirts he owns, Daisy is given a relatively long speech in which she references the inescapability of time passing.

DAISY. They're such beautiful shirts. It makes me sad because I've never seen such ... such beautiful shirts before! ... If only it were possible to reverse time—erase it!—just erase it and begin again do you think that's possible, Jay?—to just erase time as if it had never happened?—you said you'd come back from no matter where you were and here you are—gleaming like silver!—and I said I'd be waiting—remember?—my hair was damp that night yes!—and you!—so handsome in your Brooks Brothers uniform smelling like new goods—the garden smelling of wisteria and pine forests—and you told me you loved me and I thought you the sweetest person in the whole world—and the music—music everywhere!—filling the pine forests fragrant with our future—we were gold and happy—weren't we!—gold and happy—and you trusted me with the dearest heart of all and it's so much more than anybody else in all the world has ever had! (*She throws her arms around him and they kiss, deep and passionately, laughing and*

crying. Wildly happy, she throws a shirt at him, he throws one back, and now they're pulling shirts off the racks, flinging them at each other, at Nick, pulling him into their game, the three of them hurling shirts at one another...as more shirts rain down on them from above, turning the stage into a sea of color...as lights fade to black.) (32-33)

Daisy possesses the agency to touch Gatsby, to attempt to go back in time by rekindling the emotion they shared in their pasts. However, while she reminds Gatsby that he once had loved her, she does not offer in this speech that she had once loved him, only that they had appeared happy.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—3.2.2.

While the previous interstice has Nick speaking directly to his audience, thus establishing his character as narrator of the play, this interstice possesses no narrator who speaks directly to the audience and lacks any formal narration. Jordan does in essence narrate events as they unfold nearby onstage, but she is only telling Nick the story of the past involvement between Daisy and Gatsby, which does not necessarily position her as narrator.

Levy's voice is once again present in the play's minimalist stage directions. Though many of the directions seem relative and lack specificity, Levy's directions aid in the reader's understandings of the unfolding action. He uses words like "*haunting and aching*" (28) to describe the music being played during the 1917 dance scene between Gatsby and Daisy. During the next sequence from 1917, Levy's directions note that "*Tom wraps Daisy in pearls as if he were imprisoning her*" (28), but falls short of articulating precisely what this looks like for the viewing audience. Similarly, Levy offers that "*Gatsby stares at [Daisy] as if she were a dream*"

(31), but again does not expound upon what this looks like or what outward expression the actor should mimic in order to signify this direction. As Daisy stares at Gatsby's picture in the old photo album, Levy notes that Gatsby "*stares at her, enthralled*" (32), once more failing to offer any further explanation of what "enthralled" looks like or resembles. And during the very point of investigation, following Daisy jumping into Gatsby's arms and kissing him, Levy's directions offer only that Daisy is "*Wildly happy*" (33) as she and the others hurl shirts at one another before the first act ends.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—3.2.3.

Recalling Levy's "Adaptor's Note" which notes that "symbolism and metaphor, which are central to the novel, may be realized in many ways, and I leave it to the imagination of directors to tell the story as simply or elaborately as they choose" (3), this interstice (the written as opposed to the performed) contains relatively few, if any, examples of repeated patterns of meaning and/or expression. However, just prior to the beginnings of this interstice, following the party where Gatsby introduces himself to Nick, Levy's stage directions state that "*Nick leaves Gatsby standing alone in the mist and twinkling lights. Daisy appears on the other side of the stage, standing in the glow of the green light. She sways as if dancing to the faint music*" (24). As Tom approaches to inquire about Daisy's whereabouts, Gatsby's character "*disappears*" (24), and "*Daisy looks across at the lights*" (25) coming from Gatsby's party. In this way, the presence of light holds meaning not only for Gatsby, but also Daisy. This seemingly signifies that Daisy, without knowing that the lights across the water belong to Gatsby as of yet, somehow longs for what those lights represent in much the same way as Gatsby longs to be closer to what the green light represents for him: Daisy. Light is referenced again during the interstice when Gatsby is asking Daisy her opinion of his house.

DAISY. That huge place there?

GATSBY. See how the whole front of it catches the light? (32)

Since prior dialogue has established that Gatsby's house is across the Sound from the Buchanan mansion where the green light shines at the end of the dock, the light being referenced by Gatsby above harkens back to the notion that everything he has reflects his desire for Daisy.

While no physical object, such as a clock or the presence of physical antique objects pertaining to time, exists in this interstice, Daisy does verbally reference time in Act I's final lines. She asks if Gatsby believes it possible to alter time, reverse it, erase it.

Trace Four—World and Setting—3.2.4.

The set for this interstice is difficult to visualize, and even somewhat harder to describe. The stage directions offer that while Nick and Jordan are conversing, while they are kissing one another, "*Nick's cottage forms around them: a small couch and too many flowers*" (30). And while there is a knock that comes from the front door, there is no mention as to where the front door is to be found onstage or a description of the door. Similarly vague, just as Nick's cottage nearly magically appears, "*Nick's cottage transforms into Gatsby's house*" (32) near the end of Act I.

The costumes worn by the actors are also left to the reader's imagination. Levy notes that "*Daisy appears in a 1917 dress*" and that "*Gatsby appears in uniform*" (28) during Jordan's telling to Nick of the love affair that took place between Gatsby and Daisy in 1917, but there is no description of what the dress or the uniform look like. The Gatsby of 1922 does enter wearing a "*white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold tie*" (30), but no reference is made as to what Daisy or Nick are wearing.

For this interstice, the props referenced in the stage directions are: “*champagne and pearls*” (28), “*champagne bottle*” (28), “*a letter*” (28), “*a small couch and too many flowers*” (30), “*leather-bound album*” (30), “*an umbrella*” (30), a “*front door*” (30), “*a tray of tea*” (32), the presence of a “*window*” (32), and a “*rack of shelves appears, full of dozens and dozens of colorful shirts*” (32).

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—3.2.5.

This interstice comes at the end of the Act I of the two act play. The scenes are not directly indicated and, as noted above, the set comes to the actors as opposed to the actors moving into some architecture designed to hold the action. The plot is simple, if somewhat convoluted. This interstice suggests that Daisy longs for what is across the Sound; she longs to dance again and hear music. There is a quasi-flashback where the audience is allowed to see Daisy and Gatsby in their younger years before World War I. After kissing Jordan, Nick arranges a rendezvous at his cottage for Gatsby and Daisy, who comes without her husband. Gatsby shows Daisy a scrapbook he’s kept containing clippings from various newspapers which chronicles Daisy’s life during the five years since they last met. Gatsby introduces Daisy to his wealth signified onstage by his number of expensive shirts. Daisy recalls how Gatsby told her he loved her years before and how happy they had seemed before throwing “*her arms around him*” (33) as they kiss. Nick, Gatsby, and Daisy partake in a pillow fight of sorts by hurling various shirts at one another as the “*lights fade to black*” (33).

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—3.2.6.

As noted in Chapter II, the expectations of the written as opposed to the performed text differ significantly. Since the examination of this thread is the written text, only the stage directions can be used to investigate the genre conventions used for this interstice. While

Interstice One of this thread offered Nick's addressing the audience directly, thus removing the fourth wall, there is no such account found in Interstice Two. The inclusion of music is noteworthy. While not able to be signified through the act of reading, the stage directions often reference music being played during this interstice including jazz music and "*Slow blues—haunting and aching—the love theme of Daisy and Gatsby*" (28). This point of investigation once again contains minimalist descriptions of the sets used and lacks defined scenes. The staging and blocking of characters is lacking as well. The use of actor makeup is not specified in the written text, nor are the costumes described other than noting that in the flashback Daisy wears a dress circa 1917, Gatsby wears a uniform, and the 1922 Gatsby wears a "*white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold tie*" (30). Thus, these aspects specific to the drama are left to the imagination of the reader of the written text.

Interlude

When Robert Stam notes that "Film adaptations, then, are caught up in the ongoing whirl of intertextual reference and transformation, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation, with no clear point of origin" (67), the film scholar did not include adaptations from other media. And yet, Stam's assessment of the fluidity of texts is accurate well beyond the paradigm of novel to film, which is where the majority of scholarship resides in the form of compare and contrast studies. Able to house more forms of the same adapted narrative, the textus offers a framework which acknowledges the "endless process" of addition referenced by Stam, but does not limit the inclusion of texts to only novel and film. Nor does the textus limit the number of each media which can be added, just as the case study of this textus demonstrates, as it contains three filmic adaptations of the same narrative.

Thread Four—Elliott Nugent’s 1949 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—4.2.1.

Gatsby

Since this thread is rendered using black and white film, only the tone of the clothing can be described. As Gatsby (Alan Ladd) approaches the cottage leading a line of maids and waiters carrying baskets and trays of food for the tea, Gatsby, wearing two-toned Saddle Oxford shoes and smoking a cigarette, is dressed in light slacks, dark sports jacket, light shirt and dark tie.

This interstice presents Gatsby as possessing more confidence. Gatsby exudes an air of authority as he nearly pushes his way into the cottage and instructs his servants to prepare for the tea with Daisy. Though he informs Nick that his butler had taken a call confirming the time for the tea to begin, Gatsby may or may not be lying, since the viewer is not made privy to this exchange.

After Nick calls the Buchanan home asking to speak to Daisy, he informs Gatsby that Daisy is out with Jordan Baker. Gatsby, spreading his lips in a somewhat arrogant smile, tells Nick that Jordan is the one who extended Nick’s invitation for tea, but withholds the fact that he compensated Jordan for doing so. Thus, Gatsby is rendered as a shrewd character, capable of getting what he wants by any means. Without giving Nick a chance to refuse that the tea continue to take place, Gatsby steps to the side, instructing his servants to enter and set up for Daisy’s arrival.

Gatsby’s demeanor shifts as the mantelpiece clock strikes five; he becomes nervous before moving to sit on the arm of a chair opposite Nick and slumps his shoulders, seemingly defeated. After hearing the car outside, Gatsby springs to his feet and instructs Nick to go help the ladies. From the window, he watches Nick assist Jordan and Daisy as they make their way from the car to the cottage in the rain. Gatsby once again wrings his hands, rushes out another

door to the side porch and waits, his back pressed against the wall like a burglar, for the others to enter. He rushes to the front door, places his hand over the doorbell, hesitates, and withdraws. When he does enter, Gatsby passes Nick, striding across the room once again with purpose. He does not waver from staring at Daisy even as he stops several feet from where she stands with her back turned to him. As she turns, his face softens. When she steps toward him and offers him her hand, he walks to her slowly, putting his hand in hers, still peacefully transfixed.

Nick

While apparently not expecting visitors, Nick (Macdonald Carey) still answers the door to his cottage wearing a light colored suit, pale shirt and dark tie. His hair is perfectly in place as he raises his eyebrows following Gatsby thanking him for the invitation to meet Daisy. After informing Gatsby that he had not left the message inviting them to his cottage, Nick's temper nearly presents itself, but his character seems restrained when he tells Gatsby: "As a matter of fact I resented your suggestion. I still resent it" (38:58-39:03). However, after learning that Jordan Baker is the one who extended the invitation for tea to Gatsby, Nick throws his head back in laughter, telling Gatsby "you've got such colossal nerve, I'm almost tempted" to allow the tea to take place (39:45-39:48). Nick does not argue with Gatsby or ask him to leave; instead he sits with Gatsby listening to the rain outside and waits for the ladies. Once Daisy and Jordan arrive, Nick, asking Jordan to explain herself, is dismissed by Jordan. Though seemingly perturbed by Jordan's treatment of him, Nick passively follows Jordan into his living room and quietly watches Daisy and Gatsby's reunion take place.

Daisy

When Daisy (Betty Field) enters Nick's cottage, her persona is bubbly and light and cheerful. Dressed in a pale colored dress, large brimmed hat, pearl necklace, large ring on left

hand, but no gloves, Daisy exhibits childlike qualities as she seems enthralled by everything in the cottage, especially the roses. With her back to Nick and rambling on about stories from her childhood that took place on rainy days, Daisy turns to see Gatsby and her character changes immediately. She seems completely focused and says his name aloud without any hesitation. Without being informed of his newly acquired wealth or accumulation of extravagant possessions, Daisy takes a step toward Gatsby. She reaches her hand out to him, saying in a melodious voice, “I’m awfully glad to see you again, Jay” (43:42-43:45).

Jordan

Having arranged the rendezvous between Daisy and Gatsby at Nick’s cottage in exchange for Gatsby giving her his car, Jordan (Ruth Hussey) delivers Daisy wearing a dark (perhaps black) dress, black gloves, and large black hat. After Daisy has skipped into the living area, Nick asks Jordan, tall and slender with dark hair neatly wound beneath her hat, to tell him what is going on. She refuses and, turning on her heels, eagerly joins Daisy in the living room, leaving Nick in the doorway holding the umbrellas, dry despite the rain outside. She watches, much like a satisfied co-conspirator, in the background as Gatsby enters and Daisy turns to see him again.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—4.2.2.

As noted in the previous chapter, the authorship of this thread is vague. Though Nick seemingly is the narrator, as the beginning of the film suggests he is the one remembering the events that unfold, the audience soon realizes that he is not privy to much of the narrative. However, in this interstice Nick is an active participant, privy to much of the action. The exception to this comes when Nick is outside the cottage holding the umbrellas for Daisy and Jordan. The viewer is allowed to witness Gatsby nervously checking his appearance in the

mirror inside as well as view Gatsby's actions outside the cottage once the others have entered. Nick would not be able to remember these events, as he had not witnessed Gatsby's actions, thus calling into question Nick's role as narrator for this interstice.

Since no voice-over is present during this interstice, sound will be examined in trace six in as much as the soundtrack pertains to genre conventions. The eye of the director as author, then, comes in the form of the camera angles and shot compositions found in this interstice. The majority of the shots used are medium shots, including shot-reverse shots during the conversation between Gatsby and Nick which takes place outside Nick's cottage. The camera remains stationary unless gently panning to follow a character. An example of this is found following the establishing shot of the feast Gatsby's servants prepared for the tea. As Nick passes by the table of food, the camera pans to follow him as he walks toward Gatsby and the living room couch. The continuous shot then tracks Nick as he makes his way to the door to retrieve the umbrellas, stopping to frame Nick in a medium shot. Medium shots are then utilized completely until the close-up of Daisy's face near the end of the interstice.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—4.2.3.

This interstice fails to utilize elements of symbolism to heighten the viewer's understanding of the narrative. The mantelpiece clock, so significant in Fitzgerald's novel, is once again signified in this thread; however, the clock is in working order, its diegetic chiming being referenced by Nick and it being visible as part of the *mise-en-scène*. Thus, the connotative meaning associated with time having stood still until Daisy and Gatsby are once again reunited, is missing from this thread.

Trace Four—World and Setting—4.2.4.

Comprised of both indoor and outdoor locations, the set for this interstice is noticeable in that it calls attention to itself as being a set given its somewhat theatrically staged appearance, especially during the sequences filmed supposedly outdoors. The sequences which take place outdoors are: Gatsby, with servants in tow, arriving to Nick's cottage and the conversation that takes place between Nick and Gatsby on the doorstep; Nick, under umbrella, meeting Jordan and Daisy as they arrive in Jordan's newly acquired car; Gatsby exiting the cottage to hide before Daisy enters, and again on the front step of the cottage ringing the doorbell. The outside is visible from inside the cottage as well. While Nick is on the phone, his front door remains open, letting the viewer see the unmoving tree leaves and seemingly painted two-dimensional backdrop behind them. Similarly, the rain outside is also visible from indoors. Through the sheers of the large bay windows in Nick's living room, the rain falls unevenly, though even when Daisy, Nick, and Jordan enter the house no water is visible on them, their clothing, or the umbrellas. The sequences filmed in the interior of the cottage offer the presentation of two quaint spaces: the entryway and the living room. The living room is spacious, large enough to house a piano, multiple chairs, a fireplace, a couch, and various tables including a rather ornate rose-covered coffee table near the large wall of paneled windows through which, though supposedly raining outside, natural seeming sunlight still filters through to the large carpets on the room's floor. The room contains two clocks, one hanging on the wall beside the windows and the other perched above the mantel, framed by indistinguishable figurines on either side. The lighting for this interstice seems a hodgepodge of three-way and forced outside lighting utilized to appear as though natural.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—4.2.5.

Continuity editing is used at the beginning of this interstice as Nick enters his cottage to use the phone. Match on action editing is used during the same phone conversation offering another perspective (Nick's frowning face over Gatsby's shoulder). A dissolve is then used to signify the passing of time by transitioning between Nick and Gatsby's conversation following Nick's phone call to the elaborate display of food already beautifully laid out on the side table. When Gatsby hides outside letting Daisy and Jordan enter the cottage first without him there, parallel editing is utilized in order to allow the viewer to understand the actions are taking place simultaneously. The editing renders the plot sequentially so that Gatsby arrives at the cottage with his servants; Nick, wanting to prove to Gatsby Daisy is not coming to tea, calls the Buchanan house, learns that Daisy is out with Jordan, and then simply steps aside without argument to give Gatsby's servants to arrange the tea. Gatsby and Nick linger together in the living room awaiting Daisy's arrival; Nick meets Jordan and Daisy to assist them in the rain. Gatsby hides outside while the others enter through the front door, and then approaches the front so that he can make his entrance anew. Daisy, after smelling the roses arranged in a vase on the side table, turns to see Gatsby in the living room. She says his name, walks toward him, extends her hand to him, and tells him how happy she is to see him again.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—4.2.6.

As musical director for Paramount, Robert Dolan is credited with composing the musical score for numerous movies filmed for Paramount. During 1949 alone, Dolan is credited with composing the soundtracks for not only *The Great Gatsby*, but also David Miller's musical, *Top O' the Morning*, starring a young Bing Crosby, and Sidney Lanfield's *Sorrowful Jones*, starring Bob Hope. Despite being nominated for eight consecutive Academy Awards (1942-1948),

Dolan never received an award for his musical compositions, and his soundtrack for *The Great Gatsby* seems far from award-worthy, especially when examining the genre convention of the film's soundtrack rendered in this interstice, as no music is audible until Daisy turns to see Gatsby in the living room of Nick's cottage. Though the interstice opens at 35:20, the only sounds heard are the diegetic chirping of birds, the pitter-patter of the pouring rain outside, the chiming of the clock, and the forced dialogue spoken between Nick and Gatsby, until Daisy turns at 43:27 and Dolan's unremarkable soundtrack dramatically implies that the action then taking place is of particular importance.

Interlude

The purpose of using the rigid system of identifying the traces and interstices in each of the threads added to the textus is to ensure that the creator of the textus remains focused on those elements as opposed to articulating sweeping generalizations regarding the adapted narrative. Due to the memory associations which are based not only on personal life experiences of the creator of the textus, but also on his/her previous encounters with the same narrative, the impetus to recollect something that is found in the text would be quite easy to do. As Linda Hutcheon notes, when encountering adaptations "we fill in the gaps" (*Theory* 76), especially when something which we have enjoyed from a previous encounter is lacking from one we are encountering presently. Utilizing the textus permits its creator to systematically track specific moments of the narrative so as to overlay those findings in search of that moment's essence. Without a system of any kind, using only a compare and contrast model of one written text and one film, the examiner is forced to make only an evaluative claim, to like one of the two more and then articulate why. The textus allows its creator to note the differences in presentation, but to continue to seek out only the criteria he/she has predetermined are relevant to his/her

engagement with the adapted narrative, as opposed to being expected to only articulate an evaluative judgement.

