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**Fashioning Film Space: A Closer Look at  
the Effect of Costume, Set Design and  
Sound in Baz Luhrmann's  
*The Great Gatsby* (2013)**

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# 1 Introduction

Baz Luhrmann's movies have been loved by as many as they have been criticized, which is reflected in the mixed reviews and controversy surrounding his works (Cook 4). Beginning with the so-called Red Curtain Trilogy spanning the films *Strictly Ballroom* (1993), *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (1996) and *Moulin Rouge* (2001), Luhrmann has established himself as a director of colorful, fast-cut movies that combine the historical with the contemporary in unconventional ways. Being involved in all aspects of his films, from screenwriting to directing, production and more, Luhrmann has been referred to as a contemporary auteur (Khodamoradpour and Anushiravani 69; Malíčková and Malíček 209), who has a "complex cooperation" (Malíčková and Malíček 226) with his wife, costume and production designer Catherine Martin.<sup>1</sup> Though intensely researching the historical period that she is recreating, Martin prioritizes "feelings and moods" (Bauer 250) over historical accuracy, a fact that is reflected in all cinematic collaborations with Luhrmann, as their films always feature modern, anachronous elements (Bauer 250).

Luhrmann and Martin have collaborated on the majority of Luhrmann's movies together (Bauer 249). Taking inspiration from Classical Hollywood Cinema, meaning Hollywood films until 1960 (Cameron 4), the two have developed "a bold aesthetic that borrows heavily from opera and musical theater. Their signature style is characterized by a heightened reality, often in excessive, luxurious, and camp ways" (Bauer 250). In his book *Baz Luhrmann*, Pam Cook further points out the "overheated" (3) look of Luhrmann's films, as well as the "dramatic use of colour design that complements the fast editing pace and overtly mobile camera" (3). It is not just the visual dimension that is noticeable about Luhrmann's movies, though. Sound as well can be regarded as playing a crucial role in the overall cinematic style that is employed, as is noted by Chibnall:

His reality is the hyperreality made possible by digital technologies, the image electronically airbrushed, edited, and colour-enhanced to perfection, the soundscape digitally sculpted into an anachronistic mash-up of familiar melodies from the sublime J. S. Bach to the ineffable Lana del Ray (96).

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<sup>1</sup> Martin has won four Academy Awards for her work, two for Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design for *Moulin Rouge*, and two for Best Costume Design and Best Production Design for *The Great Gatsby* (2013) (Bauer 250), making her "the most awarded Australian in Oscar history" (Bauer 249).

These collective observations illustrate that Luhrmann and Martin pursue their own specific vision in filmmaking, as can be seen, moreover, by their work having been labeled “authentic and exceptional” (Malíčková and Malíček 213), with “ostentatious aesthetic characteristics” (Malíčková and Malíček 225). It is therefore not far-fetched to assume that such a distinctive style of filmmaking, featuring a unique, striking aesthetic, calls for a detailed analysis of its aesthetic features and their effects.

This bachelor’s thesis will take a closer look at the effect of costume, set design and sound in Baz Luhrmann’s *The Great Gatsby* (2013),<sup>2</sup> arguing that these elements constitute the fashion of the movie, together creating and conveying mood as well as mental spheres, while simultaneously influencing aspects of temporality within the diegesis. It will be shown how the film is permeated by an atmosphere of nostalgia and melancholy by means of fashion, with the past being a constant presence in the movie.

As a basis for this argumentation, a theoretical framework is developed. Firstly, Giuliana Bruno’s text *Surface, Fabric, Weave: The Fashioned World of Wong Kar-wai* will be used as a groundwork to establish the relationship between costume and set design. Bruno argues for an interconnection between the two elements, comparing costume to architecture and vice versa, stating that the lines between costume and the set surrounding it become blurred in Wong Kar-wai’s cinema. She draws the conclusion that both elements jointly fashion the film space and, in doing so, create mood in the film. Relying on Deleuze’s philosophy of *The Fold*, Bruno claims that fashion can transport the inner lives of the characters to the surface, making it visible to the audience. Reviewing her observations, Bruno demands for a broader definition of fashion in film, one that accounts for the interconnection of costume with its filmic back drop, the two elements jointly contributing to the aesthetic construction of the film space.

Based on these assumptions, a second framework regarding music’s role in the cinematographic expression is combined with this concept. Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick introduce the concept of the ‘musicalized image’ in their text *The «Musicalised Image»: A Joint Aesthetic of Music and Image in Film*. In this paper, they argue that film music has traditionally been analyzed from a musicological point of view, perceived as an autonomous entity that merely supports the visuals and can function as a sign on its own. The authors assert that an approach of this kind disregards the specificity of the medium, since the methods for the analysis of film music do not differ significantly from those utilized in an analysis of music in video games, for instance. Therefore, they propose a new theoretical

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<sup>2</sup> Henceforth: *TGG*

concept titled the ‘musicalized image’, in which the image in film does not simply encompass a visual dimension, but also an auditory one that accounts for music’s inclusion in the image.

The concept of the musicalized image is expanded for the purpose of this thesis to account for all types of sound in film as well. This is a logical consequence of the definition given by Torelló and Oliver in their framework, since it aims to incorporate the motion of soundwaves into their construct, and soundwaves do not distinguish between music and other kinds of noise. In accordance with that observation, the term ‘musicalized image’ is substituted by the ‘auditorized image’. The sonic dimension now a part of the image, an enlargement of Bruno’s definition of fashion is in order, one that considers the interplay of sound and visuals. Fashion in this thesis does not simply consist of costume and set design but also sound. All three elements jointly create and convey mood in film as well as transport the characters’ mental spheres.

Since mood is a central aspect of this thesis, the subsequent section is concerned with defining the phenomenon as well as determining its relevance in film. Robert Sinnerbrink argues that moods are responsible for shaping how a film is presented. Crucial here is the arrangement of aesthetic elements within a scene, among which he lists costume, set design and sound, supporting this thesis’ claim that fashion plays an essential part in constructing mood. Furthermore, moods in film can orient the audience within the fictional world and make them susceptible to having certain emotional responses that are encouraged by the narrative. Film mood can thus lay the groundwork for triggering a matching response in audiences. The notion of mood discussed here is thus something that can be found within the movie itself, a quality of the artwork that can be analyzed, instead of a feeling that is evoked arbitrarily and belongs to the audience.

In a next step, fashion’s connection to time in film is explored, following the argumentation that the three elements of fashion are capable of communicating notions of temporality in film. To investigate this properly, different concepts of time in relation to cinema are introduced, focusing on the temporality of the diegesis. For this, Henri Bergson’s idea of ‘duration’ is used as a theoretical basis upon which possible applications to film theory are implemented. Additionally, it is stated that fashion can help in portraying various narratives set in different points of time, helping to bridge the gap between these temporally separate storylines and thereby ensuring a smooth transition between them, as well as cause a constant mood of nostalgia and melancholy to be present in the film.

In the ensuing analysis of *TGG*, a few selected scenes of the movie are examined in detail. Each of these scenes provides a rich ground for the investigation of mood and

temporality, demonstrating the various ways in which fashion works. At first, the scene at the beginning of the main narrative will be analyzed, when Nick spends the afternoon and evening at Tom and Daisy's estate. Afterward, Gatsby and Daisy's reunion is the focus of analysis, followed by the first time Daisy sets foot on Gatsby's estate, when Gatsby shows her around. Nick and Gatsby's conversation at Gatsby's pool, after the second party scene, is the next object of analysis, before the end scene of the movie is scrutinized in a manner of concluding the main body of this thesis.

## **2 Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Redefining Fashion in Film**

#### **2.1.1 Set Design and Costume as Fashion in Film**

Traditionally, fashion in film refers to the costumes that are featured in a movie. In accordance with this approach, fashion in film can thus be understood as a synonym for costume design (Stutesman 18).<sup>3</sup> In her text *Surface, Fabric, Weave: The Fashioned World of Wong Kar-wai*, Giuliana Bruno puts forward a new definition of the term 'fashion' in film. Analyzing *In the Mood for Love* (2000), she argues that director Wong Kar-wai practices a kind of "visual tailoring" (85) in his film in which, creating a holistic fashion spanning not just costume but also set design:

He [Kar-wai] conceives of filmmaking as a total work of visual design, laboring on fashion not only as an art but as an architecture. Refusing to distinguish between costume and set design but rather treating them jointly, he tailors them together in filmic assemblage (Bruno 87).

In this, she draws a parallel between the director of a film and the role of a tailor, using both costume as well as set design as their resources when tailoring the cinematic space. The two

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<sup>3</sup> Many scholars have differentiated between three key terms in relation to clothing. Stutesman distinguishes between the terms 'clothes', 'fashion', and 'costume' by stating that 'clothes' are simply garments that one wears, 'fashion' refers to a trending type of clothing whereas 'costume' should be considered on a different level altogether as it is "created for a solely academic purpose" (21), having to fit the story and the character, as well as the actor of a movie (Stutesman 21-23). Köhler further offers that the term 'clothing' highlights the functional aspect of the garments, whereas 'costume' emphasizes the role of clothes within film, and 'fashion' is related to the role of clothes within society as a means to communicate the belonging to certain social categories (Köhler 3). In this thesis, 'costume' will be used as a synonym for any type of 'clothes' a character wears, whereas 'fashion' will receive its own unique definition, as presented in section 2.1.3.

elements are so intertwined that costume can be said to be constructed like architecture, while buildings and set design are tailored like costumes (Bruno 87). Interestingly, this phrasing of costumes or clothing being ‘built’ or ‘constructed’ can be found outside of Bruno’s text as well (Stutesman 21; Bruzzi 14), reflecting costume’s proximity to architecture.

Bruno thereby proposes a new, unified approach to fashion in film in which the two elements are perceived as belonging together and in which film space is “‘fashioned’” (84). The set and the costumes are thus designed in a way to complement each other (Bruno 88). Together, they become the fabric, or textile, of the film (97), likened to visual art by Bruno, as they jointly create an aesthetic image (85). This concept, here expressed in a theoretical, academic context, is repeated in a practical context as well, offering further validation: In a featurette on *TGG*, Director Baz Luhrmann also points out the significance of costume with regard to set design, explaining that in a medium close-up, where the upper body of a character takes up most of the screen space, costume inevitably becomes part of the set design:

The language I like to use is that the costume is really the set. Because, again, I’ve said it before, in a shot like this, most of the frame is my shirt (“The Great Gatsby (2013) - Razzle Dazzle: The Fashion of the ’20s – Featurette,” 01:16-01:24).

Having established this broader definition of fashion in film, Bruno then elaborates on the effect that this fashion has in film. For this, she incorporates Deleuze’s philosophy of *The Fold* into her theory (Bruno 90-91), stating that the fabric of fashion in film consists of folds and that because of these folds, inside and outside become two interchangeable concepts since the difference between the two dissolves in folded surfaces, and instead, a space residing in the middle of exterior and interior is formed (95-97). Bruno argues that the fold is a “reversible construction” (95), enabling pleats of matter such as folds of cloth to represent both inner and outer space (96). This is how fashion is able to transport inner mental spheres to the surface and convey mood (97).

