FILM ADAPTATIONS: THE DYNAMICS OF INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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For Mom and Dad

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Abstract

This dissertation begins with a brief history of adaptation studies followed by a discussion on the issue of fidelity. After examining several of the major arguments surrounding the fidelity debate, I establish a means for discussing adaptations through Robert Stam's concept of "intertextual dialogism," which takes its theoretical framework from Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "dialogism" and Julia Kristeva's "intertextuality." Stam's use of "intertextual dialogism" or "intertextuality" argues for the "open-endedness" of texts, allowing us to move away from evaluating texts simply on their faithfulness to the source.

I begin Chapter 1 with a close reading of *Pride and Prejudice* as I compare it with three adaptations: the 1940 film production, the 1995 television mini-series, and the 2005 film production—using the intertextual tropes of studio style, casting and choice of stars for each film, their mainstream ideology, and narrative point of view. In Chapter 2, I examine Huck Finn's first-person narration in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* using Bakhtinian concepts that lead into an intertextual reading with director Stephen Sommers' film adaptation. Chapter 3 examines the introspective and sentimental narration of Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby* and its relationship to director Jack Clayton's film adaptation. The final chapter looks at *A Streetcar Named Desire* by first comparing the playscript with the 1993 rerelease of the film. Then I take a look at the 1951 version and compare it with the 1993 version before ending with a reading of the 1995 television adaptation in the context of the playscript.

Too often, high school teachers show film adaptations to give a visual idea of the setting or to look at basic differences between the novel and film adaptation without asking "why?" This dissertation provides examples of close readings and comparisons with their

film adaptations, eventually arguing for a close reading of the source text in the high school curricula, not for evaluating the worth of a film, but as a way to define the sorts of relationships between a literary text and its film adaptation.

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Introduction

When I began researching ideas for the topic of my dissertation, the one thing I knew for certain was my love for literature, film, and teaching. As I discussed ideas with colleagues and friends, the field of adaptation studies seemed to provide a focal point where all three of these interests intersected. I was pleased to discover that adaptation studies could be traced back to the classroom. The classroom was not only a place where films were shown in tandem with the text, but also a battlefield, with some professors fearing that studying films would be "encouraging a new species of illiteracy [that] threatens to undermine the culture that higher education is designed to uphold." This quotation from Williams College professor Charles Thomas Samuels was published in 1973 in *Humanities*, the newsletter of the National Endowment for the Humanities (Kriegsman K11). His quotation shows the potential threat of films to the traditional academic curriculum. Samuels was particularly unhappy with the critical success of Francis Ford Coppola's adaptation of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. He states: "No literary critic took *The Godfather* seriously as a novel, but many film critics—*and the academics who look to them for guidance*—treated it with great respect as a film" [emphasis mine] (quoted in Welsh 99). The often used "the book was better" cliché did not ring true in this instance, with Samuels seeing film as a "genuine threat" to an American educational system that tended to uphold literary texts as superior.

Meanwhile, certain schools in the Midwest were moving in different directions by establishing strong cinema-studies department.[1] By 1974, John O'Connor had published

[1] Schools like the University of Wisconsin, Madison and the University of Texas, Austin were forerunners in establishing how film could be utilized in the classroom with other schools like UCLA, USC, and NYU also setting strong examples. The University of Southern California (still seen as one of the elite film schools) had been offering film courses taught by Hollywood professors since the 1920s (Welsh 100).

Teaching History with Film.[2] O'Connor's work, followed by Peter Rollins at Oklahoma State University and Loren Baybrook at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, helped to establish the foundations of adaptation "as a historically oriented discipline in which it was important to study the contexts of production to understand how and why a text had been transformed" (Welsh 101). The movement, which began with O'Connor's 1970 Historians Film Committee and its eventual journal, *Film & History*, helped to create a framework for the interdisciplinary discussion between film studies and teaching that is still prevalent in adaptation studies today. Within a few years after *Film & History* was formed, a new academic journal, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, arose out of the discipline of English in 1973. It was founded by Thomas L. Erskine of Salisbury College and inspired by George Bluestone's *Novels into Film* (1957), which was seen as one of the first texts to do a formal analysis of how novels were transformed into screenplays (Welsh 101). As an example, Bluestone dedicates a chapter to Robert Z. Leonard's *Pride and Prejudice* (1940). In it Bluestone writes, "Even the most casual reader of Jane Austen's novel will observe several significant changes in this transposition from book to screen." He then goes on to list those changes and concludes, "In short, though these new lines do not have exact precedent in the book, they do have reasonable equivalents" (130-131). Bluestone's approach was primarily focused on how faithful the film was to its original source, which led to many articles from *Literature/Film Quarterly* emphasizing Bluestone's fidelity approach. As I continued my research on adaption studies, the issue of fidelity was always present; in fact, fidelity criticism is still a major subject of conversation, which is why it is important to begin with a look at the issues surrounding the debate on fidelity.

[2] By 1987, O'Connor would update his text as *Teaching History with Film and Television*.