Thread Five—Baz Luhrmann’s 2013 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—5.2.1.

Gatsby (First Possibility)

Having appeared anxious and nervous while waiting for Daisy to arrive, Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) has calmed considerably by the time Nick informs him and Daisy that the rain has stopped outside. Rising from the couch, Gatsby, wearing an off-white fitted suit, silver shirt, bronze colored vest and gold tie, walks to the French doors beside him, leading to a covered terrace overlooking the Sound. As he pushes open the doors, he adjusts his vest, pushes his hands in his pockets, and smiles proudly as he looks out across the water, the sun filtering through the clouds allowing for a spotlight-like effect on Daisy’s house opposite. After telling Daisy to come look at the view, he positions himself beside a white column, leaving his hand to linger on the back of the column. When Daisy walks to stand near him, on the other side of the column, she places her lace-gloved hand on top of his, causing Gatsby to look at her as she tells him that the house across the bay belongs to her. Looking from their touching hands to Daisy’s face, Gatsby tells her that he knows where she lives.

Gatsby (Second Possibility)

After having led Nick and Daisy on the “royal tour” (1:00:38-1:00:39) of his estate (squeezing oranges in the press, swimming, driving golf balls off the float in the water) Gatsby strolls behind Daisy as she walks through the grand rooms of his house. Now dressed in beige linen slacks with matching summer sweater, Gatsby watches Daisy skipping up the marble spiral

staircase and, grinning, whispers to Nick beside him, “She makes it look so, so splendid. Don’t you think, old sport?” (1:01:42-1:01:47).

Gatsby rushes in front of Daisy once they enter his two-storied bedroom. He climbs the twisting metal staircase leading to the exposed second story. As he begins grabbing the multicolored handkerchiefs and shirts, throwing them so that they rain down below onto Daisy, Gatsby cheerfully announces that he has a man in England who buys his clothes, sending over new styles at the beginning of every season. Laughing, his face shining as he looks down at Daisy below on the bed and senses her glee, Gatsby’s mood shifts once Daisy falls on the bed, covering her face with the shirts and straw hat. He moves slowly to sit beside Daisy on the bed, his brows scrunching in concern, not understanding why Daisy is crying. When he asks her what is wrong, she tells him that she is sad, but then hesitates. Seemingly remembering Nick is above watching them both, Daisy and Gatsby look up until Nick moves behind a curtain, allowing Daisy to continue. She laughs then, saying, “Cause I’ve never seen such beautiful shirts before” (1:03:20-1:03:23). She stretches out on the bed, putting her head in his lap. Seemingly oblivious to the fact that Daisy is so close to him, he stares out the window to Daisy’s house across the water. “If it wasn’t for the mist, we could see the green light” (1:03:45-1:03:50), Gatsby says pensively. When Daisy asks what green light Gatsby is referencing, he stretches his head as if straining to still see the light and points out the window. “The one that burns all night at the end of your dock” (1:03:58-1:04:02). No longer cheerful, Gatsby seems lost in his thoughts, tired.

Daisy (First Possibility)

Wearing a sleeveless, lavender dress covered in bows and knots of flounced purple that falls just below her knees, Daisy (Carey Mulligan) with her cropped blonde hair and puppy-dog brown eyes, seems enthralled by Gatsby, giggling as he speaks. She follows him to the terrace

after learning that the rain has stopped to peer out across the water at her house. Seemingly surprised by what she sees, she addresses Nick rather than Gatsby as she makes her way to the terrace: “Oh, Nicky, how funny. Look, it’s my house just there across the bay” (59:14-59:25). When she places her hand over Gatsby’s, instead of looking out at the water, she stares at their touching hands as though waiting for Gatsby to respond.

Daisy (Second Possibility)

Daisy’s reaction following Gatsby telling her that the view from the terrace of Nick’s cottage is the same as the view from his house is one of a child on Christmas morning. She catches her breath and nearly skips through the grand gates as they open, running in front of Gatsby and Nick, turning her head to look at everything around her. During the montage leading up to the second possible account signifying her claiming Gatsby, Daisy’s costume changes. She is portrayed as still wearing her lavender dress in the kitchen, giggling as the elaborate juicer sprays orange juice in the air, followed by wearing a modest black swimsuit as she charges out into the water with Nick and Gatsby nearby. On the float she wears a black and white silk cover-up robe with matching head piece draped around her still perfectly manicured blonde hair. After swinging the golf club so swiftly that it breaks, Daisy laughs, nearly swallowing her words when she says, “I am such a brute” (1:01:10-1:01:12).

Seemingly giddy from the champagne she has been drinking, she twirls around still in her silk robe, her arms outstretched as though dancing underneath the crystal chandelier of the ballroom in Gatsby’s mansion. Walking into Gatsby’s bedroom, Daisy hands Nick her champagne glass so she can play with Gatsby, trying to catch the garments he throws down to her. She jumps to stand on the room’s bed, laughing, until she falls and covers herself with the raining shirts. She begins to cry. When Gatsby joins her, asking her what has caused her to cry,

she tells him she is sad. She hesitates as though she is contemplating how to articulate what has caused her to cry, then seemingly remembering she isn't to be serious, laughs again, telling Gatsby that she is crying because she has never seen so many beautiful shirts before. She stretches out across the bed and places her head in Gatsby's lap.

Nick (First Possibility)

Having been outside in the rain to give Daisy and Gatsby privacy for their reunion, Nick (Tobey McGuire) reenters his cottage dressed in a soaking brown trench coat and straw boater hat. After clanking the metal wash pan in his kitchen sink in an attempt to announce his presence, in comedic style Nick bangs other objects in his kitchen, until finally throwing his hands up in the air, shaking his head, and laughing silently. He enters the small sitting room where Daisy and Gatsby sit beside one another on a couch, a look of amazement on his face at the fact that his noisemaking hasn't been heard by the others. As he removes his wet coat, still smiling as he focuses on Gatsby and Daisy, he clears his throat in a theatrical manner. Wearing a white shirt, blue bowtie, and forest green cardigan sweater, Nick's brown hair is slicked back smoothly against his head as he informs Daisy and Gatsby that it has stopped raining outside. Nick remains in the background, drying his face with a towel while Daisy and Gatsby's hands touch on the terrace just beyond.

Nick (Second Possibility)

A participant in the montage of playful activities with Gatsby and Daisy, Nick's costume also changes in this interstice, from his green cardigan to a loosely fitting white linen shirt and linen slacks. On the float, Nick holds a camera, filming Daisy and Gatsby together. In this way, his role as narrator is reinforced as he is signified as the documentarian. Obviously content to be along for the ride, Nick joins Gatsby on the second floor of his bedroom, standing on the balcony

observing. When Daisy hesitates before telling Gatsby why she is crying, she looks to Nick. Seemingly embarrassed, Nick hides behind the curtain, to once again allow them privacy. His voice-over explains Daisy's hesitation: "Five lost years struggled on Daisy's lips" (1:03:05-1:03:11).

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—5.2.2.

This interstice allows for Nick to continue his role as the narrative's narrator, not only through his physical presence being signified onscreen as the action unfolds, but also through his use of voice-over. Nick explicitly claims authorship of the narrative. Seen under the canopy of a large tree to shelter him from the rain, Nick's voice-over reminds the viewer that the action taking place is a remembered account, taken from his recollections of the events: "Looking over my story so far, I'm reminded that for the second time that summer I was guarding other people's secrets. Once again, I was within and without" (58:01-58:19). While Gatsby is on the bed beside Daisy, asking her why she is crying, Nick, rendered as the observer, hides behind a heavy curtain on the room's balcony, noting through voice-over that: "Five lost years struggled on Daisy's lips" (1:03:05-1:03:08).

His presence as narrator, capable of filling in any of the action's narrative gaps, capable of weighting the emotional compass of the viewer, comes at the end of this interstice. As Gatsby, rendered as being pensive by DiCaprio, stares out across the water, seemingly still searching for the green light he can no longer distinguish, Nick's voice-over offers that: "Possibly it had occurred to Gatsby that the colossal significance of that light had vanished forever. Now it was once again just a green light on a dock and his count of enchanted objects had diminished by one" (1:04:05-1:04:22).

Luhrmann's hand as author is also present through the camera angles utilized to render this interstice's narrative. Since the physical *seeing* of *things* is so important to the characters, point of view shots are utilized by Luhrmann to allow the viewer the same opportunity as the characters. Filmed primarily using a Steadicam, the camera's fluid movement is also used in this interstice, zooming in and out and panning to allow different perspectives of the setting. A crane shot is used in the ballroom, allowing the viewer perspective above the chandelier. Low and high angle shots are used in the shirt-throwing sequence, rendering Gatsby above Daisy and Daisy below. The close-ups used are of Daisy crying followed by a medium close-up of Gatsby, stroking Daisy's hair, as he is lost in thought, contemplating the significance of the green light.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—5.2.3.

Just prior to the possible signification of the interstice involving Daisy touching Gatsby's hand, Gatsby, soaking wet, having anxiously stood outside in the rain gathering the courage to enter Nick's cottage to meet Daisy, leans against the living room's fireplace, tiled to present a blue seascape of blue water, white puffs of clouds in a paler blue sky, white sails on small boats. When he moves to slick back his still damp hair while beginning to explain to Nick how it is that he and Daisy had met before, Gatsby's elbow knocks the ticking clock off the mantel. He jerks to grab it, but in doing so, breaks it. Though he fumbles to repair the broken structure, he is unsuccessful. Moving to sit in a chair, he apologizes for breaking the clock, but Nick informs him that it is an old clock. In this way, the significance of time is made a part of the diegesis, especially Gatsby's inability to reconstruct time.

The green light presents itself as holding symbolic meaning in this interstice. Not only does Gatsby reference the green light when talking to Daisy, the viewer is able to watch as Gatsby's character physically searches to find the light across the bay, his demeanor melting to

one of seeming disappointment, despite Daisy's physical nearness. Nick's voice-over explains Gatsby's change: "Possibly it had occurred to Gatsby that the colossal significance of that light had vanished forever. Now it was once again just a green light on a dock and his count of enchanted objects had diminished by one" (1:04:05-1:04:22). The green light had represented Daisy to Gatsby, had propelled his character forward in an effort to attain what the green light meant to him, but the chase being over, Gatsby is not satisfied still.

Trace Four—World and Setting—5.2.4.

So many different vibrant colors are used in rendering this interstice that the setting sometimes seems cartoonish. Using primarily three-way lighting to avoid the presence of visible shadows, the overabundance of white drooping flowers in Nick's living room against the dark brown woodwork of the cottage's interior, the seemingly eternally blooming blues of the hydrangeas paired with the pinks of the potted tulips framing Gatsby's entry gate, the manicured labyrinth of dark green boxwoods against the ivy covered tree trunks and wrought iron fencing, the constant inclusion of water (the Sound, the tiled representation of a seascape on Nick's fireplace, the spraying fountains) lends a sense of fluidity. The sheer magnitude of everything, every *thing*, in Gatsby's house (the rows of boxes full of oranges and wine in Gatsby's kitchen, the number of rooms in the house, the number of shirts in his second story bedroom closet) reinforces the notion that he seeks to acquire things abundantly. The floor-to-ceiling organ, the monogrammed two-toned wooden inlay, the crystal chandeliers hanging above the man-sized candelabras holding lit candles, the spiral marble staircase suspended in the ballroom of his mansion—the presence of these props speak to Gatsby's inability to practice moderation. The high angle shot from the balcony of his bedroom allows the viewer the advantage of seeing the colorful collage of the piles of strewn shirts covering the floor and the bed. In this way, the

scattering of Gatsby's bounty signals to the viewer that Gatsby is capable of making a mess of things. The viewer is to understand, through the physical presence of the disheveled mattress covered in expensive garments to which Gatsby doesn't give a second thought, knowing he can purchase more if they are ruined, that Gatsby has made this bed for himself, has yearned for this metaphorical bed, and he will lie in it.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—5.2.5.

The transitions used for this interstice are primarily seamless in that they do not call attention to themselves. Deviations from this are the use of shot/reverse shots, which are utilized not only during exchanges in dialogue, but also to allow the viewer the opportunity to see how Gatsby reacts to Daisy and vice versa, as their reactions to one another and their environment are crucial to the understanding of the narrative. A montage is also utilized in this interstice. As portions of Del Ray's "Young and Beautiful" are heard by the viewer, the montage essentially assumes the function of a modern-day music video in that the action signified onscreen is in keeping with the narrative being rendered in the song's lyrics.

The plot that emerges is, on the surface, quite simple; yet the pauses, the glances, the hesitations, the acting that implies forced artificialness knot together in such a way as to create the presence of an invisible undercurrent. Daisy arrives at Nick's cottage. Gatsby reappears, soaking wet. Nick wanders outside, allowing the two other characters time to be alone together. After announcing the rain has stopped outside, Gatsby and Daisy stand on the cottage's terrace overlooking the Sound; Daisy puts her hand on Gatsby's. Gatsby invites Nick and Daisy to see his house; they accompany him on the grand tour. They play with one another, passing glimpses of time swimming, laughing, drinking champagne. They tour Gatsby's enormous house, arriving inside his two-storied bedroom. Nick observes Gatsby throwing shirts from the balcony onto a

giggling Daisy. Daisy cries; Gatsby attempts to comfort her. She stretches out across the bed, placing her head in Gatsby's lap, while he tries to find the green light across the water so that he can show her. He is no longer able to see the light.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—5.2.6.

Luhrmann's use of Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) is perhaps one of the most significant conventions utilized throughout the film, especially during this interstice, as the grandeur of Gatsby's mansion is rendered using chroma key compositing, a technique relying on the use of a green screen while shooting the scene, allowing computer-generated images to be overlaid during postproduction. The enormity of Gatsby's castle and estate utilizes this technique, presenting a dreamlike landscape and architecture to be signified onscreen.

Another genre convention, one which subtly introduces a momentary transparency in the fourth wall, comes in the form of the inclusion of footage seemingly being filmed by Nick when he, along with Gatsby and Daisy, is on the float. Daisy's giggles "Turn on the camera" (1:01:16-1:01:18) just as the screen fills with amateur-like images of Daisy and Gatsby, rendered using the shaky cam. This may remind the viewer that filming is taking place, or it may strengthen the viewer's understanding that the events taking place are being documented by Nick.

The significance of the film's soundtrack is inescapable during this interstice, as nearly all of the sequences being examined here are accompanied by the haunting swells and pauses found in Craig Armstrong's score. Though hip-hop artist Jay-Z, a producer of the film, received much publicity as a key influence on the film's musical selections, the musician credited as the score's composer is Armstrong, who had worked with Luhrmann on previous films, including *Moulin Rouge!* Artist Lana Del Ray co-wrote the song "Young and Beautiful" with her

producer, Rick Nowels. Armstrong utilizes the melody of their song, allowing for orchestrated variations of their chorus to be audible throughout the sequences of this interstice. The song's significance is nearly tangible as Del Ray's non-diegetic voice shares the space with the characters' diegetic laughter and dialogue. While Daisy, Nick, and Gatsby swim out to the float and later drink champagne and drive golf balls into the water, the lyrics of Del Ray's song pose questions about whether or not a lover will still love the speaker even after time passes. In this way, the musical composition, coupled with the song's lyrics, increase the viewer's/listener's understanding of the narrative unfolding onscreen during this interstice, as similar questions swirl in the minds of the audience, specifically: Will Daisy still love Gatsby after all these years, if, indeed, she ever did?

Interlude

Well beyond the half-way point in this exercise of extracting the relevant information to fulfill the examination of the interstices and traces later on, the creator of this textus is discouraged by the amount of scholarship which both calls for a reform in adaptation studies and also asserts that a theoretical model is perhaps not possible. After noting the futility of comparison studies, after arguing for the need to articulate a theory of adaptation or a model for aiding in the reading of adaptation, Brett Westbrook concludes that his "argument, finally, is that a grand unifying theory for adaptation studies is not, in fact, possible; the sheer volume of everything involved in a discussion of film adaptation is virtually immeasurable, which means that no one single theory has the capacity to encompass every aspect of adaptation" (42). Just because a task seems daunting, just because components of a whole seem "virtually immeasurable" does not mean that the task should not be undertaken, especially if the void is so nearly tangibly present. The textus addresses this void: while not encompassing every single

component of every single thread, the framework encourages the creator of each textus to isolate moments of importance to him or her and to uniformly examine the presentation of those same moments across the varied remediated threads, all in order to ascertain whether or not the essences of those particular narrative moments have been maintained.

This methodology of the textus has been demonstrated already through the examination of the first two interstices for this textus. In this chapter the creator of this textus examines Interstice Two, which signifies the climax of the narrative, or the point at which Daisy and Gatsby are reunited. Having sought Daisy's acceptance for years, Fitzgerald's Gatsby finally acquires her attentions once again, only to seemingly reject her, to seem to be incapable of accepting it. Clayton's Gatsby is signified as physically refusing to take Daisy's hand even though she has extended it to him. Daisy and Gatsby hug and kiss in Levy's rendering of the interstice. Nugent's rendering of the interstice does not present Daisy as putting her arm through Gatsby's, but instead has Daisy formally extending her hand to Gatsby, which he takes, and holds it tightly, staring into Daisy's twinkling eyes. Luhrmann offers two possible renderings of this interstice. The first comes when Daisy joins Gatsby on the terrace off Nick's living room. The second possibility is rendered when Daisy puts her head in Gatsby's lap as Gatsby still stares longingly out across the sound at the green light.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERSTICE THREE

The opening sentence in Thomas Leitch's *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* automatically limits the scope of adaptation studies: "Adaptation theory, the systematic study of films based on literary sources, is one of the oldest areas in film studies" (1). That Leitch confines adaptations to the familiar paradigm of novel to film fuels the fidelity discourse, even though he continues to downplay the usefulness of fidelity issues. Leitch asserts that when "we focus on fidelity as the central problem of film adaptation, we overlook the problematic nature of source texts that makes them worth studying in the first place by choosing to emphasize their privileged status as literature over their capacity to engage and extend our literacy" (17). So, while Leitch notes that fidelity criticism is problematic, he nevertheless privileges the written source text, noting that it possesses the ability to extend the reader's knowledge base. However, Leitch continues to move away from film scholarship (and his initial definition of what constitutes adaptation theory), and notes that reading and writing should both be incorporated "into what might be called the discipline of textual studies—the study of how texts are produced, consumed, canonized, transformed, resisted, and denied—[which] offers a unique opportunity to adaptation studies, which can serve not as an avatar of literacy over literature but as a sorely needed bridge between the two" (17-18). In this way, Leitch shifts his focus back to adaptation studies, but still neglects to acknowledge the other forms of adaptation capable of rendering the same adapted narrative.

The textus builds from Leitch's call for a "discipline of textual studies" in that its framework permits the inclusion of not only film adaptations, but also novels, drama, interactive videogames, paintings, etc. Leitch's paradigm still seemingly presupposes that the novel is still

the source text always, though this is quickly changing. An example of this is the British crime drama *Broadchurch*, which began airing on ITV in 2013. In September 2014, Erin Kelly's novel was released, which is an adaptation of the television series. The same adapted narrative was released for an American audience in October 2014 using the title *Gracepoint*. Technically, Leitch's definition of what constitutes adaptation theory could not be applied to this set, even though adaptations of *Broadchurch* do not extend past the novel and film forms of media.