The notion that costume is able to transport the inner lives of characters to the surface is in itself not unique to Bruno’s theory. Jane Gaines, prior to Bruno, already states that “there is a continuity between inner and outer rather than two discrepant parts” (184), and that costume is “key to the personality of the wearer” (184), which in this case refers to the character on the screen, not the actor portraying that character. This can also be observed in many actors’ reaction to wearing their character’s costumes, as it often helps them

“understand their character” (Stutesman 21), what they might think or what they might feel, therefore supporting the claim that costume can convey mental spheres. Similarly, Köhler also offers that costume is capable of conveying characters’ feelings (5).

What is new about Bruno’s theory, then, is that she not only refers to costume but extends this effect to set design as well. Set design and costume both blend together and envelop the characters on screen like a garment would, reflecting their innermost thoughts and feelings (Bruno 97-99).<sup>4</sup> Additionally, and in alignment with that, Bruno argues that fashion can create mood in film (89), elaborating that, when fashion unfolds as the costume-clad characters move through the matching filmic backdrop (or set), the mood, or the affect, of the film space is produced. The two elements of fashion cast a “mental image” (89), together contributing to the atmosphere of the film.

Bruno demands a broader definition of the term fashion in film, one that encompasses both set and costume design as well as production design<sup>5</sup> and the editing of the film (89-90).<sup>6</sup> This means that fashion is not just about the visual elements themselves but about how they interact with each other, how they are arranged to create the final product of the film. All of these visual elements contribute to the “aesthetic texture” (90) of the film. The following quote poignantly summarizes her main demands of a new fashion theory with respect to its impact on mood in film:

This sartorial theory should be able to address forms of fashioning that include the relation of clothes to the production of (mental) space; the clothing of space [...]; and the tailoring of visual fabrics and the dressing of surface (90).

This approach to fashion in film will be the base for this thesis’ theoretical framework. In the following section, the concept of ‘fashion’ in film will be expanded even further, making room for a two-dimensional approach to the image, as well as a three-dimensional approach to fashion.

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<sup>4</sup> Gaines notes that this can especially be observed in films belonging to the genre of melodrama, where the characters’ inner lives are reflected as signs in the set surrounding them (204). This is a relevant point in the context of this thesis, since *TGG* has also been labeled a “theatrical melodrama” (Chibnall 96) by critics.

<sup>5</sup> The terms ‘production design’ and ‘set design’ are often used interchangeably. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones states that production design “establishes the overall visual feel and look of a film by creating the settings, spaces and images which serve as the film’s backdrop” (130). It will be this definition that guides this thesis’ employment of the term ‘set design’.

<sup>6</sup> Though editing can also influence the creation of mood in cinema, this thesis will predominantly focus on set and costume design, whilst occasionally factoring in editing as well, when its contribution to the effect on mood and temporality in a scene is central. An equally detailed analysis of the effect of editing would be beyond the scope of this paper.



### 2.1.2 The Musicalized Image: Sound as Part of the Image

Historically, music has come in second to the visuals when talking about and doing research on film (Kniaż 84). The same can be said about sound in film in general, even though sound can be argued to be the more dominant mode of perception, since it cannot be escaped or missed as easily as the visuals can: ‘closing’ one’s ears, as opposed to one’s eyes, is only possible with the help of external objects (Gotto 84).

When scholars eventually did consider music in their work, analyzing music in film was mostly conducted from a musicological point of view, looking at the music as something standing on its own, simply being added to a film, instead of examining the final product that is created when music and image interact (Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick, 165-66). This can be observed, for example, in Neupert’s analysis of *The 400 Blows*, where he states that the score can be regarded as an “autonomous musical mini-text” (26). Problematic about this approach is, according to Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick, that music in film does not have its own theoretical framework, specific to the needs of this context, but rather a general framework that could also be applied to other formats such as music in the context of the opera (Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick 166).

In their article *The «Musicalised Image»: A Joint Aesthetic of Music and Image in Film*, Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick develop such a framework for analyzing music and image together as part of the same episteme in film. Considering music and image as a joint unit calls for a combination of different theoretical approaches from different disciplines, namely musicology and film studies, since music and image have been traditionally approached from these separate studies (166). Previously, only few theorists have studied the intersection of music and image as one episteme. Among them is Michael Chion with his work *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, in which he focuses on the viewers’ perception of image in combination with sound (Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick 167). Additionally, Wingstedt et al. note the immediate interplay of music and image by claiming that “what (we think) we see is to a large degree determined by what we hear” (194), arguing that music and image both influence the perception of the other when combined (Wingstedt et al. 194). After reviewing the state of the art of the literature, Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick conclude that a comprehensive, functional theoretical framework is needed, one that organizes the ideas and concepts from current research that are not yet fully developed and vary greatly from one another (167).

To build this framework, the two authors assume music in film to be a part of the sign, or the “cinematographic image” (168), which they prefer to call the “cinematographic

expression” (168), as this term better describes that the episteme does not simply contain or favor the image but leaves room for another element, such as music, to be a part of it. Relying on ideas from Chion, Burch and Balázs, Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick state that music in film should not be analyzed as a symbolic system that stands and works on its own but rather that a closer look at its potential as a sign in combination with the image should be taken.<sup>7</sup> Image and music should thus be considered as “two expressive elements [...] coexisting in one episteme, namely cinematography” (169) and should be analyzed within Film Studies instead of Musicology. Summarizing their theoretical considerations, the authors end their article by proposing the following definition of the ‘musicalized image’:

We define the «musicalised image» in the following way: *it is the flow of vibrations and waves, of sound and light that brings together the iconic and musical dimensions of the «image» in one episteme. The «musicalised image» is essentially an episteme of modernity, bidimensional; since it is an expressive device that combines elements of a diverse, if not contradictory, nature* (174).

The musicalized image thus not only combines the image with music but also contains the element of movement at its core.

This bachelor’s thesis will take this concept of the musicalized image and enlarge it to explicitly encompass not just music but all types of sound in film. Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick do occasionally mention sound in their considerations (e.g. 166) but do not clearly include it in their definition of the musicalized image. On the contrary, the fact that the term used is ‘musicalized’, and not ‘auditorized’, emphasizes the focus on music instead of all types of sound. More in accordance with their own definition, however, is a concept that incorporates “dialogue, noise, and music – all auditory channels of information” (Green 82), since sound waves do not only transport music but noise of all kinds. The neologism ‘auditorized image’ will therefore be favored for the framework employed in this thesis.

Normally, the terminology surrounding movies puts emphasis on the visuals, for example by using the phrase ‘to watch a movie’ (Wingstedt et al. 194), reflecting and

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<sup>7</sup> The terms ‘symbolic system’ and ‘sign’ stem from the field of semiotics, which is “the study of anything that can be taken as a sign” (Aiello 367), exploring the connection between the signifier and the signified (Chełkowska-Zacharewicz and Paliga 154-55), and which aims to uncover the meaning of text beneath its surface (Aiello 368). The signifier can apply to something in the physical world that can be perceived by the senses, whereas the signified represents an abstract concept (Chełkowska-Zacharewicz and Paliga 154-55). As long as a group of people can interpret a sign as representing the same thing, anything can become a sign (Aiello 367). There are various types of signs, one of them being the symbol (Chełkowska-Zacharewicz and Paliga 155), which is defined by its arbitrary link between signifier and signified (Ribó 89). The subfield of visual semiotics focuses on everything that can be seen such as images or interior design (Aiello 367), and Roland Barthes is considered the first semiologist to have examined these non-linguistic signs. In addition to images, he also studied music and fashion (Aiello 369), demonstrating that all three of these elements are important for constructing meaning. This will become a relevant notion in this thesis.

reinforcing the separation of visuals and sound. Based on the theoretical considerations of this section, this thesis' analysis in chapter three will not make use of the term 'viewer' or 'listener' as isolated entities, but rather refer to what the 'viewer-listener' may perceive while they are 'see-hearing' a given scene. If it were not for these combined terms, the theoretical idea would fail already in its application, as the executive style of the analysis would still reinforce the idea that viewing and listening are separable processes when see-hearing a movie.

Another limitation of a written analysis following this framework is the fact that, while screenshots could be utilized to illustrate the visual dimension of the auditorized image, all auditory aspects are unable to be incorporated into an appendix. Similarly, film stills would fail to capture any movement, rendering this visual point of reference as an insufficient tool as well. Analyses of this kind can therefore be conducted in a more precise manner in an oral presentation or in an electronic medium that can contain short excerpts from the movie to illustrate a point. To avoid any risk of the analysis being comprehended only visually and statically, this thesis will not rely on screenshots for reference, but rather on time stamps, encouraging readers to seek out the scenes alongside their perusal and see-hear them for themselves in their full extent.

### **2.1.3 A Three-Dimensional Approach to Fashion in Film**

For the purposes of this thesis, the theoretical frameworks presented in the previous two subchapters will be combined to form a three-dimensional approach to fashion in film. While Bruno remarks that there is an "aesthetic dialogue on spatio-visual grounds" (87), this thesis will argue for the existence of such a dialogue on spatio-visual-auditory grounds. As a consequence of incorporating sound into the episteme of the image, now 'auditorized', it seems only a logical consequence to include sound in Bruno's definition of fashion in film as well. The film space is thus not just fabricated on the visual dimension, but, equally, on the sonic one, with a focus on how these dimensions interact with each other in the creation of meaning.

It is thus not just visuals that can transport mental spheres and feelings of characters as suggested by Bruno, but also all types of auditory information that can be found in film. This is supported by Green, who argues that "music as a tool [] can expose the inner feelings and thoughts of characters" (81). Furthermore, music reflects the "general mood" (Green 82) of a film as well as actively creates meaning in film, but only in combination with the image (Green 84). This is a crucial point to remember when discussing fashion in film overall: that

fashion does not simply passively reflect but also actively construct, and it relies on all three elements to help build this construction. Wingstedt et al. additionally assert that the interplay of sound and visuals creates meaning in film (194), and the fact that music interacts with the other channels of sound as well means that it actively shapes the meaning of the narrative (197). It is not just music, however, that can contribute to the atmosphere of a film, but other types of ‘affective sound’ as well (Wierzbicki 156).

While Bruno’s approach is more concerned with the surface of and the textures of elements, relying mainly on a phenomenological approach, Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick’s concept has its basis in the field of semiotics, arguing for image and sound together functioning as a sign in film. This thesis considers both perspectives relevant with regard to fashion in film and strives to combine both in its analysis. Supporting this methodology, Köhler argues that the full potential of costume can only be understood through a combination of the two perspectives (1-2). In this work, fashion will therefore be shown to create mood and temporality both by means of the quality of its texture as well as through its capacity of serving as a symbol that supports the narrative. This latter notion is emphasized by Luhrmann, who states that when collaborating with the departments of costume, visual design and music, his choices are defined by considering what might work well in support of the narrative (*Sound of Cinema – Baz Luhrmann and Craig Armstrong*, 09:03-09:13).

This thesis does not mean to imply that the framework dealt with here is applicable to all types of movies. Rather, it intends to illustrate that there are certain movies, such as *TGG*, that demand for this interconnected approach to the three elements of fashion, which considers both a phenomenological as well as a semiotic perspective.