The Fidelity Debate

The ongoing debate about fidelity in adaptation studies possibly started to gain momentum with George Bluestone's *Novels into Film* and in the journal *Literature/Film Quarterly* (1973), which favored Bluestone's approach to criticism. According to James Welsh, who later became Editor-in-Chief of the journal:

> *Literature/Film Quarterly* pioneered the study of the transformative processes involved in adaptation. The problem with the Bluestone approach was that it tended, despite Bluestone's best intentions, to be fidelity-based, and, as a consequence, would-be critics who followed the Bluestone example found themselves rewriting the same essay over and over and asking the same questions about whether the film adaptation was "faithful" to its source. (101)

Others, like Brian McFarlane, who wrote *Novels to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996) tries to move away from fidelity based criticism. In his plenary address, entitled "It Wasn't Like That in the Book . . ." given at the University of Bath Millennium Film Conference in 1999, he confronts the fidelity issue by insisting on the creative possibilities of film itself. McFarlane's argument is that many literary critics and professors in the humanities are trained in reading for complexity and subtlety in literature, and so these same critics and professors tend to make judgments on films based on their literary skills, often leading them to a conclusion that "the book was better," not because they judged the film as an original work, but because it is an adaptation of a literary text. According to McFarlane:

> The attitude of literary people to film adaptations of literary works is almost always to the detriment of the film, only grudgingly conceding what film may

> have achieved. My contention is that their training hasn't taught them to look in film for riches comparable to those they find in literature and that, in consequence, their filmgoing experience, especially when adaptation is in question, tends to seem thin by comparison. When viewing the film version of a novel or play they know, they want to find in the film what they valued in the literary work, without asking whether this is the sort of thing film can do. (5-6)

I agree with McFarlane that many literary readers and critics, who view film adaptations of novels or plays they know well, tend to have a less favorable assessment of a film adaptation. These critics usually don't look at film as an original text; rather they are looking for a transposition of the novel into film. There has to be an understanding that the film itself should be considered as a different medium unto itself and therefore judged on those merits. More importantly, if we are reading the film as an adaptation, both new and connected to its precursor, will literary critics be satisfied with simply a preservation of the events of the novel? McFarlane writes an "ideal" film adaptation should be "bold and intelligent . . . determined to make something both connected to its precursor and new in itself" (9). He cites Peter Bogdanovich's *Daisy Miller* as a prime example:

> I'd say there is enough of Bogdanovich's own "commentary," making itself felt in the film's enunciatory procedures, on the action devised by James, to lead us to feel we are seeing something new. He seems to me, in adhering to the events of the novel, to provide a commentary on the nature and effects of repression, especially of sexual repression, rather than merely to reproduce the Jamesean complex fate. (9)

Even though McFarlane gives an idea of what he finds appealing in Bogdanovich's *Daisy Miller*, his use of the phrase "bold and intelligent" to define an "ideal" adaptation is still vague. How are we to define a film that is "bold and intelligent"? Is a film that intentionally moves away from the source novel's time period, setting, plot, character motives considered bold? Is the film's artistic use of mise-en-scène, editing, and camera shots part of the intelligence? Is it a combination of the two put together? McFarlane goes on to cite Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* as well as Amy Heckerling's *Clueless* as examples that are bold and intelligent, saying "In each of these cases, what is offered is, in some sense, a radical reworking of the precursor text, a kind of commentary on its great antecedent, a new work" (8). It seems what McFarlane is implying with phrases such as "bold and intelligent" and "radical reworking," at least with the Van Sant and Heckerling examples, is that an adaptation should comment on the original in some way. The details as to what constitutes a "radical reworking" are still vague, though his two examples seem to at least suggest different time periods and more importantly "a kind of commentary of its great antecedent." How are we to better define McFarlane's use of "a kind of commentary of its great antecedent"?

Robert Stam, in his essay, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" (2000) reveals a decidedly different perspective about fidelity in film adaptation and offers a possible answer to my question. Stam points out that literature has often enjoyed a privileged place in history because it not only predates film, but also because movie narratives are often associated with popular culture rather than high culture. Consequently, discussions of film adaptations usually take a moralistic tone, evidenced in the debate about whether or not a film narrative is faithful to its novel. He writes: "The notion of fidelity gains its persuasive

force from our sense that some adaptations are indeed better than others and that some adaptations fail to 'realize' or substantiate that which we most appreciated in the source novels" ("Beyond Fidelity" 543).

Arguing against such prejudices, Stam shows the impossibility of strict fidelity to any literary source because of the "automatic difference" built into the medium of film. He writes, "Each medium has its own specificity deriving from its respective materials of expression. The novel has a single material of expression, the written word, whereas the film has at least five tracks: moving photographic image, phonetic sound, music, noises, and written materials" ("Beyond Fidelity" 547). As an example of the differences between a novel and a film, Stam uses a specific passage from Nabokov's *Lolita* in comparison to Kubrick's *Lolita*:

> Nabokov's Humbert Humbert laments the prodding deliberateness of prose fiction, with its subordination to linear consecution, its congenital incapacity to seize the moment in its multifaceted simultaneity. Gleefully reporting his wife Charlotte's providential death by car crash, he deplores having to put "the impact of an instantaneous vision into a sequence of words." The "physical accumulation on the page," he complains, "Impairs the actual flash, the sharp unity of impression" (Nabokov 91). By contrast, the same crash as staged by Kubrick's *Lolita* offers precisely this simultaneity of impression: we see the crash as we hear it, along with the commentative music that conveys a specific attitude toward the events presented. (Stam, "Beyond Fidelity" 547)