The need for a new model of engaging with adaptations other than the model has never seemed more pressing, given the increasing plurality of texts in today's atmosphere of hypermediacy. The textus allows each creator of his/her individual textus to determine what criteria he/she privileges when "reading" the same adapted narrative across multiple media in order to determine the presence of an essence in specific narrative moments. The creator of this textus has isolated three interstices constituting what she determines to be the beginning, middle, and ending of *The Great Gatsby* narrative. Having already extracted the information which constitutes the traces for the first two interstices, Interstice Three examines what the creator of this textus considers to represent the death of Gatsby, both metaphorically and physically. Interstice Three also examines Trace Seven, which allows for the inclusion of reviews as well as a space for the textus-creator to offer a personal response to each of the threads.

The minimalist account of Gatsby's death in Fitzgerald's Thread One is prefaced by the final interstice, "No telephone message arrived" (161) which signifies Gatsby's metaphorical, if not yet physical, death. The absence of the telephone call from Daisy indicates to Gatsby that he was not accepted, nor loved fully by Daisy, or anyone else for that matter, since even the narrator of the Gatsby's story notes that he had "disapproved of [Gatsby] from beginning to end" (154). In this way, the seeming love story ends in this final interstice just prior to Gatsby's death. When

examining how Clayton's Thread Two addresses the interstice "No telephone message arrived" (Fitzgerald 161) the words themselves need not be a part of the diegesis, as the medium of film allows the audience to see the phone and hear its silence. The *mise-en-scène* found in the same interstice of Jack Clayton's 1974 adaptation presents a sunny summer day with a screen filled with the colors of blue and white and green. The presence of the blowing white and blue sheers reminds the viewers of the sheers in the sunroom of the Buchanan mansion when the audience first encounters Daisy. The silent candlestick telephone is visible on the side table near the blue pool while George unfolds his brown bag to reveal the revolver that he will use to shoot Gatsby before shooting himself.

The stage directions in Levy's Thread Three offer that "*Gatsby puts a floating mattress in the 'pool' and lies on it, placing the phone next to him, staring up into the hopeful sky*" (52). The inclusion of the word "hopeful" to describe the sky implies that Gatsby's character still believes the phone call will arrive from Daisy, though the phone remains silent during and following Gatsby's murder. In Nugent's Thread Four, the events leading up to this interstice differ significantly from other threads in that Daisy informs the others that she was the one driving the car who struck Myrtle; Gatsby, listening in through the window, hears Daisy and Tom conniving about letting Gatsby take responsibility for Myrtle's death. George Wilson pulls a gun on Tom Buchanan, and Tom, while denying a relationship with Myrtle, refuses to tell George who owns the yellow car, because Tom hypocritically announces he cannot be responsible for someone's murder. The interstice of "No telephone message arrived" (Fitzgerald 161) is rendered onscreen so that while a phone is heard ringing, the audience knows that Tom is the one calling Gatsby, and Gatsby, having denounced Daisy and all she represents, is presented as a character who no longer cares whether or not Daisy calls.

The interstice of “No telephone message arrived” (Fitzgerald 161), is presented in various ways in Luhrmann’s Thread Five. Luhrmann’s Gatsby is allowed to hear a phone ringing before he is shot so that as he falls back into the swimming pool, he dies believing that Daisy has called; he dies believing that he has not been forsaken, but is loved and not alone. Following Gatsby’s death, the viewer learns that Daisy has not phoned, but that the person on the other end of the dangling phone’s receiver is Nick. In this way, the audience understands that still no message arrived from Daisy.

Thread One—Fitzgerald’s Novel:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—1.3.1.

Gatsby

The last description of Gatsby before his death comes just prior to the interstice when Nick is still with him the morning after the wreck. However, the description does not detail the Gatsby of the narrative’s present action, but harkens back to the Gatsby who, returning from the war, has gone to Louisville to be in the city where he had once known love. The younger Gatsby journeyed to the city using the “last of his army pay. He stayed there a week, walking the streets where their footsteps had clicked together [. . .] Just as Daisy’s house had always seemed to him more mysterious and gay than other houses, so his idea of the city itself, even though she was gone from it, was pervaded with a melancholy beauty” (152). The Gatsby Nick describes is one who is searching for something/someone who is not there. As the young Gatsby is between cars on a train, watching a “yellow trolley” full of “people in it who might once have seen the pale magic of [Daisy’s] face along the casual street” (153), he seemingly abandons the idea of recapturing his past. The young Gatsby “stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all

going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever” (153). While Nick’s account suggests that the young Gatsby relinquished his hope of one day reuniting with Daisy, Gatsby’s gesture of snatching “a wisp of air, to save a fragment” of Daisy implies that he does maintain a glimpse of hope. This contradiction is mirrored in the narrative’s forward action twice. After Gatsby refuses to leave town following the wreck, Nick offers that Gatsby “couldn’t possibly leave Daisy until he knew what she was going to do. He was clutching at some last hope and [Nick] couldn’t bear to shake him free” (148). The second way in which Gatsby’s conflicted persona is signified comes just as Nick is telling Gatsby goodbye for the final time. After Nick tells Gatsby that he’ll call him later that day, Gatsby once again seeks reassurance from Nick: “‘I suppose Daisy’ll call too.’ He looked at [Nick] anxiously, as if he hoped [Nick would] corroborate this” (154). After Nick halfheartedly assures Gatsby that Daisy will call, Gatsby’s last spoken words in the novel are to Nick: “Well, good-by” (154), before his “face broke into that radiant and understanding smile” (154).

Having instructed his gardener not to drain the pool, since he’d “never used that pool all summer” (153), Gatsby

Put on his bathing-suit and left word with the butler that if any one phoned word was to be brought to him at the pool. He stopped at the garage for a pneumatic mattress that had amused his guests during the summer, and the chauffeur helped him pump it up. Then he gave instructions that the open car wasn’t to be taken out under any circumstances [. . .] Gatsby shouldered the mattress and stared for the pool. Once he stopped and shifted it a little, and the chauffeur asked him if he

needed help, but he shook his head and in a moment disappeared among the yellowing trees. (161)

And so, while Nick's later account notes that Gatsby was found in the pool dead, Gatsby's actions have him shouldering a weight and moving to blend in with the colors of autumn.

Nick

Much of Nick's role for this interstice is that of the narrator, which will be examined in the following trace; however, he assumes a small part as active participant here as well. Leading up to the point of inspection signifying Gatsby's death, Nick stays with Gatsby in his house where Gatsby shares with him stories of his time with Daisy before the war. After advising Gatsby to leave town, Gatsby rejects his advice, and Nick becomes an active listener. Even though he notes he should have gone into the city to work, Nick "didn't want to leave Gatsby" (153). Nick notes that "Just before [he] reached the hedge [he] remembered something and turned around. 'They're a rotten crowd,' [Nick] shouted across the lawn. 'You're worth the whole damn bunch put together' [. . .] [Nick has] always been glad [he] said that. It was the only compliment [he] ever gave [Gatsby], because [Nick] disapproved of [Gatsby] from beginning to end" (154). In this way, Nick shows his abilities to be false, just as Gatsby had been capable of appearing "counterfeit" and Daisy is described as possessing "artificial" qualities (86), so too is Nick capable of falseness.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—1.2.2.

Nick's role as narrator is an essential element of this interstice, as his commentary comprises the majority of the text here, guiding the reader to believe as his character does, tying up loose ends or gaps in Gatsby's story thus far. Nick gives the reader insight into Gatsby and Daisy's relationship in Louisville, suggesting that Gatsby "might have despised himself, for he

had certainly taken [Daisy] under false pretenses [. . .] he had deliberately given Daisy a sense of security; he let her believe that he was a person from much the same stratum as herself—that he was fully able to take care of her” (149). As for Daisy, Nick as narrator notes that she “was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year” (151).

After Nick shouts up to Gatsby that he is “worth the whole damn bunch put together” (154), Nick as narrator shares perhaps the saddest secret of the entire narrative. He asserts that he has “always been glad [he] said that. It was the only compliment [he] ever gave [Gatsby], because [Nick] disapproved of [Gatsby] from beginning to end” (154). That even the person responsible for seemingly rendering Gatsby’s story admits his disapproval of Gatsby heightens the reader’s understanding that Gatsby dies friendless, unloved, and alone.

The narrator is also responsible for rendering this interstice as well as offering commentary as to the significance of the interstice:

No telephone message arrived, but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o’clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came. I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees. (161)

Nick's account of Gatsby's death suggests contradictions in Gatsby's character still, suggests that in his final moments Gatsby may have realized the poison of Daisy, may not have even cared that she had not phoned him.

While the presence of the narrator is significant in this interstice, there are accounts that Nick could not have known. Thus, the reader must surely remember Fitzgerald's hand as he/she encounters the sections concerning the interactions between George and Michaelis. Though Nick begins this section with, "Now I want to go back a little and tell what happened at the garage after we left there the night before" (156), the fact that Nick admits he "left there" signals for the reader that Nick was not privy to the events which unfolded between George and Michaelis. The voice rendering this section is omniscient, knowing the minds of the characters, so much so that the narrator of this section is able to be inside Michaelis' mind, knowing that he "didn't like to go into the garage, because the work bench was stained where the body had been lying, so he moved uncomfortably around the office" (157). The narrator of this section knows that, inside the garage, the "hard brown beetles kept thudding against the dull light, and whenever Michaelis heard a car go tearing along the road outside it sounded to him like the car that hadn't stopped a few hours before" (157). The narrator of this section knows that Michaelis "believed that Mrs. Wilson had been running away from her husband, rather than trying to stop any particular car" (159). The narrator of this section is aware that, after asking George if there was a friend he could call, Michaelis silently acknowledges that this "was a forlorn hope—he was almost sure that Wilson had no friend: there was not enough of him for his wife [. . .] Wilson's glazed eyes turned out to the ashheaps, where small gray clouds took on fantastic shapes and scurried here and there in the faint dawn wind" (159). The narrator of this section knows that "By half-past two [George] was in West Egg, where he asked some one the way to

Gatsby's house. So by that time he knew Gatsby's name" (160). This switch in voice allows Fitzgerald's hand to be present in this interstice, then, as well.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—1.3.3.

While the disjointed presentation of time in this interstice could be read as symbolic, as it strengthens the reader's understanding of Gatsby's inability to differentiate between the present and the past, this use of possible symbolism will be examined in Trace Five, as it pertains to the structure of the interstice. The season in which this interstice takes place assumes a symbolic role in that it signifies a time of change and death. Just before the gardener informs Gatsby that he'll need to drain the pool, Nick notes that the "night had made a sharp difference in the weather and there was an autumn flavor in the air" (153). The gardener urges Gatsby to drain the pool, noting that "Leaves'll start falling pretty soon, and then there's always trouble with the pipes" (153). After retrieving a "pneumatic mattress" from his garage, Gatsby, having declined assistance from his chauffeur, "shook his head and in a moment disappeared among the yellowing trees" (161). In this way, Gatsby's death can be read as almost natural, as he "disappeared" or blended in with the colors of autumn just before his actual death.

The reference to Gatsby's dream is repeated in this interstice as well as allowed the opportunity to alter. After Nick shares with the reader that he was glad he'd told Gatsby "They're a rotten crowd" (154), Nick recalls the first night he "came to [Gatsby's] ancestral home, three months before. The lawn and drive had been crowded with faces of those who guessed at his corruption—and he had stood on those steps, concealing his incorruptible dream, as he waved them good-by" (154). After "No telephone message arrived" (161), Nick notes that he has "an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up an unfamiliar sky [. . .] and

shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is” (161). Since Daisy has already been aligned with the rose, and since Gatsby’s dream has thus far been to possess Daisy, that the rose has now evolved into something grotesque signifies the death of not only Gatsby himself, but his dream as well, as his “incorruptible” dream is now “grotesque” and thus has become corrupted.

Trace Four—World and Setting—1.2.4.

Fitzgerald’s description of the setting for Interstice Three is sparse. Fitzgerald, via the novel’s narrator, Nick, notes:

At two o’clock Gatsby put on his bathing-suit and left word with the butler that if any one phone word was to be brought to him at the pool. He stopped at the garage for a pneumatic mattress that had amused his guests during the summer, and the chauffeur helped him pump it up. Then he gave instructions that the car wasn’t to be taken out under any circumstances—and this was strange, because the front right fender needed repair.

Gatsby shouldered the mattress and started for the pool. Once he stopped and shifted it a little, and the chauffeur asked him if he needed help, but he shook his head and in a moment disappeared among the yellowing trees.

No telephone message arrived, but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o’clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came. I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered

as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. (161)

And so, for the purpose of this examination, the key objects referenced for the setting are the car's fender, the inflatable mattress, the yellowing tree leaves, the presence of a telephone nearby, an unfamiliar sky above, and the idea of a grotesque rose.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—1.3.5.

This interstice takes place at the end of Chapter VIII in the nine chapter novel. There are multiple divisions in the chapter as well, signified by the use of white space and the inclusion of evenly spaced asterisks (* * *). Fitzgerald uses white space twice on page 150, separating the narrative rendering Gatsby's memories of his time with Daisy in Louisville with the present narrative action between Gatsby and Nick. Fitzgerald's first use of the line of asterisks occurs shortly thereafter on page 151, separating Gatsby's supposed account of Daisy's wedding and the events of the present day. Nick benchmarks the time just following the asterisks by noting that "It was dawn now on Long Island and we went about opening the rest of the windows downstairs" (152) in order to signal to the reader the shift in time. White space is used again following Nick and Gatsby telling one another goodbye. This white space separates Nick's time with Gatsby and Nick's account of his activities following his final interaction with Gatsby (Nick's falling asleep and being awoken by Jordan calling him on the phone). Asterisks are utilized again after Nick's conversation with Jordan, though their inclusion here seems somewhat more confusing, as the reader is unsure as to what purpose this division serves. Since the events before the line of asterisks allows for the renderings of events with which Nick was a participant and the events presented after the division are those of which Nick could not have been a party to, perhaps this visible division is placed here to mark this seeming change in narrator as

opposed to marking a change in time. Given that the line of asterisks is used again just after the paragraphs detailing George's actions, the very actions Nick could not have known about as narrator, the reader could assume that this last section, set aside by the rows of asterisks, is, indeed, to offset George's account and not meant to imply a shift in time.

Aside from the visible use of white space and rows of asterisks used in this interstice, the presentation of time is disjointed at best and is imbedded deeply in the narrative. According to Nick, "It was dawn now on Long Island" (152), yet the force of the word "now" is soon lost as Nick's account turns back to Gatsby's life years before: Gatsby "came back from France when Tom and Daisy were still on their wedding trip, and made a miserable but irresistible journey to Louisville" (152). After describing Gatsby's movements those years before as he walked "the streets where their footsteps had clicked together through the November night" and knew that "it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes" (152), without a visible break in time, Nick now notes that "It was nine o'clock when we finished breakfast and went out on the porch" (153). At this point in the narrative, the presence of time takes the shape of the seasons, as Nick notes that the wreck from the night before or the interactions between Gatsby and Daisy on that evening "had made a sharp difference in the weather and there was an autumn flavor in the air" (153). When Nick tells Gatsby that he only has "Twelve minutes to my train" (153), the reader surely feels the importance of time as well. Nick tells Gatsby goodbye, begins to walk away, turns back to yell to him that "They're a rotten crowd [. . .] You're worth the whole damn bunch put together" (154), but he notes to his reader that he has "always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him" (154).

Perhaps the most disjointed presentation of time leading up to this interstice comes at the end of the paragraph Nick begins with "When I passed the ashheaps on the train that morning I

had crossed deliberately to the other side of the car” (156). In this way, Nick establishes that another day has passed and another morning has come, so that the reader is to believe that Nick is on the train in the valley of ashes on the day following his telling Gatsby goodbye. However, this same paragraph concludes with Nick asserting that “Now I want to go back a little and tell what happened at the garage after we left there the night before” (156). The forward moving narrative is once again halted and the reader is thrown back into the past and presented with an account of that past which is unreliable at best.

Even this account is cluttered with vague references to time, forcing the reader to attempt to piece together a timeline based on the account of a narrator whose name the reader does not even know. The references to physical time found in this section include: “Until long after midnight a changing crowd lapped up against the front of the garage” (156); “About three o’clock the quality of Wilson’s incoherent muttering changed” (156); Michaelis “knew every object in [the office] before morning—and from time to time sat down beside Wilson trying to keep him more quiet” (157); “About five o’clock it was blue enough outside to snap off the light” (159); “By six o’clock Michaelis was worn out” (160); “Michaelis went home to sleep; when he awoke four hours later and hurried back to the garage, Wilson was gone” (160); Wilson “must have been tired and walking slowly, for he didn’t reach Gad’s Hill until noon” (160); “Then for three hours [Wilson] disappeared from view” (160); “By half-past two [Wilson] was in West Egg, where he asked some one the way to Gatsby’s house. So by that time he knew Gatsby’s name” (160). This timeline ends at two-thirty, but the reader is thrown back in time once more when Nick’s account is that “At two o’clock Gatsby put on his bathing-suit and left word with the butler that if any one phoned word was to be brought to him at the pool” (161).

Thus, the plot is rendered in such a way as to heighten the reader's understanding of time in that remembering time is often convoluted and challenging.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—1.3.6.

Just as examined in the first interstice, Fitzgerald's use of similes is once again apparent in this space of inspection. The similes used are: "We pushed aside curtains that were like pavilions" (147); "'Jay Gatsby' had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice" (148); "it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him" (148); "Daisy, gleaming like silver" (150); "faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor" (151); "her voice came over across the wire as something fresh and cool, as if a divot from a green golf-links had come sailing in at the office window" (155). The final sentence of this interstice utilizes two similes: "A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breaking dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees" (161).

Trace 7—Socio-Cultural Context and Reception—1.3.7.

In his April 19, 1925 review of *The Great Gatsby* for *The New York Times*, Edwin Clark makes reference to the Jazz Age as illustrated in Fitzgerald's previous novels, including *This Side of Paradise*, noting that with "shrewd observation and humor he reflected the Jazz Age" (Clark). Clark continues by asserting that in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald has "said farewell to his flappers—perhaps because they have grown up—and is writing of the older sisters that have married. But marriage has not changed their world, only the locale of their parties." And though Clark asserts that "it might almost be said that 'The Great Gatsby' is the last stage of illusion in this absurd chase" for paradise, his final comments hinge on praise for the novel: "A curious book, a mystical, glamorous story of today. It takes a deeper cut at life than hitherto has been

enjoyed by Mr. Fitzgerald. He writes well-he always has-for he writes naturally, and his sense of form is becoming perfected” (Clark). Written in the collective “we,” Ruth Snyder’s April 15, 1925 review of the novel for *New York Evening World* is not nearly as flattering as Clark’s account of *Gatsby*, as Snyder asserts that this “is not a book to be read by the reader who believes the American girl to be the ideal girl of the twentieth century.” Snyder patronizes Fitzgerald’s writing style, commenting that in the novel “Mr. Fitzgerald has made a valiant effort to be ironical. His style is painfully forced. One finds oneself attempting to analyze his carefully constructed sentences.” Snyder ends her review with a tone of superior finality: “We are quite convinced after reading “The Great Gatsby” that Mr. Fitzgerald is not one of the great American writers of to-day” (Snyder). Yet, despite the mixed reviews the novel received at the time of its publication, *The Great Gatsby* would go on to become one of the most widely read books worldwide, having sold 25 million copies in 2013 alone, and having been translated into 42 languages thus far (Donahue). Though, when Fitzgerald died in 1940, his novel had only sold 25,000 copies, *Gatsby* was one of the novels printed and shipped by the Armed Services Editions to soldiers overseas during World War II. Perhaps this increased his readership and allowed soldiers who imagined themselves as having similar histories as Fitzgerald’s protagonist, Gatsby, to return home in search of something too, thus propagating the narrative’s popularity. Though one could hypothesize as to what cultural shifts occurred to increase the popularity of *The Great Gatsby*, the fact remains that “the now-classic 1925 novel is [Fitzgerald’s] publisher Scribner’s most popular title [and a] staple on high school reading lists” (Donahue).