## **2.2 Mood in Film**

Since mood is produced and conveyed by fashion in film, and this thesis will make it a point to closely analyze how that is achieved, the following section is dedicated to mood in film to give a solid foundation for further analysis. Mood in film has been said to be a concept difficult to grasp and to define (Sinnerbrink 148). For Sinnerbrink, mood is an element that has an influence on the “aesthetic composition of a cinematic world” (154), contributing to the richness of the film space. He argues that the aesthetics of the image are crucial for the existence of mood, more so than the actual narrative of a film (149), meaning that there is an expressive dimension to the image that encompasses the aesthetics of mood. In

accordance with the concept of the auditorized image, this expressive dimension of the image is not only extended to the visual dimension of the image but also to the auditory one.

Sinnerbrink distinguishes between two approaches to mood in film: On the one hand, there is the atomistic approach, in which “mood is generated ‘subjectively’ by given mood cues” (155) and, on the other hand, there is the holistic approach, in which “mood reveals aspects of a fictional world in distinctive ways” (155). In his paper, Sinnerbrink pursues the latter notion, arguing that mood as an aesthetic element of a movie does not simply serve the purpose of triggering emotions in viewer-listeners, but rather, that the elements themselves are already “meaningful” (154) and “emotionally orienting” (154). The presentation and arrangement of the aesthetic elements are key for conveying mood in film (154-55), which echoes Bruno’s theorizations of the creation of mood as showcased in 2.1.1.

This notion of moods providing an emotional orientation can also be found in other works. According to Tarvainen et al., mood conveys an “affective intent” (1), which can either be translated into the desired emotional response in the viewer, or not. For example, a romantic film might intend to convey the desperation the main character feels after going through a break-up by means of mood but might instead elicit mockery in the viewer because they feel that the means employed to express this feeling are exaggerated. It is important to draw this distinction between the mood of the film and the emotional response in the viewer. This thesis will only focus on the former, as to investigate the emotional responses of viewers to the mood set by fashion in film, a different methodology and an entirely larger scope would be needed.

Tarvainen et al.’s ideas are mirrored in other works on mood as well: According to Greg M. Smith, mood in film is created by means of the film’s structure and is an essential pre-condition for generating a “predisposition” (42) in the viewer-listener for translating these moods into an emotional response that fits the narrative. As a consequence, mood plays an important role in a viewer-listener’s “aesthetic experience” (Sinnerbrink 152-53) of a film, making it the strongest source for cueing emotions in viewers. Furthermore, Plantinga argues that a separation must be made between so-called ‘human moods’, which describe a psychic and physical state, and ‘art moods’, which are attributed to the art, which has neither body nor mind, and can thus not possess a ‘human mood’ (460-61). Moods of film should therefore be viewed as the film’s “affective character” (Plantinga 461) that can trigger a response in the mental and bodily state of the viewer-listener.

Having established that the aesthetic elements of a film can create mood, it is now in order to determine which elements in particular are influential. Sinnerbrink lists choice of colors, repeated visual and musical motifs, pop music as well as costume and performance

as factors capable of creating mood (158-59). Except for performance, all of these factors can be said to belong to the fashion of film as defined above and will be relevant for the analysis of *TGG* in chapter three. Additionally, sound in film can be said to be able to contribute to the mood of a film as well (Kniaż 82).

In conclusion of this subchapter, the following quotation by Sinnerbrink offers a poignant summary of the key features of mood in film:

Moods express qualitative characteristics of a cinematic world, disclosing relevant aspects of that world in an affective and reflective manner. They orient the viewer within the film's fictional world, eliciting and modulating our emotional responses, and thereby contributing to the expression of meaning through cinematic style. Without the expression of cinematic mood, which is essential to realizing a fictional world, we could not appreciate or be moved by the art of narrative film. (163)

### 2.3 Time in Film

Film is considered as a medium closely connected to time (Mroz 1; Viegas 126; Quigley 204) and, when examining the phenomenon of time in relation to cinema, attention can be paid to various aspects of it. Doane identifies three distinct notions of temporality: the temporality of the medium itself, which is “linear, irreversible, ‘mechanical’” (30), the temporality portrayed within the narrative, which is related to how cinema expresses different points in time in the diegesis, and lastly, the temporality of reception, which Doane classifies as “theoretically distinct” (30). The latter type of temporality demands for a different theoretical frame since its starting point does not originate from the perspective of the film itself but rather from the perspective of its audience.

A considerable amount of research has focused on the first notion of temporality, the tense of moving images, discussing whether and how moving images themselves can be said to express and possess tense, factoring in the historical development of the image and cinema.<sup>8</sup> While this thesis recognizes the importance of these discussions, it will instead concern itself with the second notion of temporality listed by Doane, namely the temporality of the diegesis. Referring to Bergson's considerations of time, the contemporary adaptation of his notion of ‘duration’ will serve as a theoretical basis and will be utilized to take a closer look at temporality within the narrative of *TGG*.

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<sup>8</sup> For discussions on the tense of the image, see for example: Currie, Gregory. “McTaggart at the Movies.” *Philosophy*, vol. 67, no. 261, Cambridge UP, July 1992, pp. 343–55. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0031819100040456>.

As Totaro and Mroz have pointed out, even though the notion of duration will guide this analysis' approach to the portrayal of the diegetic time of the narrative, this does not necessarily imply that all aspects of Bergson's philosophy around this notion are supported (Totaro; Mroz 3-4). It is merely the aspects laid out below that will serve as a basis for the following analysis of *TGG*. Similar to the investigation of mood that will be conducted in the analysis in chapter three, the given approach to temporality in film does not pursue a cognitive, empirical approach that relies on data from the audience's measured responses to certain elements within a narrative that may alter their perception of time, connected to the third type of temporality presented by Doane. Rather, the focus lies on the "explicative value in the formal and textual properties filmmakers employ to express film time" (Totaro). This means that the analysis provided here is based on arguable points instead of empirically proven 'facts'.

According to Totaro, Bergson was one of the first philosophers who included cinema in his theorizations. Bergson defines the notion of duration as states of consciousness, or psychic states, that melt into each other and can thus not be distinguished from one another, unless aided by a symbolic representation in space (54-55). As soon as space is utilized to illustrate and conceive of duration, however, duration ceases to exist (Totaro). While Bergson relies on music to explain his idea (60), Totaro employs a metaphor of clothing, elaborating that inner mental states such as emotions and memories are not lined up next to each other like clothes but instead merge as one. Totaro explains that duration can be interpreted as "consciousness itself". Bergson thus defines duration as "real time as it is lived" (Mroz 2) as opposed to objective time that can be measured and divided into separate, countable units. Quigley further offers that duration can be understood as a "qualitative rather than a quantitative experience of time, which can only be grasped intuitively" (204). Duration, then, becomes most noticeable when the passage of time as measured by the clock does not align with our subjective experience of it (Viegas 128-29), conveying for instance the impression that seconds stretch into eternity or that "time [is] flying" (Viegas 129). This idea will be a central focus in the main analysis of this thesis.

Another important concept in relation to this thesis, is Bergson's idea of interpenetration. This can be applied to film theory by investigating how different aspects of a film jointly, or in other words, in a state of piercing each other, influence temporality within the narrative (Totaro). Importantly, Totaro notes that aesthetics and style can also influence the temporality of the diegesis, the possible mechanisms of which will be outlined in section 2.3.2. One example of applying the idea of interpenetration to film studies is examining the effects of the interaction of voice-over with the image (Mroz 3), which will be demonstrated

in section 3.4 in particular. Film as a medium of moving images can therefore overall be considered a medium capable of representing duration (Quigley 204).

### 2.3.1 Portraying Temporally Separate Narratives in Film

In order to investigate diegetic temporality in film, one requires a decent vocabulary or framework. For this, Gérard Genette's seminal work *Narrative Discourse* will be used as a basis for analysis, applied to a cinematic context by Henderson in his text *Tense, Mood, and Voice in Film (Notes after Genette)*. As the title suggests already, Henderson employs the word 'tense' when discussing the portrayal of diegetic time such as differentiating between temporally separate narratives (5). Since this term is often associated with the formal aspects of time in cinema, related to the medium's capability of possessing and expressing tense, as noted above, this thesis will instead make use of the broader term 'temporality' to avoid confusion.

One important aspect when analyzing temporality in film is to look at the order of events in the narrative discourse, in contrast to the order of events in the story (Henderson 5). There can be a notable difference between the two, as films can employ an anachronous order of events (5). This means that the film might commence with a scene from the future, before 'jumping' back to a point earlier in the narrative. In those cases, the order of the events in the narrative discourse (future, then past) differs from the order of events in the story (the future scene occurring after the scene in the past) (5). Narrative progressions that regress in time are called analepses, whereas those that proceed forwards are referred to as prolepses (Henderson 5). Gordejuela identifies the term 'flashback' as the cinematic equivalent to Genette's analepsis (10), inviting the term 'flash-forward' as the equivalent of the prolepsis (Gordejuela 13).

Henderson identifies the period between 1941 and 1957 as a period in film in which analepses are highly prevalent (6), referring to movies such as *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). These films belong to an era in film history called Film Noir and follow an analeptic pattern that begins the narrative discourse with the present, after the main plot events have already taken place, then jumps back into the past to tell the story from the beginning, only to go back to the framing narrative for the very last scenes of the movie (Henderson 6). This type of analeptic story is more typical than one that merely goes back in time but never returns to the moment in time that was shown at the beginning of the movie (6). To indicate this temporal shift, cinema makes use of linguistic cues such as voice-over (Gordejuela 18; Henderson 6) as well as music and "other optical devices such as blurs,



rippling, fades, or dissolves” (Henderson 6). In other words, cinema employs fashion to help ease the transition between narratives set in different points of time.

### **2.3.2 Fashion and Time**

Having established the notion of temporality of the diegesis, alongside the notion of duration and its possible application to film theory, it is now in order to draw a connection to the main object of analysis in this thesis, the fashion in film. It will be argued that, in *TGG*, fashion is key in anchoring the narrative in various points in time as well as influence the passage of time as lived and experienced by the characters in the story as well as the viewer-listener. This is achieved by the interpenetration of the three aesthetic elements of fashion that has already been established in the theoretical framework, since fashion’s elements can be said to work as one in conveying mental spheres. One example of this may be fashion constructing a mood of discomfort, which in turn elongates the duration of a scene, with seconds seemingly stretching into hours. The scene discussed in 3.2.1 especially invites a detailed analysis of this phenomenon.

Additionally, fashion can aid in transitioning between temporally distinct storylines, rendering them as belonging to their respective points in time, while sometimes also causing these storylines to blur into each other. A scene set in the past may, for instance, be introduced by an audio-visual cue, and defined as temporally distinct by means of costumes and sets displaying features that belong to a different time period, as well as sounds that seem faded and far away. This is examined in detail in the scenes analyzed in subsections 3.4 and 3.5.