Stam makes clear that he is not arguing that Kubrick's version is superior to Nabokov's novel, rather he is attempting to show how the multiple modes of expression in film can offer

a "multifaceted simultaneity" that a novel cannot. Stam is also quick to note that the novel can convey a sense of discontinuity "between the tragic theme of untimely death on the one hand and Humbert's flip, cynical, self-regarding style of presentation on the other" ("Beyond Fidelity" 547). Consequently, Nabokov's and Kubrick's *Lolita* each elicit different impressions in their respective constructions of the same scene. Stam sees adaptations, such as Kubrick's *Lolita*, as actively engaged with their source texts, defining adaptation as "less an attempted resuscitation of an originary word than a turn in an ongoing dialogical process" ("Beyond Fidelity" 550), what Stam calls "intertextual dialogism":

> The concept of intertextual dialogism suggests that every text forms an intersection of textual surfaces. All texts are tissues of anonymous formulae, variations of that formulae, conscious and unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts. In the broadest sense, intertextual dialogism refers to the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture, the entire matrix of communicative utterances within which the artistic text is situated, which reach the text not only through recognizable influences, but also through a subtle process of dissemination. ("Beyond Fidelity" 550)

Stam's theory of intertextual dialogism is based on Julia Kristeva's intertextuality theory, which tells us that texts exist in constant dialog with other texts, almost never existing on their own (Kristeva 34-61). One of the problems many readers have is that they understand source texts as absolutes, grounded in the meanings and interpretations within the period they were written, rather than constantly shifting texts in complex relationships with other texts. The intertextual theory of Kristeva has its roots in Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "dialogism,"

which emphasizes the "constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (Bakhtin 426). Stam elaborates on Bakhtin in his "Introduction" to *Literature through Film*:

> Bakhtin's attitude toward the literary author as living on "inter-individual territory" suggests a revised attitude toward artistic "originality." The artistic utterance is always what Bakhtin calls a "hybrid construction" mingling one's own word with the other's word. Bakhtin's words about literature as a "hybrid construction" apply even more obviously to a collaborative medium like film. Complete originality, as a consequence, is neither possible nor even desirable. And if "originality" in literature is downplayed, the "offense" in "betraying" that originality, for example through an "unfaithful" adaptation, is that much less. (4)

Therefore, using Stam's term of "intertextual dialogism" or intertextuality, we are able to move away from judging a work based on how faithful it is to its source text, to reading source texts and their adaptations as having an ongoing dialogical process. As Stam notes, "The trope of adaptation as a 'reading' of the source novel, one which is inevitably partial, personal, conjunctural, for example, suggests that just as any literary text can generate an infinity of readings, so any novel can generate any number of adaptations" (*Literature* 4). Stam builds on his use of Bakhtin's "dialogism" and Kristeva's "intertextuality" by citing Gerard Genette's *Palimpsestes*, which uses terms like "hypertextuality" to refer "to the relation between one text, which Genette calls 'hypertext,' to an anterior text or 'hypotext,' which the former transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends" (*Literature* 5). Stam gives some classical examples such as *The Aeneid* with its hypotexts being *The Odyssey* and *The*

Iliad. Using Genette's terms, a source novel is considered the hypotext while its film adaptation is the hypertext. Hypertextuality focuses specifically on the relation between the hypotext and the hypertext, while intertextuality looks at the connections between all texts. Genette's terms are especially useful to give us a working vocabulary for adaptation.

For intertextuality, Stam's use of intertextual dialogism takes the focus away from the source text as the sole criterion for originality, thereby making less relevant McFarlane's criterion of a film's merits based on being "intelligent" in comparison to the original text. Stam's essays have both stimulated and responded to a new wave of critical interest in adaptation studies. Moreover, Stam's concept of intertextual dialogism has been influential on narrative theory and its concerns with textual and cultural dialogues.

Thomas Leitch echoes Stam's move towards intertextuality in adaptation studies. In a newsletter of *Literature/Film Association 1* (2003), he writes, "every text is a rereading of earlier texts and every text, whether it poses as an original or an adaptation, has the same claims to aesthetic or ontological privilege as every other" ("Where Are We Going" 332). Leitch, like Stam, replaces the question of how adaptations succeed or fail to capture the essence of a source's text with other questions—questions such as "How has a given adaptation rewritten its source text? Why has it chosen to select and rewrite the source texts it has? How have the texts available to us inevitably been rewritten by the very act of reading [by both adapting writer and filmmaker]? How do we want to rewrite them anew?" ("Where Are We Going" 332). Leitch's questions move the focus away from seeing the source text as the only standard with which its adaptations are compared; instead he gives all adaptations and source texts equal weight. Leitch then boldly declares that "intertextual studies seeks to dethrone English departments' traditional emphasis on *literature*, the existing

canon that deserves close study and faithful adaptation, and replace it with *literacy*, the study of the ways texts have been, might be, and should be read and rewritten" ("Where Are We Going" 332).