The high school classroom is where I first encountered *The Great Gatsby* as well. Because as a fourteen year old freshman I did not take the copious notes I now wish I had jotted down while I first encountered the novel, for the purpose of articulating this section of the textus,

I will rely on my more recent response to the novel after having reread *Gatsby*. Often I found myself growing increasingly angry with Fitzgerald as I too felt his prose was forced and his presentation of time was frustrating at best. Though I wanted to believe Nick was the narrator, I resented the portions of the novel of which Nick could not possibly have observed, such as the conversations which took place between George and Michaelis following Myrtle's death. However, the frustrations aside, the brilliance of allowing the reader to construct Gatsby through the rumors of other minor characters as well as through the reader's own imagination adds to the sense of mystery necessary to believe the reality presented in the novel. Because Gatsby is never quite fully realized in my mind, though, I finished the novel feeling disappointed. The disappointment does not necessarily stem from Gatsby's death or his unrequited love of Daisy, but instead I feel that there's something still missing from the puzzle that is Gatsby; I feel that Fitzgerald rushes the ending, attempting to tie up loose ends, but fails to allow me as the reader a chance to ever *know* who Gatsby is or was. When writing this within the context of a project dealing with adaptations of this novel, perhaps this is what perpetuates the need for the novel to be adapted into other media—this sense of incompleteness. Perhaps this is why in the last five months I have read the novel seven different times in multiple settings in an attempt to achieve some sense of closure which I feel is missing from the novel.

Interlude

The investigation of Interstice Three differs slightly from the examination of the previous two interstices in that an additional trace has been added, which allows a space to include both critical reviews of the individual threads by critics contemporary to the time of each thread's initial release as well as a space for the creator of the textus to articulate his/her personal response to each thread in its entirety. Thus, whereas the traces in previous chapters have dealt

only with individual moments, the final trace presented for each of the threads which examine Interstice Three permits a collective assessment of an entire thread, perhaps pulling from recollections of past encounters to establish the response as well. Determining the presence of an essence overlaying this trace may prove more difficult, as the information presented is based on evaluative claims rather than the extraction of specific data taken from each of the included threads. The usefulness of this trace, aside from allowing for the creator of each textus a space to articulate his/her responses to each encounter with the remediated narrative, is that in doing so, the creator of the framework must acknowledge the various media being investigated as well as noting his/her abilities to still recognize the same narrative, which alleviates the impetus to continue utilizing fidelity discourse to discuss adaptations.

Thread Two—Jack Clayton’s 1974 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—2.3.1.

Gatsby

The interstice begins with Gatsby (Robert Redford), wearing a white monogrammed robe over his black and white striped bathing suit, cranking the record player, allowing for Nick Lucas’s “When You and I Were Seventeen” to play. Gatsby pauses beside the record player, as though thinking about the lyrics, as though remembering his past with Daisy. After removing his robe, Gatsby pushes back the white sheers trimmed in blue which divide the veranda from the pool itself; he dives into the water and swims to the dark blue float already positioned in the pool. Once situated on the float, he hears Daisy’s voice whisper his name, turns expectantly toward the house calling her name. Seeing no one there, seeing only the silent candlestick phone on the table, he smiles and seemingly continues to wait for Daisy to communicate with him again. Seemingly believing he hears Daisy, Gatsby turns once more toward the veranda’s

ghostly sheers blowing in the wind and calls out her name anew. Gatsby does not see who fires the shots into his back. Still lying on the float, his body arches upward as the first bullet rips through his back. He falls onto the float as the second bullet hits his side. The subsequent two bullets cause Gatsby to slide off the float so that he is under the water now, streams of red gushing from his body.

Daisy

A ghostly silhouette of Daisy (Mia Farrow) is barely visible behind the white sheers separating the veranda from the pool. She whispers Jay's name in such a way that for a moment the viewer thinks perhaps too this has just been the wind since when Gatsby turns to look for Daisy she is no longer there.

George Wilson

Though having no dialogue in this interstice, George Wilson (Scott Wilson), walks with purpose as he enters the veranda near the pool. Wearing dirty brown overalls, a gray button-up shirt, and stained flat cap, Wilson carries a wrinkled brown bag with him as he stands in front of the full-length mirror beside the phone and record player. Taking the revolver out of the bag, Wilson holds it against his chest, rubs his trembling fingers over it as he begins to nearly cry. Hiding behind one of the columns framing the veranda, Wilson aims the revolver at Gatsby's body, floating in the middle of the swimming pool. With blood shot eyes and a look of desperation on his face, Wilson pulls the trigger four times, staring numbly as Gatsby's body begins to sink. With no apparent satisfaction gained by his actions, Wilson slowly puts the revolver in his mouth. Wilson is obscured from view by the swaying white sheers. A gunshot is heard before a thud, indicating his body too has fallen.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—2.3.2.

Though directly following this interstice, Nick's voice-over once again establishes his role as narrator, the action found in this interstice alone does not indicate a narrator other than the way(s) in which the scene is rendered through the use of camera angles and sound presented by Clayton as the intended auteur. The interstice begins with a close-up of a blue jay eating in the grass before jump cutting to an establishing shot of Gatsby's swimming pool. A medium shot of Gatsby cranking the record player zooms in on Gatsby's face as he contemplates the lyrics of the song being played. The medium shot of Gatsby diving into the water cuts to the close-up of the blue jay once again before it flies away, seemingly startled by the splash. A panning over-the-shoulder shot allows the viewer to see the empty veranda behind Gatsby. A succession of shot-reverse-shots is utilized during the sequences where Gatsby believes he hears Daisy whispering his name and turns to look for her. The remainder of the shots are primarily medium shots, then, until the camera closes in on Wilson's face as he fires the gun. An underwater medium shot presents Gatsby's sinking body in the pool, followed by a medium shot of Wilson putting the gun in his mouth. The screen fills with white, presumably the white of the sheers on the veranda before cutting to a medium high angle shot of the gun in the bottom of the goldfish pond near the pool.

The diegetic sounds used in this interstice are a combination of chirping birds, Nick Lucas's voice singing "When You and I Were Seventeen" as the record plays, splashing of water as Gatsby dives into the pool, the flapping of the blue jay's wings as it ascends in the air frightened by the splash of water, the whisper of Daisy calling Jay's name followed by Gatsby's saying Daisy's name aloud twice, the rapid explosions of gunfire as Wilson shoots Gatsby, the bloated sounds of air in water as Gatsby's body begins to sink, the gunshot of Wilson's suicide,

the thud of his body falling, the scratching of the record player's needle as the song has ended. The non-diegetic sounds heard are the soundtrack's orchestrated melody of "What'll I Do" which has previously been established as a theme song for Daisy and Gatsby.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—2.3.3.

The inclusion of birds in this interstice suggests their symbolic purpose as Daisy has been previously aligned with birds or things capable of flight. However, while chirping birds are a part of the diegetic sound, the bird visibly signified onscreen is that of a blue jay. While Daisy has been portrayed as relatively weak, the blue jay symbolizes just the opposite, possessing qualities of curious assertiveness and capable of mimicking the calls of other birds nearby. In the context of this interstice, the presence of the blue jay, then, may imply that Gatsby is questioning Daisy's intentions, questioning whether or not she is what he has thought she was.

Trace Four—World and Setting—2.3.4.

In this colorful outdoor setting of blues and whites with hints of green, the lighting used is heavily reliant on natural lighting, allowing for multiple shadows to be signified onscreen. Set outside Gatsby's mansion, the island blue water reflects the blue sky above. The veranda, divided by a wall of white sheers trimmed in blue and a wall of windows, allowing for sun to filter through, is full of shadows, shadows of Gatsby's figure, shadows of the potted tree leaves, shadows of Wilson's figure as he approaches the sheered wall. The props in this interstice are the record player, the candlestick phone, the float in the pool, the dream-like quality allowed by the flowing sheers, the brown paper bag housing the large revolver, and the bright orange goldfish swirling chaotically around the revolver once it is tossed there following Wilson's suicide.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—2.3.5.

The plot of this interstice is rendered in chronological order, without the impression of flashbacks. After cranking the record player on his veranda, Gatsby disrobes, dives into the swimming pool. Thinking he hears Daisy, he turns on two occasions and calls her name. Wilson, with revolver, enters the veranda, looks at himself in the mirror which hangs behind the silent telephone, and then four bullets into Gatsby's back and side. Gatsby, though initially arching his body from the supposed pain inflicted, slides off the float into the water where he remains while Wilson shoots himself. The plot is rendered using shot transitions which rely heavily on the use of eye-line matches. Since Gatsby looks back to the veranda in search of Daisy, the camera allows for the shots to transition to signify the space where Gatsby's eyes would be looking. Using parallel editing, implying that the events are happening concurrently, Gatsby is presented on the float in the swimming pool while Wilson is on the veranda preparing to shoot Gatsby.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—2.2.6.

As previously noted, Clayton need not include the words "No telephone message arrived" (Fitzgerald 161) in this interstice, as the genre conventions of film allow for the audience to perceive this void through the actions presented onscreen. While the viewer is presented with the silhouette of Daisy (dressed in a white robe of sorts, behind the flowing white sheers), when the shot transitions to the eye-line match following Gatsby's turning to look at the veranda, the sheers have parted in such a way as to reveal the candlestick phone on the short table near the pool. In this way, the audience is to understand that the silent telephone represents the line of communication with Daisy, implying that while Gatsby still hopes Daisy will phone, the phone remains silent. Nelson Riddle's soundtrack also is used to heighten the viewer's understanding

of Gatsby's internal thoughts and emotions during this interstice. While Gatsby is lying on the float in the swimming pool, the diegetic music playing on the record player is overpowered by Riddle's orchestrated rendition of "What'll I Do," which has come to be recognized as a thematic love song previously heard during moments of intimacy between Gatsby and Daisy. Thus, the viewer can assume that Gatsby is thinking of Daisy while he is on the float.

Trace 7—Socio-Cultural Context and Reception—2.3.7.

Truman Capote biographer Tison Pugh notes that the final screenplay for Clayton's 1974 adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* was written in three weeks by Francis Ford Coppola just prior to the scheduled shooting of the film after the script written by Capote was rejected by Clayton and Paramount:

Having successfully collaborated with Jack Clayton on *The Innocents*, Capote agreed to pen the screenplay for the director's production of F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel *The Great Gatsby* [. . .] Taming Fitzgerald's novel for the screen provided Capote with extraordinary difficulties, and the deeper he delved into the project, the more he realized the challenges of his source text [. . .] Assuming Fitzgerald's narrative problems as his own, Capote found himself increasingly mired in an unwieldy adaptation, and his screenplay of *The Great Gatsby* suffers from numerous problems, including an over-reliance on voice-over, static plotting, and metacinematic staging. (Pugh 207-08)

Capote's unpublished screenplay, held at the Academy's Library, presents Nick as a homosexual and Jordan as a lesbian and was deemed by Paramount executive Peter Bart an unsuitable adaptation (Pugh 209). Perhaps Coppola's rush to complete the script contributed to the negative reviews of the film as a final product. The March 24, 1974 review by Vincent Canby of *The*

New York Times notes that the “newest, biggest, most expensive and longest screen version of “The Great Gatsby” [. . .] moves spaniel-like through F. Scott Fitzgerald’s text, sniffing and staring at events and objects very close up with wide, mooney eyes, seeing almost everything and comprehending practically nothing.” While sarcastically noting that “the movie itself is as lifeless as a body that’s been too long at the bottom of a swimming pool” Canby suggests that the reason for this may be Clayton and Coppola’s “all-too-reverential attitude” as they “have treated the book as if it were an illustrated encyclopedia of manners and morals of the nineteen-twenties” and presented a plot which “has been dismantled like an antique engine and photographed, piece by piece, preserved in lots of pretty, glistening images that bathe the film in nostalgia as thick as axle grease.” Canby is critical of Clayton as a director as well, stating that the film possesses “a stunning lack of cinematic imagination.” Concluding his review, Canby argues that the film is “frivolous without being much fun.”

Roger Ebert’s January 1, 1974 review of Clayton’s film suggests possible reasons behind this adaptation’s less than stellar reception at the box office:

We’ve been distanced by the movie’s overproduction. Even the actors seem somewhat cowed by the occasion; an exception is Bruce Dern, who just goes ahead and gives us a convincing Tom Buchanan. We don’t have to be told the ways in which Tom is indifferent to human feeling, because we can sense them. But we can’t penetrate the mystery of Gatsby. Nor, to be honest, can we quite understand what’s so special about Daisy Buchanan. Not as she’s played by Mia Farrow, all squeaks and narcissism and empty sophistication. In the novel, Gatsby never understands that he is too good for Daisy. In the movie, we never

understand why he thought she was good enough for him. And that's what's missing. (Ebert)

While Ebert asserts that something is “missing” from Clayton’s film, according to the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), the film was not a total failure at the box office. With a filming budget of \$6,500,000, the 1974 version of *The Great Gatsby* grossed \$26,533,200 during its theatrical release in the United States as well as \$14,200,000 in rentals. However, compared to other films released in 1974, *The Great Gatsby* can hardly be called a resounding success. Again, according to IMDb, Warner Brothers’ *Blazing Saddles* domestically grossed \$119,500,000 as the top box office film of 1974, a sum nearly five times that of Clayton’s film.

Though I vaguely recall viewing Clayton’s *The Great Gatsby* as a senior in high school, my response for this project is based on my more recent viewings. Bored is the best word I can use to describe my attitude while watching the film. I was bored by the overuse of medium shots, just as I found it tedious to endure Clayton’s close-ups of Daisy’s face or Myrtle’s face. Had either Daisy (Mia Farrow) or Jordan (Karen Black) been able to communicate anything emotive to me as their faces filled the screen, perhaps my experience would have been different. Gatsby (Robert Redford) always seemed childlike in his interactions, which may have added to my understanding of the narrative, if indeed there had been motivation for his demeanor, which there was not in the end. Having viewed this film again after reading the novel, and after having issues with the novel as noted previously, I was hoping for some insight into Gatsby’s character; I was hoping for *more* from Gatsby in order to better understand him as a character and more easily believe the outcome of his character’s trajectory. Clayton’s adaptation does not permit me any more awareness of any of the characters. If anything, I am more confused by the film. Though Clayton presents moments where the camera closes in on Daisy’s blank face, for

instance, and the soundtrack's music swells in such a way as I have been conditioned to understand something of significance is meant to be occurring onscreen, I did not understand what exactly that was meant to be, and thus I grew increasingly bored with Clayton's production, which attempts moments of poignancy, but falls short of articulating the meaning and/or motivations of that empty nostalgia.

Interlude

Having already referenced the first of Kamilla Elliott's six concepts for negotiating the paradigm between novel and film adaptations, what she refers to as the "Psychic Concept of Adaptation," Elliott's second concept, "The Ventriloquist Concept of Adaptation," "differs from the psychic concept in that it pays no lip service to authorial spirit: rather, it blatantly empties out the novel's signs and fills them with filmic spirits. [. . .] It represents what passes from novel to film in adaptation as a dead corpse rather than a living spirit" (143). Relying on Roland Barthes, Elliott once again creates a seeming mathematical equation for understanding this proposed process: "THE NOVEL SIGNIFIERS + THE FILM'S SIGNIFIEDS = THE ADAPTATION'S SIGNS." This equation "distinguish[es] 'film' from 'adaptation': the adaptation here is a composite of novel and film, rather than pure film" (144). Though Elliott's concepts address only the relationship between the novel and the film, her assessment does suggest the presence of "a living spirit" that continues to exist despite the change in form. The textus builds from this notion by attempting to isolate this "living spirit" through the overlay of relevant traces fleshed out during the examination of criteria predetermined by the framework's creator. Because the textus does not limit the form which can be added to it, the creator of the textus is able to seek out whether or not the "spirit" or "essence" of a particular moment in the adapted narrative has been maintained. In this way, when encountering Levy's drama, the

creator of this textus is able to continue to place the thread inside the same construct which already houses Fitzgerald's novel and Clayton's film.

Thread Three—Simon Levy's 2006 Stage Play:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—3.3.1.

Gatsby

Gatsby's character is presented as one in need of confession in this interstice. Just as "*Gatsby enters dressed in a robe and swimsuit*" (51), he informs Nick that he cannot leave Daisy before he apologizes to Nick:

GATSBY. I owe you an apology for some of the lies. (*Gatsby drops the slight affection and reveals his true self to Nick.*) James Gatz—that's really, or at least legally, my name. We're cousins, Nick. You and me. Two boys out of the Midwest who've come East to make their fortunes. My parents were farm people up in North Dakota. Good people, honest, but poor. So I invented the sort of "Jay Gatsby" that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent and ran away to make my fortune. And then I met Daisy. Of course, I expected her to throw me over—after all, what did I have to offer?—some poor farm boy—but she didn't, because she was in love with me. Is in love with me. And now I have her again. And this time it's going to be the way it should have been. (52)

This long speech lets the reader to understand that Gatsby is still pregnant with the delusion that he and Daisy have a future together, despite Myrtle's death, despite Daisy's inability to tell Tom that he never loved him. After Nick tells Gatsby that he will call him around noon, Gatsby once

more seeks reassurance from his “good friend, Nick” (52), asking him if he believes Daisy will call him soon as well. Gatsby’s need to ask about Daisy’s call implies that while he appears confident of his future with Daisy outwardly, he is still plagued by doubt and struggles not to give in to his insecurities regarding his future with Daisy. Following Nick’s turning to praise Gatsby, the stage directions note that “*Gatsby gives [Nick] a salute. Nick exits. Gatsby puts a floating mattress in the ‘pool’ and lies on it, placing the phone next to him, staring up into the hopeful sky. Wilson rises from Myrtle’s body—pulls out a large revolver—slowly approaches the pool—and fires five shots, violently murdering Gatsby*” (52). While the physical body of the actor playing Gatsby’s character may remain onstage briefly as the action concludes, Gatsby is dead, having never received the call from Daisy.

Nick

As this interstice begins, the stage directions note that “*Warm lights reveal Nick pacing next to Gatsby’s pool*” (51). After listening as Gatsby informs him that Daisy turned out her light while he waited outside her house, Nick implores Gatsby to leave town. Gatsby ignores his suggestion, seemingly preoccupied with apologizing to Nick for not being honest with him previously. Following Gatsby’s confessional speech Nick responds curiously:

NICK. Thank you.

GATSBY. For what?