## **3 Fashion in *The Great Gatsby* (2013)**

*TGG* was directed by Australian award-winning director Baz Luhrmann, while his wife, Catherine Martin, took up the roles of costume and production designer. The fact that so few people assumed so many roles in the making of the film echoes the production process for *In The Mood for Love* (Bruno 87), enabling a smooth and close collaboration of costume and set design. Leonardo DiCaprio, who stars as Jay Gatsby and has known the creative pair for several years, emphasizes the long-term, very close creative collaboration between Baz and Martin’s partnership as central to their work (“The Great Gatsby (2013) - Razzle Dazzle: The Fashion of the ’20s – Featurette,” 03:58-04:19).

Luhrmann as a director was also overseeing the musical choices of the score and the soundtrack of the film, working together closely with the composer of the film score as well as the several collaborating artists. Craig Armstrong,<sup>9</sup> the composer of the score for *TGG*, comments on Baz Luhrmann's style of combining score and image:

One of the things I really admire about Baz is that if he likes a piece of music, he very often just lets it play out in parallel with the picture so that both, together, can create something special (Jernigan).

This working technique underlines this thesis's proposal that the auditory dimension does not stand on its own but rather as an integral part of the overall cinematographic expression that is a product of the interplay of sound and vision. Moreover, critics and scholars have lauded the movie as a prime example of the interweaving of the auditory and visual dimension of the cinematographic expression (Kniaż 80; Malíčková and Malíček 225).

As costume and sound are two very important elements for the following analysis, it seems relevant to mention the many collaborations taking place on this level of the film. For the men's costumes, Brooks Brothers provided all the suits worn by male actors in the movie, even if they were only extras ("The Great Gatsby (2013) - Razzle Dazzle: The Fashion of the '20s - Featurette," 01:58-02:07). Miuccia Prada designed twenty exclusive dresses for the two decadent party scenes in the movie ("The Great Gatsby (2013) - Razzle Dazzle: The Fashion of the '20s - Featurette," 12:29-13:30), while Tiffany was a collaborator on the jewelry showcased in the film, such as Daisy's pearl necklace or the hand jewelry she wears during the second party ("The Great Gatsby (2013) - Razzle Dazzle: The Fashion of the '20s - Featurette," 11:11-12:25). All of these collaborations were overseen and shaped by Catherine Martin, who was allowed to redesign historical pieces, relying on their archive that she was granted access to ("The Great Gatsby (2013) - Razzle Dazzle: The Fashion of the '20s - Featurette").

Next to these collaborations on the level of the costumes and jewelry, *TGG* is also defined by several musical collaborations. In addition to featuring works by a traditional jazz band, assembled as it would have been in the 1920s ("The Great Gatsby - the Swinging Sounds of Gatsby Part1- Behind the Scenes HD," 02:40-03:42) and the traditional orchestral score ("The Great Gatsby - the Swinging Sounds of Gatsby Part1- Behind the Scenes HD," 03:47-04:32), the movie features many songs, written and adapted specifically for *TGG* by

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<sup>9</sup> Craig Armstrong composes music for not just film but also TV, orchestra, and theatre, and has received several awards such as the Grammy and Golden Globe for his work. *TGG* marks his fourth collaboration with director Baz Luhrmann (Jernigan), emphasizing how close-knit the creative team collaborating on the movie is.

contemporary artists such as Lana del Rey, Florence and the Machine, Fergie, will.i.am and Beyoncé (“The Great Gatsby - the Swinging Sounds of Gatsby Part1- Behind the Scenes HD,” 04:40-11:39). Luhrmann hoped to convey to audiences the feeling of the Jazz Age by including contemporary music in his film, as, he explains, jazz was considered something that was “dangerous, intoxicating and thrilling” (“The Great Gatsby - ‘Great Music Is Timeless’ Featurette,” 01:16-01:18) at the time. Hip Hop in particular was viewed as a contemporary analogy to jazz for the making of the movie, with the two musical styles intertwining throughout the film (“The Great Gatsby - ‘Great Music Is Timeless’ Featurette,” 01:40-02:00).

In the following sections, a few key scenes of *TGG* will be analyzed with respect to the effect that all three elements of fashion have on the moods that are created, as well the mental spheres that are transported. Additionally, it will be shown how fashion expresses duration in *TGG*, making time stop or fly, as well as help transition between temporally separate timelines. Fashion ultimately is key in conveying the constant presence of transience, nostalgia<sup>10</sup> and longing for the past in the movie. The selection of just these few scenes will allow for a detailed analysis, offering promising insights into the workings of fashion in film. In order to avoid confusion about the various temporally separate storylines, the main narrative recalled from Nick’s memory will be referred to as the ‘present’ of the film, as most of the film’s running time is dedicated to it. The frame narrative of Nick in the sanatorium, after the events of the ‘present’, will be referred to as the ‘future’, whereas all flashbacks within the main narrative will be considered the ‘past’.

### **3.1 The Beginning of the Main Narrative (00:06:23-00:08:33)**

The first scene that shall be considered introduces the main cast of characters as well as their relationships and the main themes of the movie. The following analysis will demonstrate how fashion creates a dream-like, playful atmosphere, in which time seems to stand still. It furthermore establishes Daisy’s connection to Gatsby and the notion of nostalgia, which is a strong presence in the entire movie.

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<sup>10</sup> According to Niemeyer and Wentz, nostalgia is often connected to loss, which is in turn linked to an idealized, positively connoted version of the past (130). They describe nostalgia as “that painful longing for a romanticised, stable and more innocent past” (131). In support of that, Hutcheon states: “Time, unlike space, cannot be returned to – ever; time is irreversible. And nostalgia becomes the reaction to that sad fact” (194). Nostalgia is a powerful sentiment, she argues, and that power stems from the collision of “an inadequate present and an idealized past” (Hutcheon 198). Three years before the release of *TGG*, Pam Cook notes that the aesthetic of Luhrmann’s movies heavily relies on nostalgia (153), which is proven once again in *TGG*, as this analysis showcases.

### **3.1.1 Entering a Dreamlike Atmosphere (00:06:23-07:21)**

The scene has a dreamlike quality to it that is conveyed by means of the interplay of all three elements of fashion. When Nick enters the room, there are several shots showing the space as though through the curtains that are blowing through it. Through the alternation between close-up gaze shots of Nick's face and POV shots of the room in front of him, the viewer-listener assumes Nick's perspective for the duration of this scene. This not only causes a feeling of disorientation but also has an immersive effect, since the viewer-listener becomes entangled in the fashion of the scene, the curtains quite literally draping around Nick, and thus the viewer-listener, as if it were clothing. Even Nick disappears behind the curtains in some shots, further showcasing the omnipresence of the curtains and, with that, the pervasiveness of the atmosphere. The broad strings also help construct this mood.

There are only a few brief clear shots of the room before it is again shrouded by the curtain fabric and the diegetic sound of the curtains' rustling is accompanied by the far-away sounding sighs and giggles of female-coded voices. Combined, these factors induce a shift in modality, making the scene appear as less real (Aiello 375), as if taken from a dream. Another striking factor contributing to the fashion and thus the atmosphere of the scene is the almost blinding brightness. This is a drastic visual change in comparison to the set shown a few seconds before, when Nick and Tom were in the dark hallway leading up to the room. Taking all these elements of fashion into consideration, the scene might as well take place in heaven.

This mood of dreaminess, confusion and hypnosis has an interesting effect on the temporality of the diegesis in the scene. Due to the cyclical nature of the gaze and POV shots, the narrative time of the movie seems to stand still for the duration of the scene. The absence of dialogue or diegetic music creates the impression that the movie lingers in this moment, floating in a timeless space between the curtains and the strings. Real time as it is experienced here thus can be said to pass more slowly than objective, measurable time, showcasing fashion's influence on duration.

In addition, the dreamy, timeless atmosphere is supplemented by a playfulness. This is conveyed by means of shots of first just one hand that appears above the sofa and plays with the curtains, and which is quickly followed by the shot of a second hand appearing next to and playing with the first hand. In a successive shot, the silhouette of a female-coded body, which the viewer-listener later learns is Daisy, is shown through the fabric of the curtain, stretching sensually, next to the head of another seemingly female person also located on that same sofa, who the audience will learn to identify as Jordan. Furthermore,

there is a shot of two feet clad in women's shoes sticking into the air and into the curtains. Together with the giggles and contented sighs, this evokes a giddy, carefree atmosphere. The thin fabric of the curtains, which seem to dance lightly through the room, additionally contribute a lightness to the scene.

The atmosphere is disrupted by Tom's shouting that the doors shall be closed (00:06:44-00:06:49), stopping the movement of the curtains, and the view of the room clearing up for good. It is also emphasized by Nick startling from his trance when he apologizes for becoming caught up in the curtains, with someone actively having to come collect the piece of fabric from around him. This demonstrates that, if it were not for these external factors, Nick would have no reason or control to snap out of his trance. With the movement of the curtains eliminated, it is now time that starts moving again for a brief moment. The fact that Nick addresses his being entangled in the curtains, makes the viewer-listener aware of time having stood still just moments before and highlights the abrupt transition back into a moving narrative.

Time halts again, however, for the introduction of Daisy Buchanan, facilitated by Nick's voice-over. At 00:07:00, the string music stops on a high note, conveying that it is leading up to something relevant. This is when Daisy's theme begins to play, with the camera moving from the diamond ring on her hand to her face in an extreme close-up. Daisy's hand is deliberately draped so as for the ornate jewel to be placed in the center of the shot, underlining not just her wealth but also her marital status. This scene is also detached from reality, as the music interlaced with the cinematographic expression is again dreamlike, but this time in connection with a hopeful and innocent quality. Referring back to the notion of the scene prior taking place in heaven, Daisy is here presented in a way which can be said to resemble an angel. Nick's voiceover, woven into this cinematographic expression, conveys reverence and also creates a zooming-out effect, as the thoughts that are uttered do not stem from present time Nick but from the Nick from the future. The immersion achieved by the entanglement in the curtains is thereby broken, catapulting viewer-listeners back into their role of an audience instead of participant in the scene. Hence, the representation of a temporally separate storyline has a distancing effect in this scene.

### 3.1.2 Introducing the Romance (00:07:21-00:08:33)

Shortly after Nick's voice-over introduces Daisy – from the moment the conversation between Nick and Daisy becomes playful (00:07:23) – the main love theme of the movie, Lana del Rey's *Young and Beautiful* can be heard for the first time, but in an adapted version without del Rey's vocals.<sup>11</sup> It is played quietly in the background and in an upbeat, jazzy version that could very well be a piece from the 1920s, making it appear to be diegetic music that can be heard by the characters as well. It manages to fade into the background, not just due to its low volume and period-appropriate musical style, but because viewer-listeners have not yet had the chance to draw a connection of the motif to anything happening in the story, meaning that the motif has yet to become recognizable to the viewer-listener. The dotted notes featured in this version create a jumping impression that is mirrored in the movement of Daisy's dress: the many flower petals bounce along with her as she frolics through the room. Movement here is thus a tool to showcase the textual quality of Daisy's dress, which is a common function of movement in relation to fabric (Köhler 8), and which in turn contributes to the creation of a playful, carefree mood.