Leitch's ambitions are admirable, and given the multitudes of texts in our culture (books, films, advertisements, etc.), it would be elitist to omit or look down on hypertexts, whether it is a loose film adaptation or the description of a movie tie-in on an action-figure's packaging. In *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to the Passion of the Christ* (2007), Leitch continues to explore the issues surrounding fidelity within adaptations. In his chapter "Exceptional Fidelity," he examines *Gone with the Wind* and *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy,* coming to the conclusion that all texts, no matter how sacred, are "haunted by the traces of many other texts" (129). He then goes into detail on the marketing strategies of both films and how merchandising itself can lead to "the inevitable loss in fidelity" (147). Leitch's chapter on fidelity addresses the question of why viewers have an expectation for the adaptation to be faithful. For Leitch, the answer rests in a studio's expected financial gain of an adaptation, giving the audience what they seemingly want—a faithful visual replica of a revered novel. Some, like Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, have such a huge fan base that the film adaptation may suffer a financial loss if the adaptation does not follow plot and character devices from the novel. The BBC's mini-series production of *Pride and Prejudice* is a perfect example of a studio that felt fidelity to Austen's 19th century would appeal to Austen's large fan base, so the producers researched the setting, fashion, and dances in order to replicate as much as possible Austen's 19th century England.[3]

[3] See Birstwistle and Conklin's *The Making of Pride and Prejudice*, specifically Chapters 3-6, which detail the research and preparation involved to achieve as close as possible historical accuracy to the production design (sets and locations), costume, make-up and hair design, music, and dancing.

I agree with Stam that there is an "automatic difference" between film and novel and as Stam notes, too often "words like infidelity and betrayal . . . translate our feeling, when we have loved a book, that an adaptation has not been worthy of that love" ("Beyond Fidelity" 543). Instead, I believe in a *shared knowledge* of the original text. That shared knowledge of the original text is pivotal for not only the reader of Austen's text, but also for the director and screenwriter who must know the source novel to make decisions on the direction of the film. Once the filmmaker acknowledges the novel as a source, he or she can then use that source according to the intentions of the adaptation. As Wiltshire points out in defense of Austen adaptations, "allusions to the original novel are ubiquitous—either to validate a production decision through an appeal to the text's authority, to defend a departure by emphasizing the distinct capabilities of film, or to point out gaps which the adaptation has the opportunity to fill" ("Afterword," 160-61). Thomas Leitch takes a more exacting view of adaptations by imposing particular expectations on them, writing, for example, "The 1995 *Pride and Prejudice* offers itself less as a new achievement than as a transparent, nondistorting window through which viewers can see Jane Austen's story, characters, and world" (*Film Adaptation* 153). He goes on to say the quest for fidelity is a fetish, defining fetish as "the printed words and books, authors and their collected works" (*Film Adaptation* 172). He cites films of Merchant Ivory as being guilty of "fetishizing," along with BBC television adaptations:[4]

> These television adaptations treat their backdrops in purely pictorial terms in order to fetishize two different elements they treat as complementary: the original text's dialogue, which is replicated as fully and literally as possible,

[4] "The films of Merchant Ivory fetishize the lost lady figuring the costs of cultural conflict against an exotically handsome background" (Leitch *Film Adaptation* 172).

> and a carefully rendered set of period illustrations that are staged in cinematic terms but have the function of tableaux vivants, illustrations to a deluxe edition of a classic literary text. (*Film Adaptation* 172)

This assessment of the BBC production by Leitch is punctuated by his conclusion that the 1995 production of *Pride and Prejudice* is meant to appeal to "late twentieth-century Western female spectators" with examples of the obligatory kiss, Darcy in a bathtub, and Darcy emerging from a lake, to name a few (*Film Adaptation* 177). Though Leitch is right about the adaptation favoring a female audience with those specific scenes, all three of those scenes are not in the novel, and according to the screenwriters and producers, they wanted to show a more human and physical portrayal of their characters. Producer Sue Birtwistle writes, "[I] decided to show them going riding, and shooting and fencing. Darcy goes swimming at one point and it's partly a way of showing him as a real human being" (5). Leitch's assertion that scenes like the ones mentioned above merely pander to a certain gender demographic misses the point that seeing characters outside of what is presented in the novel can add another dimension to the novel, which challenges Leitch's assertion that the 1995 production is simply a "transparent, nondistorting window." Lastly, Leitch argues that fans of the 1995 adaptation are too enamored of "its fidelity to Austen's dialogue" (*Film Adaptation* 172). He goes on to criticize how the 1995 adaptation "softens Austen's tone by omitting her harsher judgments of Mrs. Bennet—'a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper'—and Mr. Collins—'a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility'—but intensifies the turbulence of Darcy's first proposal by having Darcy nervously pace, sit, then stand again as Elizabeth refuses to meet his eyes until she delivers her wounded, cutting response" (*Film Adaptation* 177).

Leitch's discussion of the 1995 adaptation criticizes its fetishization of Austen's dialogues and mise-en-scène, emphasizing its romance to favor a female audience, and its omission of a harsher judgment on certain characters such as Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins. His criticisms suggest he would rather have the adaptation focus on "more sociological observations on the rise of the English middle class" (*Film Adaptation* 177). Leitch is taking a position of presuming what aspect of Austen's novel should be highlighted for adaptation, which is to say, he is limiting its possibilities or writing another screenplay—his screenplay. I believe adaptations have choices that have to be made, and to simply replicate a novel would be impossible and a fruitless endeavor. Some of the best adaptations make something new of the novel that no earlier version has done, while some adaptations may simply find it profitable to capitalize on Austen's popularity. Others may simply adapt Austen's novels for the sheer love and joy it brings to them, as a quick search on YouTube will show.