NICK. (*Embarrassed.*) Twelve minutes to my train. I’ve already missed three. I really don’t want to go to work today! I’ll call you up. (52)

This exchange suggests that Nick is somehow proud that Gatsby has been honest with him, but is unable to express his emotions, is somehow unable to accept Gatsby as “James Gatz” or acknowledge the two share any similarities as Gatsby suggests they are “cousins.” As the action

of Gatsby's murder takes place while Nick is speaking, Nick addresses the audience once again following Gatsby's murder and Wilson's suicide:

NICK. THEY'RE A ROTTEN CROWD, GATSBY! YOU'RE WORTH THE
 WHOLE DAMN BUNCH PUT TOGETHER [. . .] (*Nick enters from the
 back of the stage in a flurry of flashbulbs and "news reports" and weaves
 his way through the dead bodies. To audience.*) I remember the rest of that
 day and that night and the next day as an endless drill of police and
 photographers and newspaper men. Most of the reports about Gatsby
 were a nightmare—grotesque, circumstantial, eager and untrue. I found
 myself on Gatsby's side, and alone. No one else cared. No one. Where
 were the party people NOW! I called up Daisy to see how she was taking
 it...but she and Tom had gone away that afternoon, leaving no return
 address. (*Kneels next to Gatsby's body.*) I wanted to get somebody for
 him. I wanted him to know that somebody cared. I went into the room
 where he lay to reassure him: "I'll get somebody for you, Gatsby. Don't
 you worry. Just trust me and I'll get somebody for you." (52-53)

Nick is rendered, then, as someone who cares deeply for Gatsby, who feels responsible for him following his death in a way that he did not feel responsible for him during his breathing interactions with him previously. The significance of this is that the reader understands that Gatsby's unspoken fear of dying alone is known to Nick, and Nick, internalizing this fear, continues to reassure his mysterious friend even as he is lying beside him dead.

George Wilson

As the scenes of this interstice bleed into one another, Wilson frames the action by introducing the interstice as well as concluding it. Per the stage directions, Wilson stands before the “*eyes of Dr. Eckleburg [. . .] Wilson stares up at the glowing eyes, cradling Myrtle in his arms... Warm lights reveal Nick pacing next to Gatsby’s pool. Gatsby enters dressed in a robe and swimsuit*” (51). During the interactions between Nick and Gatsby prior to Gatsby’s murder, Wilson remains onstage, still holding Myrtle’s lifeless body. Again, the stage directions are that after Nick leaves Gatsby, “*Gatsby puts a floating mattress in the ‘pool’ and lies on it, placing the phone next to him [. . .] Wilson rises from Myrtle’s body—pulls out a large revolver—slowly approaches the pool—and fires five shots, violently murdering Gatsby. Then he crosses away, put the gun in his mouth, and kills himself*” (52). The presentation of Wilson’s character, onstage even during Gatsby’s confessional speech to Nick, positions him as all-knowing. Rather than Wilson remaining the aloof, ignorant husband, the reader must wonder if Wilson has heard the confession and still murdered Gatsby anyway, and what his motives then were. Did Wilson kill Gatsby for what he presumed Gatsby represented? Or did Wilson kill Gatsby because he still believed Gatsby responsible for Myrtle’s death?

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—3.3.2.

While Nick addresses the audience multiple times leading up to this interstice, Nick assumes his role as narrator only once during this space of inspection, which is examined in the above trace. Following the flurry of action taking place onstage, the reader surely finds comfort in Nick’s turning to address the audience once more, as he tries to make sense of what has just taken place.

The stage directions found during this interstice are minimal. The directions are as follow: *“The eyes of Dr. Eckleburg glow brighter”* (51); *“Wilson stares up at the glowing eyes, cradling Myrtle in his arms... Warm lights reveal Nick pacing next to Gatsby’s pool. Gatsby enters dressed in a robe and swimsuit”* (51). While Gatsby is confessing his past to Nick, the stage directions note that *“Gatsby drops the slight affections and reveals his true self to Nick”* (52). After thanking Gatsby for sharing his secrets, the stage directions assert that Nick appears *“Embarrassed”* (52). Nick’s persona is once again given instruction via the stage directions following Gatsby asking him whether or not Daisy will phone. Nick is meant to be presented as *“Not sure what to say”* (52) while answering in the affirmative, reassuring Gatsby that he supposes Daisy will, indeed, call. As Gatsby is telling Nick goodbye, the stage directions indicate that Gatsby *“smiles that smile. Nick crosses stage, then stops”* (52). After Nick yells back to Gatsby, the stage directions specify that

Nick waves...Gatsby gives him a salute. Nick exits. Gatsby puts a floating mattress in the ‘pool’ and lies on it, placing the phone next to him, staring up into the hopeful sky. Wilson rises from Myrtle’s body—pulls out a large revolver—slowly approaches the pool—and fires five shots, violently murdering Gatsby. Then he crosses away, put the gun in his mouth, and kills himself. Three dead bodies in pools of light—Myrtle, Wilson, Gatsby. Nick enters from the back of the stage in a flurry of flashbulbs and ‘news reports’ and weaves his way through the dead bodies. (52)

After addressing the audience, the stage directions note that Nick *“Kneels next to Gatsby’s body”* (53).

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—3.3.3.

Though the green light is referenced multiple times as Act II begins—Daisy’s telling Gatsby that she is “giving out green tonight” (34), Gatsby telling Daisy she “always [has] a green light that burns all night at the end of [her] dock” (35), and Gatsby “*walks down and stares out at the green light*” (36)—this interstice does not include any repeated patterns of expression or meaning. No prop is referenced explicitly. Though Nick tells Gatsby the number of minutes until his train departs, his character does not refer to any timepiece, thus the clock, which has been significant in other threads, is not presented here.

Trace Four—World and Setting—3.3.4.

As mentioned previously, the sets are not described in detail in Levy’s play. When a set is specified, the way(s) in which it is signified onstage is vague. For example, prior to this interstice the stage directions note that, while Nick and Jordan are conversing, the “*Buchanan house forms around them. Daisy and Gatsby enter, fanning themselves. He wears a pink suit. It’s oppressively hot. Nick and Jordan join them. Or perhaps they float in on a divan*” (37). The reader of the written text, having already grown accustomed to Levy’s sometimes dreamlike and minimalist stage directions, understands that the set has taken on a seeming fluidity in itself. While the stage directions indicate that “*Gatsby enters dressed in a robe and swimsuit*” (51), Nick’s attire is not specified. When the same directions note that “*Gatsby puts a floating mattress in the ‘pool’ and lies on it, placing the phone beside him*” (52), the reader of the play may envision Gatsby’s character positioning himself as lying on the float in the pretend-pool beside a visible telephone. In this way, the props that hold significance are the bed made of air and the silent telephone.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—3.3.5.

This interstice is found near the very end of the two-act play. As already mentioned, the scenes of the play are not specified, and the structure of the acts fails to be explicitly defined other than by the action unfolding through the written text. The plot of this interstice suggests that Wilson is somewhere onstage cradling Myrtle's body while Gatsby and Nick are somewhere else onstage beside a pretend swimming pool where Nick is unsuccessful at convincing Gatsby to leave town. Gatsby apologizes to Nick for lying to him, tells Nick about his real parents, shares with Nick his legal name. Nick assures Gatsby that he will phone him later around noon. Gatsby seeks Nick's reassurance that Daisy too will call. Nick tells Gatsby that he supposes she will indeed phone. Gatsby tells Nick goodbye just before Nick turns to inform Gatsby that he prefers Gatsby above the other characters. Nick waves, while Gatsby salutes him. Gatsby takes a floating mattress (though no account is given as to from where Gatsby retrieves this prop) to the invisible pool and positions a telephone beside him as he lies on the float in the pretend-pool. Wilson moves across stage, produces a revolver, shoots Gatsby five times, places the revolver in his mouth, killing himself. Nick emerges to address the audience, in an attempt to fill in some of the many gaps.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—3.3.6.

While the genre expectations differ when reading the play as opposed to encountering the play as performed onstage, the conventions of the drama are understood by the reader. Though certain aspects of the play cannot be fully experienced as a reader—such as the stage directions indication of music being played during particular scenes—this interstice conforms to the audience's expectations of what constitutes drama as a genre in that characters are presented as being onstage and producing the narrative through their actions and speech. In this way, the

reader can visualize Gatsby's character, however vaguely he is described, lying on the floating mattress and being "violently" murdered beside the silent telephone (52).

Trace 7—Socio-Cultural Context and Reception—3.3.7.

The reviews of Levy's stage play are of the performed text as opposed to the written, which complicates the evenness of this project, as the creator of this textus has examined the written play, having not seen a performance of Levy's *The Great Gatsby*. As Levy's play opened in Minneapolis's Guthrie Theater in 2006, Quinton Skinner's July 26, 2006 review for *Variety* details that performance. According to Skinner, while "the show lacks little in ambition and production value, it's an uneven work that offers mere glimpses of immediacy amid stretches that skip across the narrative's surface like a stone tossed across the Long Island waters around which it revolves." Though Skinner approves of narrator Carraway's framing of the play, the reviewer is critical of the production overall:

Levy's adaptation wisely anchors itself around the first-person account of narrator Nick Carraway [. . .] there are instances of shocking angularity, particularly revolving around the violence of the second act, that lead one to believe this show is working hard to make the most of material that will always breathe more heartily on the page than on the stage [. . .] Ultimately, though, it feels as though an interesting exercise has been completed with less than satisfying results.

Following the 2013 release of Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*, Lisa Kennedy's May 3, 2014 review for *The Denver Post* presents an examination of Levy's play staged in nearby Arvada, CO at the Arvada Center. Kennedy asserts that this production "isn't interested in making obvious points about greed and opulence [. . .] Instead, Levy and director Gavin Mayer create enough

quiet for ruminating. They lower the volume of the Roaring Twenties.” However, Kennedy also notes that “If we’re looking for characters who throw us a moral lifejacket, we’re out of luck” as characters such as “Daisy, moving between flippancy, caginess and forced ease, underscores how confounding (and not fully formed?) a figure Fitzgerald penned.” After quoting Nick’s final words to Gatsby taken from the play: “They’re a rotten crowd. You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together,” Kennedy concludes her review by asserting that Nick is “right about Tom and Daisy. This quieter production encourages us to ask a more vexing question: Is he really right about Gatsby?”

While Kennedy questions the validity of Nick’s assessment of Gatsby as presented in Levy’s play, I found the play to be quite effective. While Nick is designated as the narrative’s narrator from the onset, having been given by Levy the opportunity to address the audience directly at several points throughout, my frustrations with Fitzgerald’s presentation of events (Nick as narrator not being privy to certain events in the novel, making me question how he possibly could have written about them later as supposed documentarian of the narrative) is alleviated in Levy’s stage play by allowing the backstory to emerge through simultaneous action onstage as though remembrances of the characters. Jordan’s account of Daisy on her wedding day is fleshed out in such a way that Jordan is able to become an active participant in her memory, which heightens my understanding of Gatsby and Daisy’s past affair. The stage directions, though minimal, often increase the idea of a magical reality. For example, at the beginning of Act II, as Gatsby and Daisy are dancing at Gatsby’s party, Levy’s directions are:

Slow music. Daisy and Gatsby dance. So do the others. And then the world drops away, and we hear their love theme, and only Gatsby and Daisy are dancing now, slow and sensuous. The others have frozen in tableau. It’s as if Gatsby and

Daisy are back in 1917, together again and in love, their dance saying it all as they blend together, exquisitely beautiful and sensual. Then Tom breaks away from Myrtle and cuts in on Gatsby, shattering the illusion. Lights change and the party comes back to life. (34)

Though reading the text as opposed to viewing the play, Levy's directions aid me in creating a visual image of not the *place*, but a space where worlds are capable of dropping away, a dreamlike world where love between two people is possible to believe despite the gaps in plausibility or character motivations still unknown to the reader. Levy's play allows Daisy to assume the agency in the narrative as well, which contributes to my understanding of their past interactions. Though Gatsby of 1922 is a man of questionably acquired wealth, when in the presence of Daisy, she takes the lead. Levy's Daisy announces to Gatsby that she has always loved him and that she has already decided to leave Tom, wants to leave him immediately, that night even. While this could diminish the notion that Gatsby has worked hard to gain Daisy's approval, the fact that she tells him she has loved him always creates a more complex character in Daisy, a character that Gatsby seems to understand and accept. The dynamic between the two characters seems more interesting to me. Since Gatsby thought himself undeserving of Daisy in 1917, he reverts back to those feelings despite his financial success and allows Daisy to control their relationship again.

Interlude

Perhaps the most in keeping with the objective of the textus is Kamilla Elliot's third concept, "The Genetic Concept of Adaptation," which she argues "is well established in narratological approaches to adaptation. Narratologists figure what transfers between literature and film as an underlying 'deep' narrative structure akin to genetic structure [. . .] in much the

same way that genetic material awaits manifesting substance in the cells and tissues of the body” (150). Again, though, Elliott does not step outside of the novel to film paradigm, failing to address the possibility of narratives being adapted to other media. She does, however, lend credence to using the textus to engage with adaptations when she notes that “Narratological approaches thus allow a separation of form and content at the higher categorical level of narrative, a category that contains both novels and films” (150-51). If Elliott were to add to this final statement other media capable of presenting an adapted narrative, she would be describing the textus, which does not privilege one medium above another.

Thread Four—Elliott Nugent’s 1949 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—4.3.1.

Gatsby

Following Daisy’s pleading with Tom to call Gatsby to warn him that George Wilson is armed and looking for him, this interstice begins with Gatsby (Alan Ladd) stretched out beside his pool wearing black swim trunks. Nick saunters beside Gatsby, telling him his phone is ringing. Nick seems eager to answer the phone, but Gatsby, his hair slicked back against his head, dismisses the phone, saying, “Let it ring” (1:27:01-1:27:03). Without changing expression, Gatsby announces that he’s “through with all this, Nick [. . .] trying to be something that [he’s] not: a gentleman” (1:27:05-1:27:10). Looking up at Nick who sits near him on a bench, Gatsby moves to perch himself at Nick’s feet, eager now to share with Nick his thoughts. Zealously, Gatsby tells Nick: “When I got home here last night I started thinking; I thought all night long. Nick, I made a mistake somewhere. I thought I was right. I thought old Dan Cody was right, but look what I’ve done to myself and everybody else to get where I am, and for what? To be like the Buchanans” (1:27:39-1:27:57). As George Wilson lurks awkwardly on the other side of the

pool, Gatsby tells Nick that he refuses to shirk responsibility for Myrtle's death, that he intends to "pay up" and he intends to "wait right here until the cops find that car and if they don't find it, [he'll] call them. [He owes] that to a kid named Jimmy Gatz [. . .] What's going to happen to kids like Jimmy Gatz if guys like [him] don't tell them we're wrong. Maybe after [Gatsby does his] time and start over" (1:28:31-1:28:50). Gatsby's speech is cut short as George fires a bullet through Gatsby's chest. Gatsby's head jerks to one side and his face contorts in pain as he turns and jumps into the pool, still able to swim across to the other side where George stands, revolver in hand. As Gatsby emerges from the water and holds on to the side of the pool, George fires two more shots into Gatsby's chest. Gatsby's body disappears into the water.

Nick

This interstice presents Nick (Macdonald Carey) almost as a backdrop, a character there only to provide Gatsby someone with whom to share his thoughts from the night before. Nick, dressed in a light, possibly tan, suit and striped tie, is casual when he strolls out the French doors to the pool where Gatsby is. Though he never announces what his motivations are for coming to visit Gatsby, when Gatsby attempts to apologize for losing his head the night before and snapping at Nick, Nick tells Gatsby not to worry about it, noting that he is "one of them" (1:26:34-1:26:35), then correcting himself to share that at least he was one of them. Nick never explains what he means by this and shifts subjects by mentioning the ringing phone again. When Gatsby informs Nick that he's tired of pretending that he is a gentleman, Nick reassures Gatsby that he is, indeed, a gentleman, "a real one" (1:27:15-1:27:16), but again does not elaborate. While Nick jumps from his bench screaming Gatsby's name after Gatsby is initially shot, Nick is not presented onscreen as ever trying to assist Gatsby.

George Wilson

George (Howard Da Silva), wearing dark slacks, similarly colored cardigan sweater over a buttoned up shirt with dark tie, is portrayed as nearly staggering up the steps leading to Gatsby's pool. Though he has supposedly been wandering for hours in search of the yellow car, George's hair is still in place. His face is shiny to suggest perspiration, as he clumsily reaches inside his cardigan to retrieve the revolver. Between firing the first shot and the final two, George has moved to stand beside the swimming pool. His tie is loosened now and his hair falling into his eyes. George does not shoot himself in this thread, as he has in others. He simply is not seen again.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—4.3.2.

Though the opening of Nugent's film establishes the narrative onscreen to be a remembrance by Nick, thus situating Nick as the narrator, Nick is an active participant in this interstice, if sitting on a bench listening to Gatsby is indeed considered active, and no narration in the form of voice-over is presented. Nugent's role as auteur of the film is presented through the cinematography and sound used in this interstice, which lack sophistication. The camera pans to follow Nick as he walks to the side of the pool and sits on a bench facing Gatsby. The camera remains in this over the shoulder high angle shot to render the majority of Gatsby and Nick's conversation, positioning Gatsby as beneath Nick, until Gatsby jumps to a standing position in order to relay his passionate intent to help the other kids like Jay Gatz. The camera does not follow Gatsby, but the next cut is a medium shot of Gatsby now looking down where Nick would be positioned, though Nick is not in the frame. The parallel editing permits a medium shot of George Wilson holding a revolver, so that when a shot is heard and Gatsby's face contorts in supposed pain, the audience can assume George has shot him. A reaction

medium shot of Nick, standing from the bench and yelling Gatsby's name, fills the screen before transitioning to Gatsby falling into the pool and swimming to the other side, despite his chest wound. A low angle shot, perhaps intended as a perspective shot, presents George Wilson, now standing beside the pool, firing two more rounds into Gatsby. A high angle medium shot of Gatsby, three wounds present on his bare chest, is the final shot of the interstice. Once Gatsby's body disappears from sight, his hands linger on the side of the pool before they too disappear in the water.

The diegetic sounds used in this interstice are few and include only the dialogue between the characters, the constant ringing of the telephone, the gunfire from the revolver, the splashing of the water as Gatsby falls into and swims through the pool, and the wail of sirens following Gatsby's murder. The non-diegetic sound of the soundtrack will be examined in Trace Six as the soundtrack is a genre convention for the film.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—4.3.3.

This interstice appears to lack any instance of symbolism; no obviously repeated patterns of meaning or expression are presented onscreen during this action.

Trace Four—World and Setting—4.3.4.

Comprised entirely of outdoor scenes, this interstice takes place primarily at Gatsby's swimming pool, with two sequences presenting George Wilson walking up stairs to position himself near Gatsby's pool. While the pool itself is filled with water, the surrounding set assumes a theatrical appearance with the obviously two-dimensional canvases painted with trees as backdrops. The lighting, perhaps intended to resemble natural lighting, given the presence of unmoving shadows of tree branches against the pool's siding, is consistent with low-key lighting used especially in film noirs. The black and white film renders the key props used in this

interstice as either lightly colored or dark. While other architectural props like statues and columns add to the viewer's understanding that the set is meant to resemble one of luxury, the practical props utilized are simple, such as the bench on which Nick sits beside the pool and the revolver George uses to shoot Gatsby.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—4.3.5.