The same musical theme, but in a very different version, takes over a few moments later, when Daisy turns her head and inquires "Gatsby? What Gatsby?" (00:08:15-00:08:22). In this scene, only the beginning of the chorus's melody is played, in an elongated version played on the clarinet, consisting of just two different notes, with the melody descending from the first to the second note, after which the exact same two notes are repeated in the same order. This short excerpt of the romantic theme can be considered the main romantic musical leitmotif of the movie, as it reoccurs frequently in relation to Daisy and Gatsby's

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<sup>11</sup> MacLean argues that the love theme is associated with the green light throughout the film (124), which is not consistent with its appearance in the film. Rather, the theme is associated with Daisy and Gatsby's romance, both with their past as well as with their relationship in the main narrative of the film, since it is most frequently and dominantly played when the two interact or reminisce about the other. This can be observed in this scene, when Daisy first hears the name Gatsby, as well as when the two spend time together for the first time in the present (00:53:06-00:53:30), or when Gatsby tells Nick about how he first met Daisy five years ago (01:19:52-01:20:12). Luhrmann referred to the song as "the sort of flashback romance track" ("The Great Gatsby - 'Great Music Is Timeless' Featurette," 02:40-02:43), which can especially be observed in the scene analyzed in 3.4.

romance.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, strings as well as a high-pitched piercing sound can be perceived, the latter of which is associated with the symbolic green light throughout the film.<sup>13</sup>

With these factors of instrumentation, elongation and repetition combined, the romantic leitmotif here already conveys a strong mood of romantic longing and nostalgia, which is directly connected to the still-unknown character Gatsby. Slow melodic movement can also convey sadness (Chełkowska-Zacharewicz and Paliga 154), which can be argued to be mixed in with the longing. The repetition cannot only be found in the musical motif but also in Daisy's echoing of Gatsby's name. After those four notes, the melody rises, creating tension that dissolves after a few beats, which is evoked on the visual dimension of the image by the doors being opened again, resulting in the curtains blowing inside the room again, once more allowing for a dreamlike atmosphere in which Daisy gets to ponder what the name Gatsby triggers in her. In the very last shot of the scene, the curtain covers the shot again, fully returning the viewer-listener to the dreamy, mysterious atmosphere from the beginning of the scene. It is when the theme is played and Daisy turns her head that all three elements of fashion convey Daisy's mental atmosphere: The camera zooms in on Daisy's face, leaving only the most upper bit of her dress in the shot, cutting off her jewelry-clad wrist as well as the part of her dress that is not see-through, before showing only her face and her exposed neck (00:08:15-00:08:23). As a result, Daisy appears to be almost naked, and her mental sphere is thus not filtered through any elaborate bits of clothing, but rather, her see-through dress and naked skin permit a glance at her vulnerable state of mind, illustrating the fact that the name Gatsby causes a sensitive reaction in her.

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Wagner (1813-1883), a German composer, has first developed the notion of the leitmotif, which can be defined as "a recurring musical motif that is associated with a particular character, object, relationship, place or idea etc." (Wingstedt et al. 198). Leitmotifs are thus symbols and are typically brief as well as introduced early on in the film (London 87-88). Repetition is key for the concept of the leitmotif, as the relationship between the musical piece and its referent needs to be established throughout the course of the film, in a way that is graspable to the viewer-listener. For this to occur smoothly, the musical idea is commonly designed in a way to fit the visual element on screen (Wingstedt et al. 199). A leitmotif thus has "cumulative" (Wingstedt et al. 198) meaning, as each reoccurrence further constructs its significance. Leitmotifs need to be distinctive in order to remain recognizable even when modified within the film (London 88).

<sup>13</sup> The green light's connection to the high-pitched, elongated piercing sound is another example of a musical leitmotif (MacLean 126-27). It is established in the very first scene of the movie (00:00:51-00:01:29), reinforcing the association many times throughout the narrative, when the light is shown (e.g. 00:00:52-00:01:02), and even when it can only be assumed but not seen (e.g. 01:01:36-01:01:41). Both, the green light and the piercing sound can be interpreted as a symbol of Gatsby's wish to reconstruct the past with Daisy (MacLean 124), creating an uncertain, melancholic mood that is intricately interlaced with the film due to its many appearances (Kniaż 82). The green light is both the first and the last thing that can be seen-heard in the movie, highlighting its symbolic relevance within the narrative.

## **3.2 Gatsby and Daisy Meet Again**

In the following, the moments immediately prior and subsequent to Gatsby and Daisy's reunion will be analyzed. The presented scenes stand in stark contrast to each other: On the one hand, they demonstrate how fashion can convey anxiety and discomfort, making time pass slowly, and, on the other hand, they showcase how fashion can create micro spaces that envelop the characters and shut them out the remaining diegetic film space, as well as the viewer-listener's reach. In this latter scenario, the flow of time in the micro space can be said to differ from the flow of time in the 'regular' space of the scene.

### **3.2.1 Anxiety and Awkwardness with Time Passing Slowly (00:49:50-00:50:43; 00:53:31-00:54:46)**

The moments directly before and after Gatsby and Daisy's reunion are defined by awkward atmosphere, filled with anxiety and the sense that time is passing excruciatingly slowly. In the scene before Daisy's arrival (00:49:50-00:50:43), this is mainly expressed by means of the ticking of the clock on Nick's mantelpiece. The ticking is already prevalent at the beginning of the scene, and only grows louder with each passing second.

Beginning with a close-up of the clock, the ticking sound and its visual counterpart are immediately linked in the cinematographic expression. Shortly after, there is a second close-up of the clock, which is when Gatsby approaches it to check the time after checking his own wristwatch as well. He sits down, and, in synchrony with another close-up of the clock, the ticking now grows louder. The audience sees shots of Gatsby's tense upper body in alternation with close-ups of the clock on the mantelpiece, both of which are zoomed into further with each passing second and shot. At the same time, the ticking of the clock is strongly amplified, growing louder the closer the camera zooms in on it as well as on Gatsby.

Since this sound can be heard much louder than is natural, it can be taken as an example of hyper-real sound effects that can be interpreted as a symbol of a "psychological abnormality" (Wierzbicki 166) in a character connected to that sound. In this case, the many shots switching between Gatsby and the clock establish that relationship between character and sound. The loud ticking can be said to symbolize Gatsby's anxiety about seeing Daisy again and thus not accurately representing the diegetic sound that the characters in the room actually hear, but rather a reflection of how Gatsby perceives it (Wierzbicki 166). Therefore, the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic sound becomes blurred, which is a common phenomenon of *TGG* (Kniaż 83), showcasing how complex the auditory dimension



of the movie is. In this scene, fashion thus conveys duration, time as it is experienced by Gatsby in that moment. Even though the clock highlights the objective, measurable time passing, fashion conveys the merging of Gatsby's psychic states of anxiety that endure and due to which time seems to pass more slowly.

Another element involved in the construction of the scene's anxious atmosphere can be found on the costume level of fashion, specifically in Gatsby's suit and his walking stick. At the beginning of the scene, Gatsby is standing with his left hand in the pocket of his pants, causing the left side of his suit jacket to be lifted upward, lending the piece of clothing a disarranged quality. In addition, Gatsby fiddles with the hem of his sleeve, before putting his hand back into his pocket, all the while leaning on his walking stick for support. Unbuttoning the top button of his suit jacket and smoothing its lapel before sitting down, Gatsby is clearly neither comfortable in his skin nor in his clothes.

The beginning of Daisy and Gatsby's reunion (00:53:31-00:54:46) is marked by a mood of awkwardness, heavily emphasized by the fashion of the scene making time appear to stand still. At the beginning of the scene, Gatsby is standing directly next to the clock on the mantel, almost making it seem as though he is clinging to it, holding on for dear life. The sound of the ticking can again be heard very distinctly, recalling Gatsby's anxiety already conveyed in the scene discussed above. It should be noted, though, that the ticking is not nearly as loud as it was towards the end of that first scene, which demonstrates that Gatsby is trying to rein in his feelings, not wanting Daisy – and with her the viewer-listener – to notice the full extent of his inner world. Apart from the sound of the ticking intermingling with the clinking of the silverware Nick is carrying into the room, only Gatsby's very audible, heavy breathing can be heard above the awkward silence.

Gatsby is so anxious, in fact, that he knocks the clock to the ground whilst checking his own wristwatch, directly after referring to the past by saying "We've...we've, um...we've met before" (00:53:41-00:53:44). Even after the clock is on the ground in two pieces, and even while Gatsby is trying to repair it on the mantel piece, the ticking can still be heard faintly. This can be interpreted as Gatsby not being able to quiet and conceal his nervous thoughts, as well as him being unable to escape the present, in which each moment seems to stretch into eternity. It is only after Gatsby violently slams his fist on the two pieces that the ticking finally stops, but at this point it is already too late: his anxiety and discomfort have been made very visible to Daisy and the viewer-listener. In a way, this scene already hints at Gatsby's violent outburst against Tom during the big confrontation at the plaza towards the end of the movie (01:37:43-01:37:50), putting this character trait and ultimate

incapability of hiding his mental spheres in a narrative frame – occurring once, when his interaction with Daisy in the main narrative begins, and once, when it ends.

Gatsby is not alone with his discomfort in this scene: Standing between Daisy and Gatsby, Nick does not sit down at first, even when he has to bow down to be able to serve them tea, almost as if he refuses to become part of the uncomfortable situation. In several shots, Daisy and Gatsby's faces can be seen, while Nick's is cut off, only the middle of his body visible (e.g. 00:54:13), emphasizing his desire to extricate himself from the scene. When Nick finally surrenders and takes a seat, all conversation ceases as soon as all three faces are shown sitting next to each other in one shot. With the ticking of the clock gone, the only other diegetic sounds that can be heard is the thunderstorm outside pouring down around the house, as well as the clinking of the china and their breathing, the silence further rendering the moment as awkward and uncomfortable. Strengthening this mood of awkwardness, Daisy and Gatsby take their first sips of tea in a synchronized manner, whereas Nick does not even have a cup in his hand in the first place (00:54:32-00:54:37). Duration is thereby once again made noticeable by fashion, as the experienced passage of time seems to elapse at a much slower pace than objective time.

### **3.2.2 Gatsby and Daisy Reconnect (00:55:59-00:56:24)**

When Nick enters the house again after giving Daisy and Gatsby some space, the first shot the viewer-listener sees of the living room is a full shot showing Daisy and Gatsby tucked away between all the lavish flowers, seemingly deep in conversation. The shot is interesting for several reasons: Daisy and Gatsby are not located in the center of the frame but rather slightly to the left of it. Instead, the large windows showing the stormy sky and the bay beyond are the center of the frame. This creates a mood of intimacy between the two characters, since they are not exposed within the frame, but located within their own nook of the living room. This private nook can be said to have been constructed by Gatsby himself, as he was the one who ordered the arrangement of the flowers in the living room. In this way, Gatsby takes an active part in the building of his reality.

Daisy is seated directly in front of Gatsby, the angle of the shot making it appear as though their bodies have merged into just one: Daisy's head completely covers Gatsby's face (00:55:58-00:55:59). The rest of Daisy's body is hidden fully either by the skirt of her dress or the flowers surrounding them, the way that Gatsby is draped around her with his hand on her lap making it appear as though his arms and shoulders are growing out of her body. This scene strongly demonstrates the close relationship between costume and set

design, as the flower petals on the left side of the frame seamlessly transition into the petals on Daisy's skirt, creating the illusion of the dress being an extension of the flowers. Furthermore, it creates a stark contrast to the scene prior, where Daisy and Gatsby were barely looking at each other and were sitting far apart with Nick between them as a separation. Now, they do not just sit close but seem to have become one entirely.