I agree with Stam's and Leitch's assertion that intertextuality is vital to adaptation studies, as they both give equal weight to the source text and its hypertexts. For the high school curriculum, I want to emphasize the relationship between the hypotext to its hypertexts, showing students how the source text functions as it engages in intertextual connections with its film adaptations. Therefore, I put a primary degree of importance and weight in understanding the source text because students cannot understand the issues at hand without understanding the original material. In other words, the source text still holds a vital position in how we teach and study literature. As an example, students should have a strong understanding of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, considering the novel's major events and character motivations to better compare and understand the artistic choices that an adaptation provides. As students begin to find similarities and differences between the

source text and its film adaptation, they can ask questions and make connections on ways the adaptation comments on the original or deviates from it. To be clear, I am not holding the source text as the *standard* to which film adaptations should be judged. Rather, I am advocating a thorough *understanding* of the source text in order to equip high school students with a method to have a meaningful intertextual dialog with a novel's film adaptation.

Adaptation in the High School English Classroom

To have a better understanding of the role film adaptations often have in high schools, let me elaborate on its use in a typical high school English class. A common practice in class is to have students read, as an example, a novel, over a period of time and to explore its content with daily class discussions. As teachers, we help to facilitate discussions to make sure the students have an understanding of the novel and are able to connect its themes and motifs to other works they may have read in class, usually culminating with the students each turning in a well-written essay on the novel. The essay's argument should demonstrate a good understanding of the novel, complete with a strong thesis and examples to support it. After the discussion of the novel, students are sometimes "rewarded" with the viewing of a film adaptation of the novel. I have noticed that during the viewing of the film, almost all students are engaged, piqued by what an adaptation of the novel they have read and discussed looks and sounds like. After the viewing, I have also observed in classes that many teachers open with "So, what do you think of the movie?" Oftentimes, the responses are, "I liked the book better," "What happened to (blank) from the book?" "How come they changed her name?," and even the occasional, "When was it made? It looks old." All of these responses have the potential to promote a good discussion on the film, but more often than not, the

teacher's discussion is relegated to a checklist of differences between the novel and the film adaptation without asking "why?" leading to an eventual conclusion that the book was better because it came first. In the most egregious cases, I have even seen some teachers bypass discussion completely, starting with the next assigned text the following day with no critical inquiry into the film, using the film more as an intermission before continuing on to the next work of literature. More commonly, I find teachers using the film as a way to give students a visual sense of what the novel's setting "looked like," say in the 1920s for a novel like *The Great Gatsby*; however, these teachers miss a golden opportunity to engage students in the film by asking "why" questions. Because the film is treated as an addendum to the novel or "a break" for finishing the novel, students tend to be less *actively* engaged when watching a film than when they are reading the novel. Students are interested in seeing the film, to be sure, but because many teachers don't follow up the film viewing with questions or writing assignments, students take on more of a passive role when watching films. To be fair, reading a film critically, much like reading literature critically, takes practice. What should happen at the high school level when teachers show film adaptations is to treat the adaptation as a text worthy of discussion, an original text as Stam proposes, that has its links to its source text and to explore the intertextual space between the two. So, in essence the fidelity debate has replicated itself on the high school level, where the source text is usually seen as superior and the film adaptation or hypertext an inferior work because it is unable to match the original.

In the high school English classroom, an important skill for students is the ability to do close readings. Starting with a passage from a text or a poem, students are taught to annotate lines and passages, engaging themselves critically with the text. Teachers then provide students with the literary terminology to articulate what they find in the text during

class discussions and in writing. Through continual practice with the guidance of the teacher, students are able to improve and become more engaged in the text as they make connections within the source text and other texts, leading to more sophisticated arguments within their papers. I believe that with close readings, students become familiar with the text, providing them with a strong foundation to move towards "reading" a film adaptation. I do not expect high school students to write and analyze films as if they were students in a college film studies class; rather, I expect students to be able to use the source text as a means to open dialog with film adaptations. I want students to look at the differences that an adaptation brings to the original while questioning *why* these changes were made and *what implications* these changes have on the way they view both the novel and the adaptation. For high school students, it is especially important to have the original text to give them a foundation for their ideas as they process other texts such as adaptations. As students understand the importance of viewing films actively as a text, more intertextual connections from popular culture can be encouraged. Critics like James Welsh have responded to the issue of fidelity by seeing it as an important tool in understanding how to read texts:[5]

> Students in the classroom might still be interested in issues of fidelity—especially when many curricula in high schools and universities still expect them to have a broad grasp of Shakespeare's "original" text in order to pass their examinations. They might enjoy Shakespearean films as a way of understanding the plays, but the plays themselves still assume an important position as the main focus of study. (104)

[5] James Welsh's "Adaptability: Questioning and Teaching Fidelity," as well as Jennifer M. Jeffers's, "Life Without A Primary Text: The Hydra in Adaptation Studies," and Peter Clandfield's "Teaching Adaptation, Adapting Teaching, and Ghosts of Fidelity," all see the importance of reading and knowing the original written text well to see the differences in adaptations in order to better understand students' own cultural concerns.

Given the complexity of Shakespeare's plays, high school classes often show Shakespearean adaptations to give students a better understanding of the play, but the main point Welsh is making is that students still need a thorough understanding of the play itself before being able to make connections to other related texts like film adaptations. I agree with Welsh because having a strong understanding of the source text allows students to be better equipped to formulate and ask questions about the source text in relation to its adaptations.