With the exception of two shot-reverse shots used during the conversation between Nick and Gatsby, the editing in this interstice relies on jump cuts and parallel editing to render these last minutes of the film. The plot during this interstice is slow paced and seemingly unmotivated. Nick arrives at Gatsby's pool, though the audience does not know what has brought him here. Gatsby begins to apologize for losing his temper with Nick the night before, but Nick rejects the need for apology and sits on the bench beside the pool to listen to Gatsby tell him about why he intends to take responsibility for Myrtle's death: to make amends with his past as Jay Gatz in the hopes that children who are in similar situations as Gatsby was in his youth will see the consequences of their actions through Gatsby's end and will change course. George Wilson shoots Gatsby, who is, despite his being shot in the chest, able still to swim the width of the pool only to be shot two more times by Wilson.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—4.3.6.

Robert Dolan's soundtrack does aid in heightening the intensity of the action presented during this interstice. The calming melodies heard while Gatsby and Nick converse shift dramatically as Gatsby begins his speech concerning Jimmy Gatz. The violins build on themselves, increasing in intensity as Gatsby continues his speech. Following Gatsby's being shot, the chaos which is not rendered through the acting is heard through the score as the varied instruments of the orchestra seem to themselves be fighting with one another.

Trace 7—Socio-Cultural Context and Reception—4.3.7.

Bosley Crowther's July 14, 1949 review of Nugent's *The Great Gatsby* for *The New York Times* concedes little to no praise for the film. Crowther suggests that Paramount chose to make the adaptation in order to highlight their film star of the time, Alan Ladd, but notes that Ladd's performance is lackluster. According to Crowther:

Except for a few pictorial tracings of parties and brittle high-life, the flavor of the Prohibition era is barely reflected in this new film at the Paramount. Indeed, there are reasons for suspecting that Paramount selected this old tale primarily as a standard conveyance for the image of its charmed boy, Alan Ladd. For most of the tragic implications and bitter ironies of Mr. Fitzgerald's work have gone by the board in allowing for the generous exhibition of Mr. Ladd.

Crowther argues that, coupled with the poor acting demonstrated by Ladd, the film also fails due to the poor screenplay and directing. To Crowther, the failure of the film can be blamed

in part on a weak script. Cyril Hume and Richard Maibaum have achieved a dutiful plotting of the novel without the substance of life that made it stick. Blame it, too, upon direction; Elliott Nugent's handling of the cast and of supposedly significant behavior is completely artificial and stiff. And blame it, at last, on the manner in which Mr. Ladd always acts. His portrait is quite in accordance with that stock character he usually plays.

Penned by a *Variety* staff member, the publication's December 31, 1948 review of Nugent's film is brief in length, but overflowing with dislike for the adaptation. Per the review, "F. Scott Fitzgerald's story of the roaring '20s is peopled with shallow characters and the script (also from the play by Owen Davis) stresses the love story rather than the hi-jacking, bootlegging

elements.” After noting that Ladd “handles his characterization ably, making it as well-rounded as the yarn permits and fares better than other cast members in trying to make the surface characters come to life” the *Variety* staff writer concludes that “Elliott Nugent’s direction skips along the surface of the era depicted. The script doesn’t give him much substance to work with.”

Though the reviewers are unanimously critical of Nugent’s *The Great Gatsby*, I found the movie quite in keeping with my understanding of Nugent’s contemporaries in that their postwar moral compasses were geared toward a male, especially a former soldier, taking responsibility for his actions and a female being sweet, beautiful, and deserving of her soldier’s affections. Rendered as a quasi-film noir, where Jordan Baker’s character assumes the role of the femme fatale as opposed to Daisy, the narrative shifts significantly in that Nugent, though filming in black and white, seems incapable of presenting the narrative’s use of gray to signify the areas between good and bad, right and wrong. With him presented from the film’s onset as a gangster, I found myself accepting that Gatsby *wanted* to accept responsibility for Myrtle’s death not just to spare Daisy the humiliation, but also to acknowledge his own shady past. Though I laughed aloud at Ladd’s performance, especially during his poorly filmed death scene, I accepted the outcome as one in keeping with the ideologies of the late 1940s. Daisy, who after learning that Wilson had visited Tom and learned the name of the owner of the car used to kill Myrtle, begs Tom to call Gatsby to warn him of the impending danger. Had Daisy been the one frantically calling, trying to get through to Gatsby, I would have struggled to accept Gatsby’s refusal to answer the phone, but his character rejects the Buchanans, tells Nick that he is tired of trying to be something he is not, dismisses any warning Tom may be attempting to send him without knowing the warnings even exist. Though I still have questions concerning the voids in Gatsby’s character, Nugent’s adaptation invites me to view an arc in Gatsby’s character that is missing

from Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*: in his final scene, Nugent's *Gatsby* tells Nick (and me as the audience) *why* he is doing something, as opposed to leaving me wondering about his past and how that has shaped the decisions of his present.

Interlude

Creators of another textus may choose to isolate other criteria to investigate when applying the textus to the same adapted narrative and may be interested in examining their findings in regards to how each thread situates itself using, for instance, cultural studies. However, for the purpose of this textus, only the three interstices which constitute this creator's understanding of the narrative's beginning, middle, and ending are investigated through the extraction of what represents the six to seven traces predetermined initially.

Thread Five—Baz Luhrmann's 2013 film:

Trace One—Character and Dialogue—5.3.1.

Gatsby

Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio), in a black swimsuit, stands on the diving board staring out across the water toward Daisy's house before he dives into the circular blue pool of water. Under the water, his long body swims the length of the pool. As he emerges on the other side, he hears the phone ringing as he slowly ascends the pool's ladder. Smiling briefly, *Gatsby* gazes in the direction of Daisy's house once more before he feels the bullet pierce his chest from behind. Seemingly confused, he touches the wound with his hand. Looking back to the Sound, the only word spoken by *Gatsby* during this interstice is the whispering of Daisy's name. His face fills with a torment that may be understood as fear, not for himself, but for Daisy. In this way, believing that Daisy is on the phone, that she has accepted him, *Gatsby's* face is consumed by this look of fearful torture as he realizes that his future with Daisy will not come to fruition. His

eyes still focused on the Buchanan mansion, the tension leaves Gatsby's face as his eyes glaze over and he falls back into the water with a loud splash. In an oozy web of red, Gatsby sinks to the bottom of the pool.

Daisy

Though this interstice does not present Daisy (Carey Mulligan) as uttering a spoken word, her presence still permeates the entire scene. After Gatsby dives into the pool, the parallel editing presents a close-up of Daisy's contemplative face. Her sad-eyed face sits in her left hand, which bears her large wedding ring. She stares at the cream-colored phone on a marble pedestal across the room from where she sits. She walks slowly toward the phone, eventually picking up the phone's receiver. The editing of this interstice is such that just following Daisy's reaching for the phone's receiver, a ringing is heard by the audience and by Gatsby. In this way, for the briefest of moments, the viewer believes Daisy has, indeed, phoned. Gatsby believes this as well. After Wilson has shot Gatsby, and the viewer learns that Nick is the character who has called, Daisy hangs up the phone. Her face is not visible as her thin fingers retreat from the phone. The objects with which Gatsby (and the audience) have come to align with Daisy, the Buchanan mansion and the telephone, have a larger role in this interstice than Daisy herself. As Gatsby falls back into the water, the final image he sees is Daisy's house. Under the water, as he is sinking, the phone on which Daisy has just replaced the receiver is superimposed onscreen with the image of Gatsby, so that the two are merged, and are signified as reunited in Gatsby's death.

Nick

In his office in Manhattan, Nick (Tobey McGuire), in gray flannel suit, light gray shirt and maroon plaid tie, sits staring blankly at the candlestick phone on his desk, informing the

audience through voice-over that he is unable to work as he “waited for Gatsby to call with news while *he* waited for Daisy” (2:00:52-2:01). Transitioning between his role as narrator to his role as active participant, Nick, his once slicked back hair now falling in his pasty-white face, yells frantically into the phone’s mouthpiece after he has presumably heard the gunshots coming from Wilson’s gun. Still speaking the words “Hello” into the mouthpiece, Nick’s tormented face is also superimposed onscreen, blending with Gatsby’s lifeless body underwater as well as the cream-colored phone Daisy’s fingers have just released.

George Wilson

Though initially signified only as a solid shadow creeping against a wall with gun in hand, George Wilson (Jason Clarke) is presented as a crazed man. In wrinkled brown overalls and stained light brown shirt, Wilson’s bruised face shines as though drenched in sweat and tears. His eyes are red and nearly swollen shut. His lips pucker as he descends the steps after shooting Gatsby once through the chest. With oil-stained fingers, Wilson cups the inverted revolver in his hands, shoving it in his mouth. He looks up to the sky. While the actual suicide is not rendered onscreen, Wilson’s lifeless body lies beside the pool during the final shot of this interstice.

Trace Two—Author and Narrator—5.3.2.

This interstice begins with Nick’s voice-over, reestablishing his character as narrator. Luhrmann is present as the film’s auteur as well, as he authors the interstice through his choice of camera angles and sound. Luhrmann’s use of deep focus shots allows the audience to see both the character and the setting or action taking place behind the character. An example of this is when Gatsby is positioned on the swimming pool’s ladder; the audience can see Wilson descending the steps behind Gatsby, creating tension. Rack focus is also used to heighten the viewer’s understanding of the importance of the object(s) presented in clear focus, such as the

cream-colored phone in Daisy's room. The director's use of zoom shots plays a large role in this interstice as well. The camera zooms into Nick's office through the supposed window, zooms across the water to Gatsby as he stands on the diving board, zooms in on the Buchanan mansion as Gatsby believes Daisy has called and he is drawing near to her, and zooms out from the same mansion as Gatsby begins to die, the increasing distance signifying his impending death. Many of the shots are framed symmetrically, such as Gatsby on the diving board, Gatsby presented via a crane shot as swimming directly in the center of the oval swimming pool, and Gatsby's point-of-view shot of Daisy's mansion. The speed of the film is also manipulated in this interstice, suggesting that Luhrmann increased the exposure to the number of frames in order to present the narrative as though it is occurring at a dreamlike, slow-motion pace.

The sound utilized in this interstice relies heavily on the inclusion of silence. During Nick's voice-over as the interstice begins, bustle typical of an office can be heard, but is muted, as though Nick himself is attempting to shut out the noise. The diegetic sounds included are: the splashing of water as Gatsby dives into the pool, the rustling of brittle leaves as Wilson's shadow approaches the pool, the click of phone's receiver as Daisy raises it from its cradle, the phone's constant ringing above the splash of water as Gatsby reaches the pool's ladder, the respectful tone of the butler's voice as he answers the phone. Upon answering, the butler says to the unidentified person on the other end of the line, "I know Mr. Gatsby will be very happy that you've called" (2:01:45-2:01:49). The blast from the gunshot seems like a near explosion when juxtaposed against the calming silence presented just prior to Wilson's shooting Gatsby. Gatsby exhales an airy groan, similar to a sigh, after he is shot. The sounds of water, perhaps waves lapping against the pool or against the beach nearby, accompany the zooming shot focusing in on the Buchanan mansion. Just as Gatsby slowly whispers Daisy's name, exhaling for the final

time, the soundtrack swells with the knotting of violins and cello; the explosion of Wilson's suicide is muffled by the crashing made by Gatsby's body falling backwards into the water. Nick's voice is heard through the dangling phone's receiver, so that his frantic voice and the orchestra's haunting melody dissolve to silence in unison.

Trace Three—Theme and Symbol—5.3.3.

The repeated patterns of meaning and expression found in this interstice are the presentation of objects aligned with Daisy, with Gatsby's perceived promise of Daisy: the cream-colored telephone on a pedestal and the Buchanan mansion. The phone is only visible eleven seconds during the two minute and seventeen second interstice, and is heard ringing just fifteen seconds, but as the phone symbolizes Daisy's line of communication, the phone has come to represent hope for Gatsby, and indeed for the viewer as well. Daisy's symmetrically framed mansion, signified onscreen in glimpses for a total of just ten seconds, assumes the same significance the green light has in previous interstices. This is what Gatsby's eyes hold before and after he is shot. In this way, he is able to take Daisy with him as he falls back into the water, as her subsiding home is the last thing he sees before he dies.

Trace Four—World and Setting—5.3.4.

Aside from the indoor shots of Nick inside his cramped Manhattan office and the indoor shots of Daisy near her phone, the interstice is otherwise entirely filmed outdoors. Though CGI was utilized during postproduction to present the elaborate backdrop of Gatsby's expansive mansion, the structures of the pool, diving board, ladder, scattered leaves, telephones (Daisy's, Nick's, and Gatsby's), and the revolver used by Wilson are all tangible props used by the actors to simulate the narrative's action. Seemingly natural lighting is used outside, creating a ballet of shadows and causing Wilson's damp face to glow. The sunlight is implied in the indoor scene allowing for the close-up of Daisy's face, as the front of her, the part of her facing the phone, is

aglow with light, while behind her is darkness void of light. While the colors previously used in this thread have been many and diverse, the colors for this interstice are muted and simple: grays, blues, black, brown, and off-white. In the interstice's final crane shot, the sun is presumably hidden behind an unseen cloud, as the lighting takes on a hue of gray.

Trace Five—Plot and Narrative—5.3.5.

Following Nick's voice-over transitioning to the zooming establishing shot of Gatsby's mansion and pool, the cross-cutting allows the audience to view Gatsby, in black swimsuit, dive into the circular swimming pool surrounded by fallen leaves that scatter in the wind, then a close-up of Daisy's pensive face as he stares at the cream-colored phone on the pedestal. As Gatsby swims under the aqua water, a shadow of a man holding a gun appears just prior to Daisy's approaching the pedestaled phone. In near slow motion, almost in one fluid movement, Daisy removes the phone's receiver, Gatsby emerges from the water, and a phone's ringing is audible. As Gatsby climbs the ladder to exit the pool, a perspective shot zooms across the Sound to the Buchanan mansion. The audience, and more importantly, Gatsby, hears the butler's words, "I know Mr. Gatsby will be very happy that you've called" (2:01:45-2:01:49), just as a gunshot is heard and Gatsby's chest begins to bleed. As Gatsby falls back into the water, Nick cups the mouthpiece of the phone in his office and yells into it, his words heard as the shot transitions again to reveal the dangling receiver of the phone beside Gatsby's pool. The over the shoulder shot of Daisy hanging up the phone with her hand on its receiver dissolves into the bubbles of the water rising from the weight of Gatsby's now limp body so that for a moment Daisy's phone and Gatsby's bleeding body are one.

Trace Six—Genre Conventions—5.3.6.

As referenced previously, Luhrmann relies heavily on the use of CGI to render the extravagance of Gatsby's world. While this interstice does allow for the use of chroma key compositing through both the presentation of Gatsby's mansion as a backdrop and the Buchanan mansion, the genre conventions which particularly heighten the viewer's understanding of the narrative's action are the speed of the film coupled with the mixing of diegetic and non-diegetic sound. By rendering the sequences through slow motion, the viewer is not rushed, but is able to experience the subtle and extremely significant nuances onscreen such as Gatsby's visible confusion dissolving into torment, Daisy's hesitation blending in with Gatsby's limp body, Wilson's tortured face as he pulls the suicidal trigger. When combined with the pacing of the sequences, Armstrong's soundtrack, its swell of violin strings stretching out the viewing, and tugging on the viewer so that he/she too surely strains to hold on to that final image of Daisy's sunlight haloed mansion as Gatsby falls back into the water, aids the audience in experiencing something akin to pain, aids the audience in *feeling* the finality of Gatsby's dashed hopes.

Trace 7—Socio-Cultural Context and Reception—5.3.7.

The New York Times May 9, 2013 review by A. O. Scott suggests that director Baz Luhrmann's "reverence for the source material is evident. He sticks close to the details of the story and lifts dialogue and description directly from the novel's pages." But, according to Scott, Luhrmann "also felt free to make that material his own, bending it according to his artistic sensibility [. . .] The result is less a conventional movie adaption than a splashy, trashy opera, a wayward, lavishly theatrical celebration of the emotional and material extravagance that Fitzgerald surveyed with fascinated ambivalence." Commenting on the perceived world in which the narrative unfolds, Scott argues that the audience members "are in a world of artifice

and illusion, confected from old-fashioned production-design virtuosity and newfangled digital hocus-pocus.” Though not impressed by the movie in its entirety, Scott does praise the film’s director: “Mr. Luhrmann’s peculiar genius—also the thing that drives cultural purists of various stripes crazy—lies in his eager, calculating mix of refinement and vulgarity.” While Scott is critical of actor Leonardo DiCaprio, who plays Gatsby in the adaption, by asserting that DiCaprio’s accent is forced and far from authentic, Scott praises the presentation of Gatsby, noting that “it is impossible to look away from him. His charisma has increased as his youthful prettiness has worn and thickened away, and he is beautiful, sad, confident, and desperate in exactly the way Gatsby should be.” This, of course, implies that Scott’s ideas of how Gatsby “should be” are in keeping with the remainder of the film’s viewing audience. But Scott’s concentration on the ways in which Gatsby is signified onscreen seem fitting given Gatsby is the film’s title character. Scott argues that Luhrmann’s Gatsby “is self-invented, and also self-deluded, spinning out fantasies for himself and others as easily as he gives parties. As a character in Nick’s ruminations, in Fitzgerald’s sentences and in our national mythology, he is a complete mess. This movie is worthy of him.” So, either Scott ends his review with a derogatory remark, implying that Luhrmann’s adaptation is “a complete mess” or Scott is praising the director for creating a film “worthy” of Gatsby.

Scott Foundas’s May 5, 2013 review for *Variety* is ripe with sarcastic remarks about not only the film, but about the director as well. Foundas opens the review with “It don’t mean a thing if it ain’t got that bling [. . .] Baz Luhrmann’s “The Great Gatsby [. . .] maintains something of a gussied-up holiday feel, like the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade staged by Liberace.” Foundas continues with his use of similes by noting that like “the blinking green beacon at the end of Daisy’s dock—so close and yet so far—Fitzgerald’s masterpiece of

American letters has been a siren call for filmmakers ever since it was published in 1925.” After detailing an account of the number of film adaptations made of *The Great Gatsby*, Foundas posits that:

It is often said that great books make for inferior films and vice versa, but there is something particular about “Gatsby” that seems to defy the screen. Transformed into voiceover, the running first-person narration of Nick Carraway (here played by Tobey Maguire) turns stilted and dry (presumably a problem the silent version avoided). Scrutinized by the camera’s gaze, Fitzgerald’s beautifully deployed symbols and signifiers laden with portent: the green light, the yellow roadster, the mountain of custom-tailored suits, the unused swimming pool and the ever-watchful eyes staring out from the billboard of an enterprising Queens oculist.

With Luhrmann at the helm, those devices loom larger and more literal than ever, until they come to resemble the towering monoliths of “2001.”

Noting that “Luhrmann identifies far more strongly with Gatsby than he does with Nick,” Foundas suggests that “instead of a tragic figure undone by his false optimism and unrequited yearning,” the Gatsby of Luhrmann's film “becomes an object of envy—someone whose swank mansion and runway couture could be awfully nice to call one’s own.” Despite Foundas’s lengthy review full of sarcasm and inclusion of varied intertextual references, the reviewer fails to note whether or not his reader should view the film, which had an estimated budget of \$105,000,000 and, according to the box office notes on IMDb, has grossed \$351,040,419 worldwide.