This effect is shaped by the sonic dimension of the cinematographic expression as well: The limited space on the sofa in a way turns into its own "micro-sonic space" (Kniaż 84) that Nick does not have access to, indicated by him being unable to attract either of Gatsby or Daisy's attention, despite loudly rattling the dishes in the sink (00:56:05-00:56:09). Characteristic of this micro-sonic space is the two characters' verbal exchange being only audible to themselves and not to view-listeners from the outside, except for the occasional whispered word from Gatsby, or a happy sigh or laugh from Daisy. The shots change from extreme close-ups of Gatsby's face to Daisy's face to Nick in the kitchen, trying to wake the two from their trance. Even though the viewer-listener is so close to the two lovers' faces, the content of their conversation cannot be determined. The fact that the movement of their lips can still be seen creates an asynchrony between sound and visuals, emphasizing Daisy and Gatsby being in their own world in this moment.

Simultaneously, the micro-sonic space blocks out noises from the outside as well. This is illustrated on the one hand by Gatsby and Daisy's ignorance of the diegetic sound of the dishes' rattling, and on the other hand by a change in the orchestral score. Before Nick reenters the house, the score is characterized by a rich orchestral sound. Woven into this piece of music, a harp can be made out. When Nick then sees Daisy and Gatsby deep in conversation, the full orchestral sound fades away, until, eventually, only the soft fragments of the harp can be heard during the extreme close-ups of the two lovers' faces. This can be interpreted as the micro-sonic space filtering out the dominant and loud layers of sound trying to reach it, permitting entrance only to the gentle harp, which does not pose a threat to the persistence of the intimate atmosphere within the micro space. It is only when Nick steps closer and clears his throat that the sounds manage to penetrate this isolated space and thus disrupt its atmosphere.

### 3.3 At Gatsby's Villa (00:57:31-01:00:13)

Prevalent in this scene is a mood of excitement as well as romance and happiness, creating the illusion of more time passing than it actually does. As Gatsby gives Daisy a tour of his house and his grounds, the three characters seem to spend more than just one afternoon together, which is conveyed by means of fashion. At the same time, the scene is interlaced with an atmosphere of transience, hinting at the temporary nature of the moment in a melancholy, wistful manner.

Towards the beginning of the scene, the little decorations on Daisy's dress, particularly on her shoulders when she runs up to lean against the little wall, flutter in the wind, underlining her excitement that is also conveyed by her quick breathing that can be seen-heard (00:57:43-00:57:57). The purple color of her dress matches the purple orchids on her left, which can also be found directly at the beginning of the scene, before the three walk through the gate onto Gatsby's property, on the left side of the gate (00:57:32-00:57:37). Here, the viewer-listener can also see the petals on Daisy's dress bouncing alongside her step, communicating how eager she is to see Gatsby's house. When Daisy puts her hand on the wall that is covered in greenery, the purple glove on her hand, in combination with the shadow falling across her hand, makes it appear as though that part of her hand is merged with the plant on the wall. This demonstrates that she belongs, emphasizing the happy, excited mood of the scene. At the same time, her face is bathed in the light of the afternoon sun, underlining her being the "golden girl" (00:07:02-00:07:04), as Nick introduces her at the beginning of the movie. Noticeably, Gatsby steps into this light next to her, further contributing to the impression that the two belong together in this scene and underlining the happy mood of the scene.

Nick's dark-green knit jacket, on the other hand, lets him fade into the background, either matching the dark tendrils on the outside of the walls of Gatsby's estate before walking through Gatsby's gate, or morphing into the black shadows on the right side of the frame before being cut off completely (00:57:48-00:57:55), which highlights him being a voyeur from the side. Gatsby's white suit is in stark contrast to that, standing out brightly in front of the dark background. This emphasizes the fact that in this scene, Gatsby is most content in the main narrative, since he is in control of the situation and can finally present Daisy with everything that he attained for her, as he has waited to do for a long time. The cream suit he is wearing, for instance, can be considered "flashy" ("An Interview With Catherine Martin,

Costume Designer for the Great Gatsby,” 07:44-07:45), as it conveys wealth, along with everything else Gatsby is showing to Daisy.<sup>14</sup>

The positive, happy mood of the scene can further be found in the dialogue: There is a parallel of both Nick and Gatsby using the word “splendid” (00:58:05-00:58:06; 00:59:17), which also underlines Nick secondary role in this scene: aside from the voice-overs from future-Nick and a few trivial, brief remarks to Gatsby and Daisy on the raft, this is his only line for the remainder of this scene. Even when Gatsby addresses him once more, whatever Nick may have responded is drowned out by the vocals of the nondiegetic music.

Permeating the aesthetic texture of the entire scene is the love theme *Young and Beautiful*, which is played loudly and for the first time with del Rey’s vocals. Luhrmann states that it is in this scene that the viewer-listener first understands the song as the central love theme of the movie (“The Great Gatsby - the Swinging Sounds of Gatsby Part1- Behind the Scenes HD,” 05:43-05:50). During the part of the scene described above, the instrumental prelude can be heard, paired with a distant sounding, elongated ‘ah’. Since this sound seems to stem from far away and – in combination with the minor key – has a haunting quality to it, it can be argued that it is a calling from the past, weaving the past into the present, whilst once again constructing a mood of nostalgia and transience.

This is also mirrored in the lyrics that commence when a shot of the house is shown (00:58:02), romantically illuminated by the afternoon sun, with Lana del Rey simultaneously singing about a treasured moment of one summer in the past. When a shot of Daisy, walking towards Gatsby’s villa, is depicted, with the house and a lavish fountain framing her in the background, the lyrics refer to the past of two lovers, when they were “forever wild” (00:58:08-00:58:10). During the utterance of those two words, the camera cuts to a close-up of Gatsby’s face as well, connecting Gatsby and Daisy by means of the lyrics. The transience expressed in these lyrics is at its strongest in the chorus of the song. Instead of describing the happiness and joy of a romance, the lyrics pose the questions:

Will you still love me, when I’m no longer young and beautiful?

Will you still love me, when I got nothing but my aching soul? (00:58:19-00:58:33)

This conveys the impression that the scenes that are shown together with the song already belong to the past, or are already doomed to pass eventually, underlining their finiteness.

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<sup>14</sup> Catherine Martin explains that owning clothing in light colors during the 1920s was a sign of wealth, since cleaning such garments was a laborious and thus expensive undertaking (“An Interview With Catherine Martin, Costume Designer for the Great Gatsby,” 07:32-07:45).

In alignment with that, the time Daisy, Gatsby and Nick spend together at Gatsby's place creates the illusion of spanning more time than simply one afternoon and evening, while the duration of the events on screen is shortened. The passing of time in film can be illustrated by the changing of costumes (91), as is argued by Bruno in her analysis of *In the Mood for Love*:

We sense that time is passing, that hours or even days might have gone by, because of a change of clothes. Just as we seem forever wrapped in an endless feeling of temporal drift, a new [outfit] appears, marking time (91).

It is this very effect that fashion has during the given scene. Time seems to slide away as Gatsby, Daisy and Nick spend the afternoon together, since the three of them change outfits more often than would be expected on just one afternoon. Daisy's elegant dress, Gatsby's cream suit and Nick's dark-green clothes are first exchanged for bathing suits (00:58:18-00:58:26) before the three reappear on a big raft floating on the water in relaxed and casual, yet still elegant clothes (00:58:29-00:58:50). The fact that the viewer-listener does not get to see when or where this change of clothes takes place, never mind where the clothes come from in the first place, creates the illusion of several days, or maybe even weeks passing.

Contributing to this impression is the fact that the scenes take place in many different locations that are new to the viewer-listener. The room in which Gatsby keeps his machine for pressing oranges is a place that is only shown in the brief moments of that scene (00:58:13-00:58:17). Similarly, this is the only scene in which Gatsby or any of the characters swim in the bay instead of his pool. Even though there are visual anchor points such as shots showing a part of Gatsby's pool in the foreground, the angles from which those shots of the set are taken are unfamiliar to the viewer-listener, allowing the scenes on the water to still convey the notion of a vacation that might be taking place anywhere near the seaside. It even appears as though Daisy and Gatsby have traveled to Asia when they sit next to each other on the floating raft, due to the two red parasols, matching the details on Daisy's scarf, as well as the fact that Daisy is wearing a kimono (00:58:32). According to Bruno, time itself can turn into a mood, creating the feeling of time "endlessly unfolding as a form of infinite duration or pervasive ambience" (91), which is a notion that is highly applicable to this scene. This demonstrates once more the strong interconnectedness of fashion and its effects on mood and temporality.

Later on, when they are inside, the camera tilts from the ornate ceiling, over the organ, with the quality of the vocals suddenly changing to the sound of a heavenly choir, as

if from far above. This is matched in the lyrics saying, “Dear Lord, when I get to heaven, please let me bring my man,” (00:58:50-00:58:58) accompanied by organ sounds that are mixed into the song. These organ sounds are not part of the diegesis, as is clarified by Daisy asking if anyone is able to play the instrument, showcasing how interwoven diegetic and nondiegetic sound are in the film and connecting the auditory dimension decidedly with the visual one.

The rectangular patterns on the scarf around Daisy’s head furthermore match the patterns on the organ, as well as those on the floor of Gatsby’s house behind her, demonstrating the dialogue between set design and costume. Moreover, the long ends of the scarf that are draped over her left shoulder are just a few inches longer than her hair was when she first met Gatsby (cf. 01:18:59), seemingly representing the length that has been cut off since then. It can be wondered whether this was intended by Gatsby, in an attempt to turn back time, since, if the scenes really all do take place during just that one afternoon, he must have been the one to provide Daisy with a change of clothes. This can be regarded as another example of Gatsby ‘fashioning’ his own reality (cf. scene 3.2.2).

Emphasizing the connection between costume and set design further, the stripes on Gatsby’s beige sweater are echoed on the walls behind him, as well as on the pillar to his left. All three of these elements share the same color, underlining the close relation between set design and costume, with the bright colors and soft materials conveying the atmosphere of a relaxed and casual summer day. Even Nick’s shirt as well as both men’s trousers fit the surrounding color of the walls and staircase. Daisy’s kimono being black, it is the beige floral patterns on it – its color matching the interiors as well as the men’s clothes – that stand out, once again strengthening the connection between her and flowers. Additionally, as her outfit appears the most elegant out of the three, it highlights her being the center of attention, in combination with her being the only one vocally “demand[ing]” (00:59:14-00:59:15) the course of events such as that she be given a tour or that a Charleston be played on the organ.