Peter Clandfield also stresses knowing the source text well enough to discern differences in order for students to better understand adaptations:

> [Fidelity is] a matter not of attempting to protect students from the illegitimate influence of an upstart and down-dumbing medium, but of determining what students have and have not brought away from an adaptation to apply to a source text, and also of using the differences between an adaptation and a source to reinforce students' understanding of the conventions of each medium involved. (140)

Like Welsh and Clandfield, I believe going to the source text offers a starting point that can evolve with each reading of an adaptation. Though it is always better to have an adaptation that students will find stimulating, even the adaptations that were seen as "bombs" are useful. Dennis Cutchins writes, "Students engage with film adaptation of literary works much more deeply and immediately than they do with scholarly essays. Thus I have found that adaptations, even adaptations considered failures by viewers and critics, can train my students in that skill of negative capability that is so central to literary studies"[6] ("Why

[6] Cutchins likens the effect the study of adaptations can have on students to John Keats' concept of negative capability. As Cutchins explains it, "Studying adaptations requires students to adopt an essential and persistent double-mindedness. In order to analyze a work of literature through the study of adaptation, students must hold at least two texts in their minds at once, and that can be very productive indeed" ("Why Adaptations" 88).

Adaptations" 90). Cutchins makes a good point in acknowledging that whether the adaptation is good or bad, reading two texts more or less simultaneously can train students to learn by being more observant to details in the texts, leading them to develop and ask critical questions. I believe showing a poor adaptation can be an ideal opportunity to ask students why they feel the adaptation fails, beyond the "it wasn't in the book" answer. Ideally, students will end up "re-reading" the source text, as "performed" in the film. Having students find answers to their questions through evidence from both the source text and the film allows them to become not only better critical thinkers, but suddenly opens both the source text and the film to Stam's intertextual dialogism, thereby opening the classroom to a broader range of discussions.

I had three goals when I embarked on this dissertation. The first was to write about literature and film critically. The second goal was to make use of what I learned in my writing and research as a pedagogical tool for my classroom. My third goal is to encourage high school teachers to seriously consider using film adaptations as texts. Hopefully, the examples I use for intertextual analysis between the source texts and their adaptations in these chapters will inspire other high school teachers to recognize the use of film adaptations as a useful tool for teaching literature. The source texts that I use in these chapters are from the literary canon—texts that are universally studied and respected. I chose these texts because they are fixtures in most high school reading curriculums. At the same time, I wanted to make sure that these works of literature had film adaptations that were easily available for both students and teachers. Let me now outline the chapters of my dissertation to show its overall movement.

Chapter 1, "*Pride and Prejudice*: An Intertextual Reading of Three Adaptations," examines three *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations: the 1940 production directed by Robert Z. Leonard, the 1995 television mini-series directed by Simon Langton, and the 2005 production directed by Joe Wright. The intertextual tropes I explore with these adaptations are the studio's style, the casting and choice of stars for each film, and their mainstreaming ideologies and narrative points of view, especially considering the way the film's narrative can impact how we read both the novel and the film.

Chapter 2, "*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: An Intertextual Reading of Mark Twain's Novel and Stephen Sommers' Film Adaptation, *The Adventures of Huck Finn*," begins by providing a groundwork for understanding Huck's use of first-person narration in Mark Twain's novel by applying the Bakhtinian concepts of "the authoritative word," "the internally persuasive word" and "one's own word" alongside close readings of the novel. I then move to an intertextual reading of Sommers' film adaptation with the novel, examining first-person narration in the film and the risks taken by him as a film released through Walt Disney Studios.

Chapter 3, "An Intertextual Reading of First-Person Narratives in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Jack Clayton's Film Adaptation," looks at the introspective and sentimental way Nick presents Gatsby and Daisy's relationship in the novel. This is contrasted with Jack Clayton's film adaptation, with its omniscient lens that presents the doomed relationship between Gatsby and Daisy. With the camera's lens allowing us to see multiple perspectives, how does seeing these differences illuminate the way we see narration work in *The Great Gatsby*?

Chapter 4, "The Streetcars Named Desire," compares Tennessee Williams' playscript of *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Elia Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire*: the censored 1951 version of the film to the 1993 "The Original Director's Version," to show how the two versions shape how we understand the actions and motivations of Stanley, Stella, and Blanche. The next section, entitled, "A Streetcar Faithfully Named Desire," compares Kazan's film with a modern version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, a 1995 television adaptation directed by Glenn Jordan. My comparison of the film to the television adaptation will show the differences and challenges of a remake.

What I hope to accomplish pedagogically with this dissertation is to make literature more accessible to students. Accessibility, not in the way of simply showing a film to give them a better "feel" for the sounds and visuals of a source text, but to empower students to make connections between source texts and films, giving them opportunities to ask "why?" Training students to do close readings of the source texts allows them to make critical connections with film adaptations that go beyond the inherent differences between a text and film. Teachers need to present films to students as works unto themselves, treating them as texts that require analysis, worthy of critical dialogue with the literature they read. Therefore, when students are asked to make connections between the source text and its film adaptation, they will begin by asking critical questions about the film. Their questions will hopefully motivate them to go back to the source text to see the implications the film may have on the text, or to even question their original assumptions about the source text. Having students apply their close readings of the source text to a film adaptation allows them to have the open dialog that Kristeva's intertextual theory exemplifies. In the classroom we may start with the novel and move to films, but, as Linda Hutcheon notes, adaptation goes far

beyond just the novel and film medium: “Videogames, theme park rides, Web sites, Graphic novels, song covers, operas, musicals, ballets, and radio and stage plays are just as important to this theorizing as the more commonly discussed movies and novels” (XIV). Encouraging students to understand that adaptations are available in many mediums allows them to expand their matrix of meanings exponentially as they begin to make intertextual connections that can go beyond the novels. One of our jobs as teachers is to encourage students to make those connections and to challenge them by having them critically ask questions on how adaptations can influence, shape, distort, and change the way one text interacts with another.