Having no experience with Luhrmann’s film prior to this project other than viewing the trailers advertised on television during the film’s 2013 release, I must admit that I am smitten

with the adaptation. In many ways, Luhrmann quenches the thirst that I had after completing Fitzgerald's novel. My desire for a better understanding of Gatsby is satisfied through DiCaprio's stellar acting. The conventions of film as a medium are at their best in this production, as I found myself in awe of the elaborate sets and costumes, yes, but also the editing and the physical speed of the film itself, slowing in just the exact moments that I needed to take a breath along with the actors portraying the fully-realized characters. Not at all distracted by the recasting of Nick as a psychiatric patient, I found instead that this portrayal added credence to his being the narrator, especially regarding the notion that he is the narrative's *writer*. Having the written words being scribbled onscreen reminded me that his character is responsible for physically writing his remembrances; that Nick is in the mental hospital only justifies in my mind the quirks or small voids which present themselves in his recollected narrative. Craig Armstrong's soundtrack coupled with the camera's purposeful movement during the scene in which Gatsby is shot is perhaps one of the most powerful cinematic moments I have experienced. The perspective shot of Daisy's mansion across the water zooms in while Gatsby believes Daisy has called, that he is loved, validated. When he realizes that he has been shot, the look on Gatsby's (Leonardo DiCaprio's) face is one of fear, not for himself, but for Daisy. He whispers Daisy's name as he looks once again across the water; the perspective shot of Daisy's house zooms out so that I am able to assume his point of view, so that as Gatsby falls back into the swimming pool (causing a crash which muffles the explosion of Wilson's suicide), I too am able to fall away from Daisy's house, almost tangibly sensing the growing distance. As Gatsby is under water, Luhrmann presents Daisy's cream-colored phone and her fragile-fingered hand superimposed with the image of Gatsby's lifeless body so that in essence Gatsby dies with Daisy. Recognizing the importance of the relationship between Nick and Gatsby, Luhrmann also

presents the image of Nick seated at his desk as he yells into the silent candlestick phone to be superimposed with Gatsby's body while underwater. It just doesn't get much better than that. While critics may argue that this adaptation is too gaudy, I would argue that the circus-like execution is exactly in keeping with the social commentary which Fitzgerald only subtly creates in his novel. Without hesitation, I can easily state that Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* is the text to which I will compare all future adaptations.

Interlude

Acknowledging how many components of each thread have not been addressed in this examination, the purpose of the textus is not to assess the immeasurable components which make up each thread's narrative, but instead to offer the creator of each framework an opportunity to determine which aspects of the narrative he/she deems most interesting, to isolate the interstices to be investigated as well as the traces through which the narrative may be fleshed out, and finally to overlay the findings to establish whether or not the essence has been maintained for specific moments in the remediating narrative. This final interstice presents threads which differ in their rendering(s) of what constitutes the metaphorical and physical death of Gatsby, but each of them signify Gatsby's death. Fitzgerald's novel states that "No telephone message arrived" (161), which indicates Gatsby's metaphorical death in that Daisy does not phone, does not accept Gatsby after all. Clayton's presentation of Gatsby's metaphorical death comes prior to his character being shot in the form the visible phone remaining silent. Gatsby puts the silent phone beside him in a pool as well in Levy's stage play. The diegetic sound of the ringing phone is heard throughout the final interstice in Nugent's rendering of Gatsby's death, but Nugent's Gatsby refuses to answer it. Still, Gatsby is killed physically. And Luhrmann's Gatsby hears the

phone ringing, believes the person on the other end to be Daisy, and though he still dies, he does so believing he is loved.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Utilizing the textus as a means to engage with adaptations permits the creator of the textus to focus on the parts of each text's narrative which interests him/her most as well as easing his/her impetus to privilege the elusive "original" and thereby diminishing the need for the perpetuation of fidelity discourse. As the purpose of the textus is to isolate specific moments of each added thread's embodied narrative in order to examine criteria predetermined by the framework's creator so as to be able to overlay the findings of similarly coded criteria from the various media and thus to establish whether or not the essence of a specific moment of inspection has been maintained through each instance of the remediated narrative, this conclusion offers a prototype for how to determine the presence of the essence. While the creator of this textus will demonstrate by using only one trace, this same trace will be extracted from each of the three interstices found in each of the five threads.

When examining the way(s) in which certain threads render the traces of certain interstices, other dimensions of the narrative may consequently present themselves. This is because the creator of the textus is able to extract similarly coded points in the coordinate-system in order to "overcome" as it were, the form of the narrative, and focus instead on the investigation of the meaning present in the retellings. "Reading" the sequence of textus-coordinates affords an experience not associated in any close way with the forms in which the threads (individual works) were originally rendered, but instead offers a means to solidifying the elusive "spirit" or essence of a work. The existence of such as essence has been affirmed by many previous theorists of adaptation, but, without any robust scheme to use for analysis, the "spirit" of a given work of art has been forced to remain on the relative periphery of discourse in

adaptation studies, since the spirit of the text has seemed to be largely predetermined by its form. Though any combination could be utilized, for the purpose of this prototype, the textus-coordinates which will be explored are (1.1.1 + 2.1.1 + 3.1.1 + 4.1.1 + 5.1.1), (1.2.1 + 2.2.1 + 3.2.1 + 4.2.1 + 5.2.1), and (1.3.1 + 2.3.1 + 3.3.1 + 4.3.1 + 5.3.1) in order to offer an example of the application process.

While creators of another textus may choose to cut and paste the data extracted during the investigation of the interstices and traces, I have opted to summarize the findings for Trace One, which gives the creator of this textus an opportunity to revisit anew the ways in which each of the threads present each interstice. Beginning with Interstice One, “I’m Gatsby” (Fitzgerald 48) I list the ways that each thread presents Trace One, Character and Dialogue, seeking the ways Gatsby’s introduction is signified.

1.1.1.

In thread one, the reader is introduced to the rumors swirling about Gatsby, implying that not only does the reader yet have a firm grasp of Gatsby’s character, but neither is he known to the other characters in the book with any concreteness. While at Tom and Myrtle’s apartment, Catherine asks Nick if he knows Gatsby. When Nick informs her he lives next door to him, Catherine says that, “Well, they say [Gatsby’s] a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm’s. That’s where all his money comes from” (32). Again, the rumors persist and multiply. At the first party of Gatsby’s Nick attends one of the twins shares that after she tore her dress at a previous party, Gatsby sent over a new dress which cost “two hundred and sixty-five dollars” (43). To this, the other girl in yellow announces Gatsby “doesn’t want any trouble with *anybody*” (43). The other rumors spill across the lips of the other party-goers then: “Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.” ““I don’t think it’s so much *that*,’ argued Lucille

skeptically; it's more that he was a German spy during the war.'” “I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany” (44). These rumors come directly before Nick finds himself “sitting at a table with a man about [his] age” (47). Nick and the man exchange details about their stations during the war before Nick announces that “This is an unusual party for me. I haven't even seen the host [. . .] I live over there [. . .] and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation [. . .] ‘I'm Gatsby,’ [the man] said suddenly” (47-48). Finally, the reader meets Gatsby, but still knows very little about him. Disappointed himself, Nick demands Jordan to tell him who Gatsby is. “He's just a man named Gatsby” (48), Jordan responds. With that introduction to Gatsby, Interstice One ends.

2.1.1.

Though his name is mentioned in passing between Nick and Jordan, and even Daisy asks at the mention of his name, “Gatsby? What Gatsby?” (Clayton 7:12-7:14), Gatsby's character in Thread Two is not introduced formally until more than thirty-five minutes into the film. While Nick (and the viewer) see a fair haired man in a tuxedo standing in the dark of night on a balcony above the Sound clenching his fists, this figure has vanished when Nick, returning from his jaunt across the Sound to visit Tom and Daisy in East Egg, looks for him a second time. Again, the back of the same tuxedo-wearing man is presented, framed by French doors leading to the balcony on which he stands as he gazes across the dark waters and night sky at the green light flickering across the water. His persona through Interstice One is constructed by rumors offered by other characters at the party and at Tom and Myrtle's apartment in the city. During the party scene Nick, having been asked to follow an armed guard into the mansion, is introduced to Gatsby's character. After leading Nick into a room paneled with dark wood, the guard closes the heavy door behind Nick so that he is left to encounter Gatsby on his own. Framed by the large windows which look out on the water, Nick's view of Gatsby is initially obscured by a heavy

curtain, which he pulls back to reveal an ill-at-ease Gatsby (Robert Redford), still dressed in his tuxedo. Nervously, Gatsby turns to face Nick and says, “How do you do, old sport. I’m Gatsby” (Clayton 35:20-35:22).

3.1.1.

Jay Gatsby’s character is described in Thread Three as “a romantic idealist, with a disarming smile” (Levy 5). While the clothing of the other characters is not described in the stage directions, Gatsby is described as remaining “distant and mysterious, wrapped in mist, staring off into a blinking green light, dressed in a white tuxedo [. . .] It’s important he be insubstantial, ghostly, an illusion” (Levy 9). Following Nick’s receipt of the invitation to attend one of Gatsby’s parties, the stage directions note that “Out of the mist, Gatsby and his garden appear. He looks around at his world, charming and dangerously sexy. He approaches Nick and speaks in a slightly affected manner, picking his words carefully” (Levy 20). Still not knowing Gatsby’s identity, Nick mentions to this character capable of appearing out of mist that he has yet to meet the host of the party. To this Gatsby announces, “I’m Gatsby” (Levy 21).

4.1.1.

Thread Four introduces Jay Gatsby early on. During the montage of events rendered onscreen and narrated by the voice-over of older Nick’s character, Gatsby is seen in the front seat of a moving car shooting a gun out the passenger’s side window at men in another nearby vehicle. After killing the other men, Gatsby exits the vehicle in a darkened alleyway and, wearing a trench coat and hat to one side, turns to face the camera just as the voice-over of the older Nick continues to introduce Gatsby: “And out of the twenties and all they were came Jay Gatsby who built a dark empire for himself because he carried a dream in his heart” (Nugent 3:50-4:03). Accompanied by two other men, Gatsby drives a convertible through the valley of

ashes, stopping at Wilson's Garage for gas. Here he tips George generously as George does not have change for the twenty dollar bill Gatsby has given him, and receives directions to West Egg, his destination. Once inside the enormous mansion, Gatsby makes plans to purchase and redecorate the newly acquired home which is across the Sound from the Buchanan home. After requesting the same interior designer as used by Daisy, Gatsby saunters around the ballroom rattling off orders for improvements: "I want murals on the walls, all over the walls, big murals. Antiques, lots of antiques. And new carpets all over the house" (Nugent 7:46-8:55). In this way, his propensity to blur the past with the present is signified as he desires new murals and new carpets and as many antiques as money can buy. After being informed of Nick's presence at the party, Gatsby, wearing a black tuxedo, approaches Nick and inquires about whether or not he is enjoying the party. When Nick, not knowing the man with whom he speaks is Gatsby, tells the stranger that "This Gatsby must be quite a character" (Nugent 12:49- 12:51) and he doubts Gatsby knows for himself why he hosts the elaborate parties. Gatsby, without hesitation, informs Nick that he thinks Gatsby does understand the purpose of the parties. "You see, I'm Gatsby" (Nugent 13:08-13:10).

5.1.1.

Though not clearly presented until thirty minutes into the film, his character is implied through Nick's voice-over noting his presence while a hand bearing a large pinky ring is often visible indicating the wearer of the ring is, indeed Gatsby. That same ring is seen on the hand holding a silver serving tray above Nick's head as Nick ascends a staircase during the party he attends at Gatsby's mansion. Like a choreographed dance, the ringed hand passes the empty tray to a butler and the man whose hand bears the ring remains a mystery as only his black-suit-covered arm and hand are visible to the viewer while he begins talking to the slightly intoxicated

Nick. With his back to the camera, he takes a martini from a tray beside him and, just as the previously promised fireworks begin in the background, Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) turns to greet the camera. With his short brown hair parted to the side and slicked back with precision, and wearing a pristine white shirt and fitted tuxedo, the symmetrically chiseled face of Gatsby smiles directly at the audience as though he knows the answer to some riddle not yet posed. He raises his glass to the air in a near cartoonish manner as he introduces himself: “I’m afraid I haven’t been a very good host, old sport. You see, I’m Gatsby” (Luhmann 29:46-29:55).

Essence Extracted for Interstice One/Trace One

Recalling that by reviewing the findings of Interstice One/Trace One I am attempting to seek the presence of a maintained essence in these moments of inspection, I note that Gatsby does introduce himself to the audience throughout all five interstices. Though Thread Four introduces Gatsby as a gangster early on, which initially seems to differ significantly from the presentation of Gatsby in the other threads, the *idea* of Gatsby as a man of questionable morals is indeed introduced in the other threads via the utilization of rumor and innuendo in creating Gatsby’s persona. In this way, all of the threads present a Gatsby burdened by mystery and rendered in glimpses. Thus, this specific moment of the remediated narrative has, indeed, maintained its essence. What one chooses to do with this knowledge is entirely open ended. Creators of a future textus may choose to apply cultural studies to the ways in which each of the threads signifies Gatsby’s introduction. However, the creator of this textus is satisfied to have applied the framework of the textus in order to systematically demonstrate the way an essence may be identified.

Examining Interstice Two, “Daisy put her arm through his abruptly” (Fitzgerald 93), or the point where Gatsby and Daisy meet, I continue to list the ways each thread presents Trace One, Character and Dialogue, seeking how each thread signifies Gatsby and Daisy’s reunion.

1.2.1.

Having manipulated a chance meeting with Daisy at Nick's cottage, Gatsby's previously cool, mysterious demeanor is complicated by perceptible emotion. Nick notes that Gatsby "in a white flannel suit, silver shirt, and gold-colored tie" (Fitzgerald 84) "literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room" (Fitzgerald 89) of Nick's house because of Daisy's presence. Gatsby who, just moments earlier had reclined "against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease" (Fitzgerald 86), is now "like an ecstatic patron of recurrent light" (Fitzgerald 89). He emerges in this scene, however momentarily, from the shadows of the previous chapters, in order to showcase his wealth for Daisy in the hopes of her acceptance of him. While accompanying Daisy and Nick on a tour of his "splendid" (Fitzgerald 90) house, Gatsby "revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response from [Daisy's] well-loved eyes" (Fitzgerald 91). During this interstice, Nick notes that Gatsby "had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third" (Fitzgerald 92). "After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock" (Fitzgerald 91-92). Following Gatsby's overt display of emotion, after he had "sat down and shaded his eyes and began to laugh" (Fitzgerald 91), Gatsby, Nick, and Daisy stand "in a row looking at the corrugated surface of the Sound. 'If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay,' said Gatsby. 'You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock'" (Fitzgerald 92). This interstice occurs just then as "Daisy put her arm through his abruptly" (Fitzgerald 93), but Nick notes that Gatsby

seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one. (Fitzgerald 93)

2.2.1.

With sweat on his forehead, Gatsby (Robert Redford) appears anxious and introspective. Wearing a fitted off-white suit with a silvery blue shirt and gold tie, he paces the floor in the living room of Nick's cottage before sitting finally beside the fireplace. After announcing that he should leave because he believes Daisy will not come, Gatsby, staring down at his feet confides in Nick and the viewer that "This is a mistake. This is a terrible mistake" (Clayton 50:29-50:36). With childlike awe, he stares speechlessly at Daisy when their eyes meet. Once inside his room, he maintains the actions of a child in that he openly seeks Daisy's validation by showing her (and Nick and the audience) his slew of multicolored shirts stacked on shelves inside his closet. He brags to her about having his shirts sent to him by a man in England who is mindful of the current fashion trends. Upon seeing her glee, he throws the shirts one by one up in the air and lets them fall down on Daisy and Nick like rain. When Daisy begins to cry, Gatsby is startled and seemingly does not know how to react. Daisy begins to laugh once more then, and Gatsby too chuckles, obviously relieved. While seated across from Daisy, Gatsby, wearing a white sweater and slacks, sits with his hands crossed under his chin in a dark leather chair. Daisy asks him why he sits so far away from her. He responds: "I find it difficult [. . .] It's been a very long

time since I've been able to look at you" (Clayton 1:03:09-1:03:19). This causes Daisy to reach her hand out to him. He leans forward as though prepared to touch her, but stops short.

3.2.1.

There are two Gatsby characters signified during this interstice: the Gatsby of 1917 and the Gatsby of five years later. While Jordan is relaying the story of Gatsby and Daisy's love affair that took place in Louisville in 1917, the stage directions note that "*Gatsby appears in uniform [. . .] Gatsby takes Daisy in his arms and they dance, lost in each other*" (Levy 28). In the action of the play taking place in 1922, as Gatsby waits in Nick's cottage for Daisy to arrive, his character "*paces, looking extremely nervous. He wears a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold tie, and is carrying a leather-bound album*" (Levy 30). Gatsby is to appear "*anxious*" as he "*fidgets, panicking*" until he sees Daisy and is then "*enchanted by the awkwardness between them*" (Levy 30). He "*stares at [Daisy] as if she were a dream*" (Levy 31). After Gatsby "*takes Daisy to window*" (Levy 32), to point out for her his mansion across the water he asks her if she likes his house.

GATSBY. See how the whole front of it catches the light?

DAISY. Oh, Jay, it's splendid. (32)

In this way, Gatsby seeks Daisy's approval, thinking the grandeur of his possessions may warrant affection from Daisy.

4.2.1.

As Gatsby (Alan Ladd) approaches the cottage leading a line of maids and waiters carrying baskets and trays of food for the tea, Gatsby, wearing two-toned Saddle Oxford shoes and smoking a cigarette, is dressed in light slacks, dark sports jacket, light shirt and dark tie.

Possessing more confidence, Gatsby exudes an air of authority as he nearly pushes his way into the cottage and instructs his servants to prepare for the tea with Daisy. Though he informs Nick that his butler had taken a call confirming the time for the tea to begin, Gatsby may or may not be lying, since the viewer is not made privy to this exchange. After Nick calls the Buchanan home asking to speak to Daisy, he informs Gatsby that Daisy is out with Jordan Baker. Gatsby, spreading his lips in a somewhat arrogant smile, tells Nick that Jordan is the one who extended Nick's invitation for tea, but withholds the fact that he compensated Jordan for doing so. Thus, Gatsby is rendered as a shrewd character, capable of getting what he wants by any means. Without giving Nick a chance to refuse that the tea continue to take place, Gatsby steps to the side, instructing his servants to enter and set up for Daisy's arrival.

Gatsby's demeanor shifts as the mantelpiece clock strikes five; he becomes nervous before moving to sit on the arm of a chair opposite Nick and slumps his shoulders, seemingly defeated. After hearing the car outside, Gatsby springs to his feet and instructs Nick to go help the ladies. From the window, he watches Nick assist Jordan and Daisy as they make their way from the car to the cottage in the rain. Gatsby once again wrings his hands, rushes out another door to the side porch and waits, his back pressed against the wall like a burglar, for the others to enter. He rushes to the front door, places his hand over the doorbell, hesitates, and withdraws. When he does enter, Gatsby passes Nick, striding across the room once again with purpose. He does not waiver from staring at Daisy even as he stops several feet from where she stands with her back turned to him. As she turns, his face softens. When she steps toward him and offers him her hand, he walks to her slowly, putting his hand in hers, still peacefully transfixed.

5.2.1.