The happy mood comes to a halt during the scene of Gatsby throwing his shirts down on Daisy, as is conveyed by the fashion of the scene. When Daisy’s crying becomes audible and Gatsby walks down the steps towards her, it is a piano that plays the outro, with the vocals changing from lyrics to the ‘ah’s from the beginning, before stopping completely, when Gatsby asks Daisy what the matter is (01:00:12). It is worth to mention that the melody on the piano ends in what appears to be the middle of a phrase, creating the yearning to be continued, which does not happen in this case. The piano can thus be taken as an extension of Gatsby’s mental sphere: it starts with him noticing that Daisy is upset and, together with the slowness of his step, expresses his reluctance of accepting the fact that the carefree,

happy moment with Daisy is over. This reluctance is drawn out until the last possible moment, when Gatsby reaches Daisy and Gatsby and addresses her. Only then does the piano and the theme in general stop playing, signaling that Gatsby is facing the situation and leaving the positive atmosphere behind. This moment can be interpreted as the crucial moment where time, and with time also reality, catches up with the two of them, ending what seemed like an ever-lasting moment in time that was distant from all their problems.

The visual dimension of the auditorized image helps create this impression. The shirts Gatsby throws on Daisy can be said to belong to both costume and set design, since they are clothes that could be worn by a character in a movie, but also a part of the set, as they are not worn in this scene but thrown through the room, hence decorating it like a part of the set might. When the melody on the piano can be heard, the shirts are not swirling through the air anymore, in an enduring stream of elegantly moving fabric, instead lying on the ground in a crumpled, unmoving heap. This underlines Daisy's changed emotional state as well as Gatsby's awareness of it, since both were responsible for making the clothing move through the air just seconds before. In addition to that, the visual of the elegant shirts lying crumpled on the ground is in itself a cause of disruption of the previous lightness, therefore contributing to the sense of distress.

### **3.4 Reminiscing About the Past (01:17:58-01:20:58)**

As the title of this subchapter hints at, this scene is focused in particular on Gatsby's past with Daisy and his wish to recreate it in the present of the story. Interweaving three temporally distinct storylines, this scene after the second large party at Gatsby's allows for a detailed analysis of the manners in which fashion can coordinate the transitions between and overlapping of the various points in time of the narrative. In doing so, fashion conveys an atmosphere of nostalgia as well as melancholy.

In this scene, the viewer-listener can perceive Nick's voice-over whilst still staying in the present of the narrative, i.e. in the point in time where Nick and Gatsby converse after the party. In film, voice-overs are typically used to set the scene in the past and then they fade away to make room for the viewer-listener to be immersed in this past as though it were the present (Henderson 16). This, however, is not the case in the given scene. Quite the opposite, Nick tells the viewer-listener about Gatsby "talk[ing] a lot about the past" (01:17:57-01:17:59). Central for the effect on the portrayal of time is the phrase 'a lot', which draws the viewer-listener out of the scene, not just due to the voice-over in itself, but especially due to the phrase marking Gatsby's word as part of a series, as though the scene



that is being seen-heard is not what Nick the narrator is talking about specifically, but rather as if he is recalling a general fact about Gatsby, a habit, that could and *has* also become evident in another situation than the one that's being shown. It takes the focus away from the scene itself in that way, and instead evokes several other moments in time that cannot be seen-heard, in which Gatsby also talks about the past.

Additionally, another temporal dimension is opened up, a window into Gatsby's past with Daisy, five years before the main narrative of the movie takes place. This is not accomplished through a voice-over by Gatsby at first, however, but rather by Nick's that is eventually replaced by Gatsby's after a few sentences, creating the impression of the two of them telling the story at the same moment in time, thus causing the different points in time to blur into each other.

The transition from the main narrative to the past is facilitated by the sound and the image of the pulsing green light (01:18:17) in the far distance, as well the apparition of the house of Daisy's parents in the clouds in the night sky. The green light is continuously employed throughout the movie as a gateway into a storyline set farther in the past. When switching back to Gatsby in the main narrative, in between scenes set in the past, the sound of the green light can be heard frequently, and each time the unfocused green light in the background pulses alongside the sound, emphasizing that the green light is not seen or heard but seen-heard. The decadent house reminds viewer-listeners of the phrase 'castles in the sky', which symbolizes "dreams, hopes, or plans that are impossible, unrealistic, or have very little chance of succeeding" ("Castles in the Sky"), emphasizing the impossibility of Gatsby being able to "fix things just the way they were before" (01:17:49-01:17:51). While the house is still manifesting in the clouds, it is at first shrouded in mist that slowly clears away, as the house becomes big enough to take up the entire screen and take over as its own narrative, conveyed on the sonic level by the emergence of diegetic sound in the form of unintelligible chatter of the guests streaming into the house.

Adding to the surrealism of the scene, the colors are exaggerated: the yellow lights shining through the window are too bright and shiny. Lighting in general is a vital tool for rendering the scenes in the past as a flashback, together with the definition of the image as well as the colors. Furthermore, the starry night sky seems somewhat too romantic to be real. That same night sky even serves as a visual connection between the frame narrative set in the future and that flashback into Gatsby's past, skipping the main narrative, temporally set in the middle, altogether. Visual anchors of this kind are typical tools used in cinema to convey flashbacks (Gordejuela 19). The overlapping of the future and the past is already triggered a few seconds before, however, when Nick's voice-over begins while Gatsby is

shown, gazing up to sky, and the words that future-Nick is typing appear on past-Gatsby's right arm.

There are several instances of different moments in time overlapping in this scene, facilitated by the fashion of the scene, strongly demonstrating the interconnection of costume, set design and sound once more. The most striking example of that can be seen-heard when Gatsby recounts "So I stopped" (01:19:14-01:19:15), which is the only time his present self and his past self are overlapping, both seen and heard at the same time. This demonstrates how relevant this very moment still is to Gatsby, the moment when he hesitates to fall in love with Daisy, marking a pivotal moment in his life. According to Viegas, depicting both past and present at the same time can demonstrate the possibility of reversing time (129), which can be interpreted as an expression of Gatsby's deep wish of going "back to the start" (01:18:06-01:18:07) with Daisy. What is more, Gatsby's face from the present overlaps with Daisy's face from the past, uniting them in a way that represents Gatsby's desires: His present self with the Daisy from five years ago, who has not yet met and married another man. This version is still 'pure' in Gatsby's mind, which is emphasized by the bright light, making her blond hair look unreal and her face and gown shimmer in white. Editing is here thus another relevant element responsible for the creation of mood. The scene can therefore be said to convey a deep mood of yearning and nostalgia, facilitated by fashion's cuing of flashbacks as well as the merging of several temporally separate storylines.

The interplay of costume, set design and sound can be seen-heard especially in the flashback scene. Gatsby's uniform in the past seems to consist of a thick material, and is buttoned up straight to the collar, concealing, as Nick observes, the fact that Gatsby is poor. Clothes can fulfill a protective function (Moseley 114) and that is exactly what the uniform does for Gatsby here, shielding him from the judgment of the upper class as a type of "social armour" (Moseley 111). If it were not for the uniform, Gatsby's clothes would indicate his social status, which is a common function of clothing (Köhler 5, 12). This phenomenon is usually present in the archetype of the 'Cinderella story' (Moseley 109; Bruzzi 14-15), meaning with reference to women's costumes, but which can also be applicable to men's costume, as is showcased here. The uniform here expresses the confidence and assurance Gatsby feels in relation to his pursuit of Daisy, supported on the sound level by Gatsby's voice-over stating that he "always knew that [he] could climb" (01:18:52-01:18:54).

Furthermore, in the flashback the green of Gatsby's uniform melts into the green of the plants surrounding the couch he and Daisy are intimate on, as well as the green on the cushions surrounding them. At the same time, the rose-colored flowers in Daisy's hair alongside the details on her dress match the floral patterns on the cushions as well. All these

elements together create the mood of romance and unity together with an orchestral version of the love theme.

The end of the flashback is signaled the same way that its start was indicated as well, only reversed: this time the house is shown in full at first, fully opaque before becoming shrouded in mist and transparent again, growing smaller as the camera zooms out of the clouds, showing the dark water beneath them again in the present. Moreover, shortly before the mist appears, a deep percussive sound can be perceived, signaling the jump back into the main narrative. The end of the flashback is then marked by the green light pulsing both visually and audibly, closing the frame around that moment in the past.

### **3.5 The End Scene (02:01:22-02:04:21)**

The last scene of the movie is marked by a mood of mourning and loss, emphasized by the past penetrating not just the main narrative in the present but also the frame narrative in the future. In this scene, color is one of the aspects that can be noticed first. As opposed to the bright and flashing colors characteristic of the earlier portrayals of the villa, Gatsby's property is now dark and deserted. Additionally, the scene being set at night time, the scenery surrounding the house is equally dark and defined by a turbulent storm howling through the trees and blowing through the dead leaves on the ground. In contrast to that, Nick's gait is slow and brooding, conveying, on the surface, that he is calm and deep in thought, supported by the slow nondiegetic music as well as the voice-over. It can be argued, though, that the dark set surrounding him expresses his deeper mental sphere of agitation and indignation over how Gatsby has been treated and depicted by other people.

During this scene, there is a piece of music carried by a violin that conveys a haunted mood. This is complemented by Nick's voice-over stating: "After Gatsby's death, New York was haunted for me" (02:01:02-02:01:07), as well as the fact that voice-overs in themselves were first introduced to film to communicate loss and grief (Haacke 46).<sup>15</sup> Specifically, the film space is haunted by the past the viewer-listener has experienced in the movie, which is expressed by means of brief flashbacks that are integrated into Nick's walking through Gatsby's mansion. These brief flashbacks need to be distinguished from the longer, 'regular'

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<sup>15</sup> The entire narrative frame of the movie is based on this concept, as Nick wistfully begins and ends the movie with his voice-over, in which he ultimately tells a story of loss: His own loss of Gatsby and faith in human kind, but also Gatsby's loss of Daisy and Tom's and George's loss of Myrtle. As a tool of narration, the voice-over, which has its beginning in film history in the period of Film Noir (Haacke 46), can be interpreted as one of several elements paying homage to the golden era of Hollywood, as has been noted by critics (Chibnall 95-96).

flashbacks seen in the movie, since the separate points in time are not clearly distinguished from one another but rather seem to constantly overlap with the present of the narrative. Their fleeting quality somewhat epitomizes what has been prevalent throughout the entire film and narrative: a lost past, a moment in time that cannot be recovered and is gone forever. Only this time, even the viewer-listener “fail[s] to grasp it” (02:02:45-02:02:47), as the scenes are not only brief but also ‘see-through’, like apparitions or ghosts, turning Gatsby’s dark and deserted villa into an example of a gothic haunted house. As a result, these flickers from the past do not permit the viewer-listener to forget the present, which prevents a proper immersion into the past. Fashion thus intercepts the complete transition into a temporally distant narrative, instead strengthening the atmosphere of transience and loss permeating the present as well as the future, as is indicated by Nick’s voice-over.

On the sound-level, impressions of the past are not just communicated in combination with the visuals of the past but rather are also present during shots of the dark, abandoned estate of the present. They are pieces of utterances from the characters of the story such as Jordan, Gatsby and Daisy but they are faded, as if heard from a far distance that is just out of reach. Together with Nick’s voice-over, it is again the case that various temporally distinct storylines overlap in just one scene. Nick’s narration reminds the viewer-listener of the narrative in the future, with Nick telling the story from the sanatorium, whilst the visuals of Nick walking through the mansion represent the present, interspersed with audio-visual material from the past.