During my discussion of source texts in relation to their film adaptations, I chose tropes that I found interesting and worthy of exploring. Though much of the intertextuality between texts relies heavily on close readings of the source texts, Jennifer M. Jeffers argues there shouldn’t be a source text at all: “there is no academically ‘clean’ way to present students with a primary text because culture, media, literary, and historic texts, and image all overlap with each other to the extent that they cannot be separated” (136). Jeffers’ assertion certainly challenges teachers to present a fuller experience that moves beyond the novel to film approach; however, trying to cover all the literary, cultural, and historical texts that overlap with a novel, play, or adaptation is too immense of a task, especially at the high school level. What seems more practical in high school is to present a list of an adaptations’ historical and cultural overlaps, allowing students to make connections with what interests them, in much the same way that I did in my chapters. Close readings of source texts are good places to start for high school students as they begin to question choices made in adaptations. If used well, adaptations in the high school classroom will enable students to gain insight into both the literature they read and the film adaptations, in ways that teaching a

literary text by itself does not do. My hope is that the examples of intertextual readings that I use in these chapters can provide teachers with models on how to teach novels, plays, or short stories with their film adaptations. It is my hope teachers will find my approach to be a new and exciting way to teach literature in general to their students.

CHAPTER 1

Pride and Prejudice: An Intertextual Reading of Three Adaptations

Jane Austen's popularity seems to increase every year as her themes of romance, marriage, and money echo central concerns in the 21st century. Though there have been many Austen adaptations since 1940, there has been a boom in Austen adaptations within the last 20 years.[7] One of the major factors in the resurgence of Austen these past years comes from the overwhelming success of the BBC 1995 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* by director Simon Langton and screenwriter Andrew Davies. The BBC television serial adaptation helped to stimulate interest in more Austen films by the end of the year such as Emma Thompson's *Sense & Sensibility* and Nick Dear's *Persuasion.* By 1996, audiences would also have *Clueless* (an updated *Emma*), the American release (A&E) of *Pride and Prejudice*, Miramax's version of *Emma* starring Gwyneth Paltrow, and Andrew Davies' screenplay of *Emma* starring Kate Beckinsale (released on A&E in America in February of 1997). These productions from the nineties led to publishers selling tie-in editions of the novels. Emma Thompson and Nick Dear published their screenplays, and Sue Birtwistle and Susie Conklin have written two heavily illustrated books designed to accompany Davies' adaptations: *The Making of Pride and Prejudice* and *The Making of Jane Austen's Emma*.[8] Not surprisingly, technology also played a major part in the popularity of Austen. BBC and its international counterpart, A&E, made the BBC adaptations accessible to Americans, and with the advent of the VCR, DVDs, Blu-rays, video streaming, and the Internet, the

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[7] As an example, "between 1970 and 1986, seven feature-length films or television mini-series, all British, were produced based on Austen novels; in the years 1995 and 1996, however, six additional adaptations appeared, half of them originating in Hollywood and the rest influenced by it" (Linda Troost and Sayre N. Greenfield 1).

[8] In England, *The Making of Pride and Prejudice* made the top of the nonfiction best-seller list in December 1996 (Sales 228).

opportunities for accessing and publicizing the films have never been greater and easier. A quick search on Google of Jane Austen's name brought in 50,000,000 results.[9] Sites like *The Republic of Pemberley* (pemberley.com) and the teeming number of discussion boards allows viewers to find a seemingly endless array of information on Austen's life and novels. In fact, Jane Austen's popularity led to her being named one of the "Top 10 Entertainment Personalities of 1995" by *Entertainment Weekly* (Ascher-Walsh), while devotees of her works call themselves "Janeites," engaging in costume balls, games, and readings of the popular novelist.

Given the contemporary buzz surrounding the institution of Jane Austen, it is evident that Austen's popularity is inextricably tied not just to the cultural zeitgeist at hand, but also to what Robert Stam calls "intertextual dialogism." Stam defines it as "the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture, the entire matrix of communicative utterances within which the artistic text is situated, which reach the text not only through recognizable influences, but also through a subtle process of dissemination" ("Beyond Fidelity" 550). With the seemingly instantaneous means of communicating with others and having one's opinion heard via the Internet or Twitter, Stam's "subtle process of dissemination" is not so subtle anymore, giving almost anyone an instantaneous audience. Stam's definition of "intertextual dialogism" is often referred to as "intertextuality,"—the relationship of one text to another. Film is just one form of a text; though anything that people produce or modify to communicate meaning (paintings, photographs, T-shirt messages, cartoons, letters, commercials, ads) can be seen as texts. For this chapter, I wish to intertextually examine the different film and television adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* to show how one adaptation influences another. To reexamine Austen's original text through

[9] Accessed on April 21, 2013.

close reading along with its adaptations not only allows us to better understand the choices made in a film and the connections that one film has with other films, but also to better understand the original text. This approach is especially useful for high school students as they critically read a source text and create meaning through their interpretations. Their interpretations of these textual intersections are where meaning is formed, empowering students by giving them control in determining meaning. Stam's quotation seems especially relevant to the teaching of literature and film because students should be constantly challenged not only to make personal connections to the literature, but also to recognize the relevance of the original text in other texts as "the entire matrix of communicative utterances" constantly evolves.