This thread offers two possibilities for the signification of Interstice Two. First possibility: Having appeared anxious and nervous while waiting for Daisy to arrive, Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) has calmed considerably by the time Nick informs him and Daisy that the rain has stopped outside. Rising from the couch, Gatsby, wearing an off-white fitted suit, silver shirt, bronze colored vest and gold tie, walks to the French doors beside him, leading to a covered terrace overlooking the Sound. As he pushes open the doors, he adjusts his vest, pushes his hands in his pockets, and smiles proudly as he looks out across the water, the sun filtering through the clouds allowing for a spotlight-like effect on Daisy's house opposite. After telling Daisy to come look at the view, he positions himself beside a white column, leaving his hand to linger on the back of the column. When Daisy walks to stand near him, on the other side of the column, she places her lace-gloved hand on top of his, causing Gatsby to look at her as she tells him that the house across the bay belongs to her. Looking from their touching hands to Daisy's face, Gatsby tells her that he knows where she lives.

The second possible signification of this interstice occurs after Gatsby, having led Nick and Daisy on the "royal tour" (Luhrmann 1:00:38-1:00:39) of his estate (squeezing oranges in the press, swimming, driving golf balls off the float in the water), strolls behind Daisy as she walks through the grand rooms of his house. Now dressed in beige linen slacks with matching summer sweater, Gatsby watches Daisy skipping up the marble spiral staircase and, grinning, whispers to Nick beside him, "She makes it look so, so splendid. Don't you think, old sport?" (Luhrmann 1:01:42-1:01:47).

Gatsby rushes in front of Daisy once they enter his two-storied bedroom. He climbs the twisting metal staircase leading to the exposed second story. As he begins grabbing the

multicolored handkerchiefs and shirts, throwing them so that they rain down below onto Daisy, Gatsby cheerfully announces that he has a man in England who buys his clothes, sending over new styles at the beginning of every season. Laughing, his face shining as he looks down at Daisy below on the bed and senses her glee, Gatsby's mood shifts once Daisy falls on the bed, covering her face with the shirts and straw hat. He moves slowly to sit beside Daisy on the bed, his brows scrunching in concern, not understanding why Daisy is crying. When he asks her what is wrong, she tells him that she is sad, but then hesitates. Seemingly remembering Nick is above watching them both, Daisy and Gatsby look up until Nick moves behind a curtain, allowing Daisy to continue. She laughs then, saying, "Cause I've never seen such beautiful shirts before" (Luhrmann 1:03:20-1:03:23). She stretches out on the bed, putting her head in his lap. Seemingly oblivious to the fact that Daisy is so close to him, he stares out the window to Daisy's house across the water. "If it wasn't for the mist, we could see the green light" (Luhrmann 1:03:45-1:03:50), Gatsby says pensively. When Daisy asks what green light Gatsby is referencing, he stretches his head as if straining to still see the light and points out the window. "The one that burns all night at the end of your dock" (Luhrmann 1:03:58-1:04:02). No longer cheerful, Gatsby seems lost in his thoughts, tired, exhausted.

Essence Extracted for Interstice Two/Trace One

With the exception of Thread Two (1974), the remaining threads present Daisy as the one possessing the agency to touch Gatsby first. Thread Two still gives Daisy the opportunity to offer her hand to Gatsby, but differs in that Gatsby is presented the option not to accept Daisy's hand in return. Though all of the threads, including Thread Two, suggest that Gatsby's driving force over the years has been to reunite with Daisy, Gatsby is not rendered as satisfied upon experiencing Daisy's touch. This inability to be satisfied with the present moment manifests itself in Gatsby's pensive demeanor following Daisy's touch (or attempt to touch), signifying

Gatsby's preoccupation with the past. While Gatsby is characterized similarly in each of the five threads, the essence of Daisy touching Gatsby is not maintained in this interstice, as Clayton's adaptation does not let Gatsby take Daisy's hand when it is offered him. The textus is a framework which offers its creator a space to house encounters with multiple adapted media and engage with those adaptations by isolating specific points of inspection and criteria to be examined at those specific points in order to determine whether or not the essence of the remediated narrative has been maintained. The textus is only the framework; what one does with the findings is completely left to the discretion of the creator of each textus. That the essence is not maintained and is absent only from Clayton's film may prove interesting enough to another scholar to take up another project in order to determine a hypothesis as to why this may be the case. The textus is only the vehicle to elucidate the absence (or presence in the instance of Interstice One) of the essence.

The final examination for this prototype demonstrating how to overlay the traces in order to determine if the essence of this specific moment of the narrative has been maintained is of Interstice Three, "No telephone message arrived" (Fitzgerald 161), or the point when Gatsby is in the pool awaiting Daisy's phone call. Below I list the ways that each of the five threads present Trace One, so as to conclude whether or not the essence is collectively intact.

1.3.1.

The last description of Gatsby before his death comes just prior to the interstice when Nick is still with him the morning after the wreck. However, the description does not detail the Gatsby of the narrative's present action, but harkens back to the Gatsby who, returning from the war, has gone to Louisville to be in the city where he had once known love. The younger Gatsby journeyed to the city using the "last of his army pay. He stayed there a week, walking

the streets where their footsteps had clicked together [. . .] Just as Daisy's house had always seemed to him more mysterious and gay than other houses, so his idea of the city itself, even though she was gone from it, was pervaded with a melancholy beauty" (Fitzgerald 152). The Gatsby Nick describes is one who is searching for something/someone who is not there. As the young Gatsby is between cars on a train, watching a "yellow trolley" full of "people in it who might once have seen the pale magic of [Daisy's] face along the casual street" (Fitzgerald 153), he seemingly abandons the idea of recapturing his past. The young Gatsby "stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever" (Fitzgerald 153). While Nick's account suggests that the young Gatsby relinquished his hope of one day reuniting with Daisy, Gatsby's gesture of snatching "a wisp of air, to save a fragment" of Daisy implies that he does maintain a glimpse of hope. This contradiction is mirrored in the narrative's forward action twice. After Gatsby refuses to leave town following the wreck, Nick offers that Gatsby "couldn't possibly leave Daisy until he knew what she was going to do. He was clutching at some last hope and [Nick] couldn't bear to shake him free" (Fitzgerald 148).

The second way in which Gatsby's conflicting persona is signified comes just as Nick is telling Gatsby goodbye for the final time. After Nick tells Gatsby that he'll call him later that day, Gatsby once again seeks reassurance from Nick: "'I suppose Daisy'll call too.' He looked at [Nick] anxiously, as if he hoped [Nick would] corroborate this" (Fitzgerald 154). After Nick halfheartedly assures Gatsby that Daisy will call, Gatsby's last spoken words in the novel are to Nick: "Well, good-by", before his "face broke into that radiant and understanding smile" (Fitzgerald 154).

Having instructed his gardener not to drain the pool, since he'd "never used that pool all summer" (Fitzgerald 153), Gatsby

Put on his bathing-suit and left word with the butler that if any one phoned word was to be brought to him at the pool. He stopped at the garage for a pneumatic mattress that had amused his guests during the summer, and the chauffeur helped him pump it up. Then he gave instructions that the open car wasn't to be taken out under any circumstances [. . .] Gatsby shouldered the mattress and stared for the pool. Once he stopped and shifted it a little, and the chauffeur asked him if he needed help, but he shook his head and in a moment disappeared among the yellowing trees. (Fitzgerald 161)

And so, while Nick's later account offers that Gatsby was found in the pool dead, Gatsby's actions have him shouldering a weight and moving to blend in with the colors of autumn.

2.3.1.

The interstice begins with Gatsby (Robert Redford), wearing a white monogrammed robe over his black and white striped bathing suit, cranking the record player, letting Nick Lucas's "When You and I Were Seventeen" to play. Gatsby pauses beside the record player, as though thinking about the lyrics, as though remembering his past with Daisy. After removing his robe, Gatsby pushes back the white sheers trimmed in blue which divide the veranda from the pool itself; he dives into the water and swims to the dark blue float already positioned in the pool. Once situated on the float, he hears Daisy's voice whisper his name, turns expectantly toward the house calling her name. Seeing no one there, seeing only the silent candlestick phone on the table, he smiles and seemingly continues to wait for Daisy to communicate with him again. Seemingly believing he hears Daisy again, Gatsby turns once more toward the veranda's ghostly

sheers blowing in the wind and calls out her name anew. Gatsby does not see who fires the shots into his back. Still lying on the float, his body arches upward as the first bullet rips through his back. He falls onto the float as the second bullet hits his side. The subsequent two bullets cause Gatsby to slide off the float so that he is under the water now, streams of red gushing from his body.

3.3.1.

Gatsby's character is presented as one in need of confession in this thread. Just as "*Gatsby enters dressed in a robe and swimsuit*" (Levy 51), he informs Nick that he cannot leave Daisy before he apologizes to Nick:

GATSBY. I owe you an apology for some of the lies. (*Gatsby drops the slight affection and reveals his true self to Nick.*) James Gatz—that's really, or at least legally, my name. We're cousins, Nick. You and me. Two boys out of the Midwest who've come East to make their fortunes. My parents were farm people up in North Dakota. Good people, honest, but poor. So I invented the sort of "Jay Gatsby" that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent and ran away to make my fortune. And then I met Daisy. Of course, I expected her to throw me over—after all, what did I have to offer?—some poor farm boy—but she didn't, because she was in love with me. Is in love with me. And now I have her again. And this time it's going to be the way it should have been. (Levy 52)

This long speech lets the reader understand that Gatsby is still pregnant with the delusion that he and Daisy have a future together, despite Myrtle's death, despite Daisy's inability to tell Tom that he never loved him.

After Nick tells Gatsby that he will call him around noon, Gatsby once more seeks reassurance from his "good friend, Nick" (Levy 52), asking him if he believes Daisy will call him soon as well. Gatsby's need to ask about Daisy's call implies that while he appears confident of his future with Daisy outwardly, he is still plagued by doubt and struggles not to give in to his insecurities regarding his future with Daisy. Following Nick's turning to praise Gatsby, the stage directions note that "*Gatsby gives [Nick] a salute. Nick exits. Gatsby puts a floating mattress in the 'pool' and lies on it, placing the phone next to him, staring up into the hopeful sky. Wilson rises from Myrtle's body—pulls out a large revolver—slowly approaches the pool—and fires five shots, violently murdering Gatsby*" (Levy 52). While the physical body of the actor playing Gatsby's character may remain onstage briefly as the action concludes, Gatsby is dead, having never received the call from Daisy.

4.3.1.

Following Daisy's pleading with Tom to call Gatsby to warn him that George Wilson is armed and looking for him, this interstice begins with Gatsby (Alan Ladd) stretched out beside his pool wearing black swim trunks. Nick saunters beside Gatsby, telling him his phone is ringing. Nick seems eager to answer the phone, but Gatsby, his hair slicked back against his head, dismisses the phone, saying, "Let it ring" (Nugent 1:27:01-1:27:03). Without changing expression, Gatsby announces that he's "through with all this, Nick [. . .] trying to be something that [he's] not: a gentleman" (Nugent 1:27:05-1:27:10). Looking up at Nick who sits near him on a bench, Gatsby moves to perch himself at Nick's feet, eager now to share with Nick his

thoughts. Zealously, Gatsby tells Nick: “When I got home here last night I started thinking; I thought all night long. Nick, I made a mistake somewhere. I thought I was right. I thought old Dan Cody was right, but look what I’ve done to myself and everybody else to get where I am, and for what? To be like the Buchanans” (Nugent 1:27:39-1:27:57).

As George Wilson lurks awkwardly on the other side of the pool, Gatsby tells Nick that he refuses to shirk responsibility for Myrtle’s death, that he intends to “pay up” and he intends to “wait right here until the cops find that car and if they don’t find it, [he’ll] call them. [He owes] that to a kid named Jimmy Gatz [. . .] What’s going to happen to kids like Jimmy Gatz if guys like [him] don’t tell them we’re wrong. Maybe after [Gatsby does his] time and start over” (Nugent 1:28:31-1:28:50). Gatsby’s speech is cut short as George fires a bullet through Gatsby’s chest. Gatsby’s head jerks to one side and his face contorts in pain as he turns and jumps into the pool, still able to swim across to the other side where George stands, revolver in hand. As Gatsby emerges from the water and holds on to the side of the pool, George fires two more shots into Gatsby’s chest. Gatsby’s body disappears into the water.

5.3.1.

Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio), in a black swimsuit, stands on the diving board staring out across the water toward Daisy’s house before he dives into the circular blue pool of water. Under the water, his long body swims the length of the pool. As he emerges on the other side, he hears the phone ringing as he slowly ascends the pool’s ladder. Smiling briefly, Gatsby gazes in the direction of Daisy’s house once more before he feels the bullet pierce his chest from behind. Seemingly confused, he touches the wound with his hand. Looking back to the Sound, the only word spoken by Gatsby during this interstice is the whispering of Daisy’s name. His face fills with a torment that may be understood as fear, not for himself, but for Daisy. In this way,

believing that Daisy is on the phone, that she has accepted him, Gatsby's face is consumed by this look of fearful torture as he realizes that his future with Daisy will not come to fruition. His eyes still focused on the Buchanan mansion, the tension leaves Gatsby's face as his eyes glaze over and he falls back into the water with a crash. In a fluid web of red, Gatsby sinks to the bottom of the pool.

Essence Extracted for Interstice Three/Trace One

Though Thread Four (1949) presents a ringing phone as part of the diegesis as does Thread Five (2013), none of the threads actually present a phone message arriving for Gatsby. Gatsby rejects Daisy and Tom Buchanan in Thread Four, refusing to answer the phone, though Gatsby wouldn't have known with any certainty Tom was the one who was calling. Though Thread Five leads Gatsby (and the audience) to believe that Daisy has called prior to Wilson shooting him, the audience realizes that Daisy has not called, that Gatsby has died without Daisy, just as he does in all of the other threads. In this way, though every single thread is rendered differently, the outcome is the same—Gatsby does not talk to Daisy on the phone. Thus, the essence is maintained for this interstice in each of the five threads.

Though multiple media are utilized in rendering the above, extracting *what* is signified in the threads' interstices as opposed to being distracted by *how* things are presented is possible. While this prototype only examines the ways in which Trace One presents itself in the three interstices of the five threads, other textus-coordinates could be utilized in order to seek the plausibility of solidifying the singular "essence" of the collective presentations. The value of the textus is that by adding remediated narratives to the framework despite the form in which those narratives are presented alleviates the impetus to utilize fidelity discourse as the standard engagement with adaptations. The framework also extends the discourse of adaptation to encompass media other than the novel to film paradigm. Perhaps most importantly, the textus

gives its creator the agency to determine for him/herself what criteria will be examined and what points of inspection will be isolated as he/she seeks to find whether or not the essence of those particular points of the adapted narrative have remained intact.

HOW-TO MANUAL

The textus need not be accessible only to scholars interested in adaptation studies. Indeed the framework may be utilized by anyone who encounters adaptations despite their presented form. For the purpose of this brief how-to manual, I will detail a few ways the framework may be useful in the classroom setting. Though students of other disciplines may find the textus useful in mapping the outcomes of given criteria, I will narrow the focus of this manual to address exercises for the literature and film classrooms, though the specifications of the exercises may be adjusted to fit the course level in which the framework is being used.

Print off blank grids such as the chart utilized in the Introduction on page 29 of this dissertation. Divide students into small groups of four to five students. Assign roles within the groups such as Organizer, Secretary, Time-Keeper, and Librarian. The Organizer will be the student responsible for scheduling meeting times outside of class, and/or organizing viewing sessions when watching films is necessary, as well as scheduling time to interact with videogames or view plays, etc. The Secretary is responsible for keeping the journal detailing the findings of the group and filling in the textus chart noting what criteria will be sought once the threads to be added to the textus are determined by the group. Because this may be the most time-consuming job within the group, two students may need to share this responsibility. The Time-Keeper is responsible for making sure that the texts (movies, novels, plays, videogames, etc.) are returned to the Librarian on time, so as to grant other groups to access to the same texts. This student is also responsible for keeping track of not only the time spent outside of class, but ensuring that any preliminary materials required by the instructor are turned in on time as well, as the application of the textus may be a semester-long exercise, and as such the instructor may want periodic assignments turned in to track the students' progress. The Librarian of each group

is responsible for checking-out the material from the instructor, as the instructor may wish to limit the adaptational sets used by the students so as to ensure he/she is familiar with all of the possible threads prior to the students' engagement with them.

After handing out the blank grids, inform the students that you will be using the textus as a framework to come at some conclusion regarding adaptations systematically. Give the students a list of possible adaptational sets, presenting the list in no particular order so as not to influence their decision of inclusion. After giving them time to decide which adaptational set they choose, have them list the order they will encounter the adaptations and ask that they stick to this order. They should choose their first thread to include in the textus and based on their experience with this thread, isolate as many points of investigation as they decide is necessary, with the understanding that a minimum of three interstices be chosen to represent what they determine to be the beginning, middle, and ending of the narrative. The number of traces each group should isolate is dependent on the instructor's wishes and learning objectives. The students should journal their findings, labeling each trace with care. The instructor may wish for the students to present their findings, or a portion of their findings, at the end of the semester, which would offer an opportunity for class discussion.

Three possible exercises for utilizing the textus:

- 1.) Choose traces based upon a particular critical approach.
 - a. Have students engage what this shows us about the role criticism and theory play in unpacking a text, and how it is a mutable process leading to multiple meaning-making opportunities. They can observe the literal "play" they can produce.
- 2.) Choose traces which focus on audience expectation of the artist and the subject—this can be grounded in Reader-Response criticism, specifically that of Iser.

- a. Omit genre and media conventions from the overall approach and discuss particularly the role the *artist* plays in the creation of meaning based upon an audience's expectations of that particular artist. Or discuss particularly the role certain *content* or *subject matter* plays in the creation of meaning based upon an audience's expectations of a particular subject/content.
 - i. The student can use this approach to see the disruption of or coincidence of expectations based on the artist and/or the subject.
 - ii. Possible examples: *Aquarius* on NBC—Charles Manson as subject or C. S. Lewis as rendered through adapted media as a subject; Musical cover songs such as Nick Cave vs. Johnny Cash—artist expectations.
 - b. This approach can be applicable to every level of study. The more advanced the course, the more particularly this approach can be molded to the study of a particular writer, auteur, artist, or theory. The more general the course, the more a generalized study of the function audience expectation plays in meaning-making can be studied.
- 3.) Use the interstices/traces to have students chart the structure of an overall text in order to determine what sort of “story” the text(s) is.
- a. The student will chart the structure of each adaptation noting what particular qualities the narrative presents.
 - b. For example: Chiastic structure; an inward/outward structure indicative of horror stories, such as a stranger comes to town; a lipogram (what is omitted and why); a folktale; the picaresque, the “road” story.

- c. Students can be asked to think how each text employs a particular structure in order to focus more on certain threads than others, asking themselves how each thread might lead to an understanding of *why* the choice of similarity or difference was made.

Not only will using the textus in the classroom aid the students in engaging with adaptations, by including adapted narratives presented in varied media, students will no longer feel the need to be preoccupied by fidelity discourse, i.e. the students may say to one another “the book was better” but that evaluative claim need not be automatic, and need not be based on a notion that the book was created first chronologically. In this way, the textus is a framework which is able to assist not only those already interested in adaptation studies, but is accessible to any student who encounters adaptations on a regular basis.

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