One of the scenes from the past shows Daisy and Gatsby dancing together at the second party scene of the movie (02:02:10-02:02:14), while Daisy’s voice can be heard from the distance. Her utterance does refer to the visuals that can be seen, telling Gatsby how perfect everything is, however, there is no depiction of her lips moving. This constructs a moment of asynchrony between the visual and sonic dimension, demonstrating the uncanny<sup>16</sup> nature of the impressions from the past, as they do not appear how they were but are disassembled, their fragments not quite matching each other.

Fashion is thus once again crucial in portraying this haunted mood, closely connected to its navigation of temporally distinct narratives: the scenes from the past are too bright and transparent, their outlines appearing to be fragile, making it seem as though the scenes are taken from a point in time that is located much farther in the past than it feels to the viewer-

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<sup>16</sup> The ‘uncanny’ is defined by Freud as “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (220). Essentially, this means that something familiar, such as the past scene of Daisy and Gatsby dancing together, is encountered, but in an altered state, as is the case with the asynchrony between Daisy’s utterance and her lip movement. This dissonance between what is known and what is encountered is responsible for creating a scary, ‘uncanny’ feeling.

listener. This added distance and reminiscence contributes to the movie's overall mood of nostalgia and longing for the past, as well as the melancholy expressed from the very first scene when Nick's voice-over introduces the viewer-listener to the movie. Nick, and with him the viewer-listener, remembers the decadence, color and liveliness of Gatsby's place, which is demonstrated for instance by the lingering on the chandelier, both in the flickers of the past as well as the present (02:01:45-02:01:53). This chandelier, though fallen to floor and damaged, is somehow still sparkling in the dark scene of the present, conveying an uncanny, haunted atmosphere of the past seeping into the present, but in a way that it should not be.

Moreover, a scene from the past of Gatsby and Nick walking through the doors out onto the patio can be seen-heard, followed shortly by present-Nick walking through the same doors on his own. In the past, the curtains framing the doors are peaceful and calm in the wind but become tumultuous and unruly in the scene of the present. Having once contributed to a dreamlike, heavenly atmosphere existing in a space without time, the curtains now, together with the rest of the set, convey Nick's inner emotional turmoil, serving as a means of expressing his mental sphere.

It is only when Nick reaches the dock and sees Gatsby standing at the end of it that the flickering of the past stops, as if collecting its last bits of strength, and Gatsby appears in full color, in the suit the viewer-listener recognizes from the second party scene. Before this clear view of Gatsby, there is a veil of rain covering him, making him appear as if he is not quite there, as if he is a figment of imagination, or rather, a figment of the past. This recalls the dreamlike scene from 3.1., in which the room and the characters in it are covered by the curtain fabric, making Gatsby here similarly appear as if sprung from a dream.

Gatsby only materializes fully when he notices Nick's presence behind him and turns around. Before, it almost seems as if he is in his own world, undisturbed in his pursuit of the green light. Gatsby's turning around coincides with Nick saying, "behind him," (02:02:53-02:02:54), displaying the interconnection of sound and image as well as the interaction of future, present and past in this scene: Gatsby from the past materializes at the end of the dock that Nick is walking towards in the present, while Gatsby's movement is synchronized with the voice-over from the future and cued by Nick's approach in the present.

With Gatsby manifesting completely at the end of the dock, the set behind him changes as well, the rain now substituted by a peaceful night sky. It is worth mentioning that the fashion of the film does not render Gatsby and his backdrop a flashback, since he does not shimmer brightly and is not accompanied by far-away sounding dialogue. However, he also does not belong into the present, as is indicated by Gatsby's individual scenery, which does

not fit in with the scene Nick from the present is based in. Instead, Nick seems to be able to gaze directly into the past, a past which is vivid and more than just a haunting memory. He is even able to interact with the past, and the past with him, as Gatsby and him exchange glances (02:02:58-02:03:06). This can be said to be facilitated with the help of the green light that both men are observing.

The green light therefore once again serves as a powerful aesthetic device for initiating a temporal transition into the past. At first, there is a medium close-up of Nick walking along the dock, facing towards the bay. This is succeeded by a shot of the green light pulsing once through the rain and the darkness from the other end of the bay, before cutting back to the close-up of Nick. In the subsequent shot depicting the bay once again, the view of the green light is this time obstructed by the outline of a figure standing at the end of the dock. This figure can quickly be identified as Gatsby. The shot is arranged in a way that Gatsby stands directly in front of the green light, covering its source and bathing him in it. This can be interpreted as the strongest memory Nick has of Gatsby, reaching for the green light in the hopes of recreating the past with Daisy. It is no coincidence that Gatsby is clad in the same suit he wears in and after the second party scene. It is in this suit that Gatsby tries to convince Nick of the possibility of repeating the past, believing in a future with Daisy that aligns with his imagination.

Nick's voice-over ends on the word "past" (02:03:24-02:03:27), represented both visually as well as audibly by Nick's typewritten words and voice-over. In this scene, past, present and future are all represented in the visual dimension of the auditorized image: the view of the bay with the green light on the other side belongs to both the past, in which Gatsby is still alive, as well as the present, in which Nick remembers him, whereas the typewritten words represent the future.

The movie concludes with the same auditorized image that it starts with: the green light pulsing, visually as well as audibly, in the distance. For a moment, the light pierces through the manuscript of Nick's novel, weaving the past into the future story line one last time, until the novel eventually fades away (02:03:54-02:04:02), with the green light persevering. This demonstrates that even when the story is finished already, visually emphasized by the completion of the written novel, the past is a strong force that penetrates the future, with the green light functioning as a gateway between the different points in time.

## 4 Conclusion

This bachelor's thesis has presented a closer look at the effect of costume, set design and sound in Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* (2013). After introducing Giuliana Bruno's theoretical framework of fashion in film encompassing both costume as well as set design, her definition of fashion was broadened to also account for the sonic dimension of cinema. As a basis for this extension, Torelló Oliver and Swarbrick's concept of the musicalized image was expanded to include all types of sound, rendering fashion in film as a three-dimensional phenomenon consisting of costume, set design and sound. It has been argued that all three elements jointly construct mood in film as well as convey the characters' inner lives. Furthermore, fashion's influence on the temporality of the diegesis has been examined, showcasing that fashion can influence the duration of a scene as well as help transition and distinguish between narratives set in different points of time. In some instances, fashion has also been revealed to indicate the overlap and interaction of past, present and future within the narrative, conveying the constant presence of the past woven into the film's aesthetic texture.

For the analysis of *TGG*, relevant scenes with respect to fashion's influence on mood and the temporality of the diegesis have been analyzed. In the first scene, it was shown that fashion can create dreamlike atmospheres that seem to take place in a kind of heaven, where time stands still. Additionally, the love theme of the movie was identified, and it was demonstrated how the leitmotif is capable of conveying a mood of nostalgia and sadness as well as transport Daisy's vulnerable emotional state to the surface by means of the interplay with the see-through fabric of her dress as well as her exposed neck.

Next, the two scenes directly before and directly after Gatsby and Daisy's reunion have been examined. It was shown how the abnormally loud ticking of a clock can serve as a symbol of a troubled psychological state, in this case expressing Gatsby's anxiety over meeting Daisy. In doing so, fashion was identified as influential for the duration of the scene, since the moment seems to last much longer than is reflected in the passage of mathematical, countable time. Gatsby's incapability of quieting and concealing his emotions becomes visible when he violently tries to fix the clock that he has broken.

The scene after their reunion, however, stands in stark contrast to the mood of anxiety and discomfort prevalent before. This time, Gatsby and Daisy are portrayed as having merged, hidden away in their own private corner of the room that they blend into. Fashion works to create a micro-sonic space surrounding Daisy and Gatsby, shielding them from

unwanted auditory interruptions while simultaneously keeping their verbal exchange private from the outside.

Subsequently, the scene in which Gatsby leads Daisy and Nick around his estate constructs a mood of happiness, whilst also conveying a melancholy transience underlying everything. This is achieved by means of a romantic montage that is filled with laughter on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by means of the lyrics and minor key of the love theme, which is woven into the visuals. Time appears to be sliding away in this scene, creating the impression of Nick, Daisy and Gatsby are spending more than just one happy afternoon and evening together, which is facilitated by the many changes of clothes as well as changes of locations. When the happy, carefree atmosphere is interrupted, the melody played on the piano serves as a reflection of Gatsby's mental state of reluctance to face reality, while the crumpled shirts around Daisy jointly with Daisy's crying convey her distress and the disruption of the previous lightness, as well as Gatsby's awareness of it.

The scene after the second party, when Gatsby tells Nick of his first encounter with Daisy, demonstrated how fashion can help transition between temporally distinct storylines. In this scene, three different points in time are connected: the future, represented by Nick penning the novel about Gatsby, the present, represented by Nick and Gatsby's conversation at the pool, as well as the past, represented by Gatsby and Daisy's first encounter in Daisy's family home. The green light in particular helps facilitate the shift from the present into the past and back, aided by other elements of fashion such as lighting and color intensity of the sets, or the employment of diegetic sound matching the visuals of the scene in the past. Next to helping distinguish between the various points in time, fashion also enables their overlap, which is demonstrated, for instance, by Nick's voice-over from the future seamlessly transitioning into Gatsby's voice-over from the present.

Finally, the end scene of the movie has been analyzed, further emphasizing the interaction between past, present and future as well as the past's omnipresence in the film. As Nick passes through Gatsby's estate, a haunted mood of loss is fashioned by the interplay of Nick's voice-over, the dark abandoned set of Gatsby's villa, as well as the many flickering scenes from the past that permeate the space both visually and audibly. Dissonances between the visual and auditory dimensions of these impressions additionally create an uncanny feeling, strengthening the haunted atmosphere. In contrast to the brief, unstable impressions from the past, Gatsby's past self materializes fully at the end of the dock. Nick being able to interact with this past Gatsby, it can be argued that the green light, which both men are gazing towards, permits Nick a straight glance into a vivid past demonstrating once more its significance within the narrative.



The analysis of the selected scenes from *TGG* has shown that next to costume, set design and sound, editing is another element that can contribute to the creation of mood as well as temporality in film. It may thus be interesting to see consecutive studies focus on this element of film in more detail and discover editing's full potential.

Moreover, future research might strive to apply this theory of fashion to the remainder of Luhrmann's work as well, in a manner of investigating consistency and differences in his works. It may thus be investigated whether costume, set design and sound have similar effects on mood and diegetic temporality as is showcased here.

Lastly, there is also the possibility of pursuing the creation of mood and temporality by means of fashion from a cognitive perspective. Studies of this kind could, for instance, trace the audience's perception of the passage of narrative time and establish an empirically observable connection to the interplay of the elements of fashion. Similarly, it might be examined to what extent the moods constructed by fashion as analyzed in this thesis actually elicit a matching emotional response in the viewer-listener.

The three examples given above illustrate the many possibilities of research developing out of the approach of this thesis, emphasizing its relevance in the field of film studies. While this thesis has provided a detailed analysis by focusing on select scenes from one movie, there are still many more opportunities for future research to be conducted on the complex interplay of costume, set design and sound.

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