The discussion that follows focuses on three adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*: the 1940 production directed by Robert Z. Leonard, the 1995 BBC television mini-series directed by Simon Langton, and the 2005 film directed by Joe Wright. These directors' intertextual choices within the contexts of production, studio style, star performance, and mainstreaming ideology, drove the direction of each adaptation.

1940 Production of Pride and Prejudice

The 1940 production of *Pride and Prejudice*, directed by Robert Z. Leonard, has a troubled history.[10] One of the more unexpected finds in my research into this adaptation was that Harpo Marx was responsible for getting the project off the ground when he saw a Broadway-bound dramatization of *Pride and Prejudice* on October 28, 1935 that was

[10] All details in this paragraph, as well as the next one, are indebted to Kenneth Turan's article, "*Pride and Prejudice*: An Informal History of the Garson-Olivier Motion Picture," especially pages 141-142. Turan was given access to MGM's and the Motion Picture Academy's files on *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as the personal scrapbook of the film's director, Robert Z. Leonard.

subtitled “a sentimental comedy in three acts.” Marx telegrammed Irving Thalberg, one of the most powerful Hollywood producers: “Just saw *Pride and Prejudice*. Stop. Swell show. Stop. Would be wonderful for Norma. Stop.” Thalberg, then head of production for MGM, as a result of Marx’s recommendation, wanted his wife Norma Shearer to play Elizabeth Bennet, straight from the success of her role as Elizabeth Barrett Browning in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street.* So in January of 1936, MGM bought the rights to the play for $50,000 because they reasoned that the publicity generated by the play and by the sale would help sell the American movie-going public on what was then considered an obscure property. By September 2, 1939, Clark Gable was cast as Mr. Darcy with production to begin at the end of October, but two weeks before the announcement Irving Thalberg died. His death put *Pride and Prejudice* on the shelf, and only the casting of Laurence Olivier, straight from the success of *Wuthering Heights* (1939) and *Rebecca* (1940), rescued it. Olivier wanted Vivien Leigh, with whom he was having an affair at that time, to play Elizabeth, but the studios did not want the affair to become public, instead she was cast in *Waterloo Bridge* (1940) and Greer Garson, who had worked with Olivier in a London play, *Golden Arrow*, got the part. MGM counted on Robert Z. Leonard, the studio’s most senior contract director, to direct and efficiently finish the film. The screenwriters were Jane Murfin and Aldous Huxley; the latter signed to give the film literary credibility. Huxley never seemed pleased with his task and wrote in a letter to a friend that the screenplay was “an odd, crossword puzzle job. One tries to do one’s best for Jane Austen, but actually the very fact of transforming the book into a picture must necessarily alter its whole quality in a profound way” (Turan 141). Despite Huxley’s best efforts, it was clear that Hollywood and he did not see eye to eye on this adaptation. Huxley stated in a letter, “I barely stopped my director from having Bennet fight

a duel with Wickham!" (Dunaway 154). According to Huxley, he was interested in conveying "the diffuse irony in which the characters are bathed" (Clark 42). Jane Clark writes in her book, *Aldous Huxley and Film*, "[W]e may assume that Huxley had a large part in the literate dialogue and the intelligent handling of Austen's ironic wit, while Murfin's Hollywood experience was a factor in determining the structure and pace" (42).

In addition, the film was promoted by MGM with an ad campaign that announced "Bachelors Beware! Five Gorgeous Beauties are on a Madcap Manhunt!" suggesting that the studio valued Austen's irony much less than Huxley did. Another discordant note was struck by Olivier's disengagement from the project. He was not pleased that Leigh was not cast opposite him and apparently spent most of his time off stage planning a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, which he would direct, starring himself and Leigh. Olivier only mentions *Pride and Prejudice* lightly in his book *On Acting* in which he writes, "The best points in the book were missed, although apparently no one else [seemed to think so]. I'm still signing autographs over Darcy's large left lapel. MGM always got its costumes right" (qtd. in Turan, "An Informal History" 142). In fact, the film's costumes had nothing to do with the actual fashions of the early nineteenth century, which were considered too bland by the studio. Adrian, the MGM costume designer, gave everyone a look more befitting the characters from *Gone with the Wind*; the more voluminous skirts from three to four decades later gave the females the chance to knock over items for comedic effect (Parrill, *Jane Austen on Film* 55).

The movie did reasonably well at the box office, and overall reviews were favorable.[11] Turan cites several film critics who showed their enthusiasm for the film:

[11] An interesting cultural side effect of the 1940 adaptation was one of MGMs "greatest promotion in years, with no less than five popular-priced editions of the book getting into print as a result of the film, including three from Grosset & Dunlap and an inexpensive 25-cent paperback from Pocket books. By 1948, a mere eight years later, that edition alone had gone through twenty-one printings" (Turan, "An Informal History" 143).

> Though there were some carpers, like the *Los Angeles Herald Express* which called it "decorous, bloodless entertainment which will find an appreciative audience among women," almost all the reviews were excellent. Bosley Crowther, the influential *New York Times* reviewer, called it "deliciously pert, the most crisp and crackling satire in costume that this corner can remember ever having seen on the screen," [and] *The New Yorker* noted that "Jane Austen, in her day, was as brittle as Huxley, Noel Coward and a whole package of Saltines together." And the critic for the *Los Angeles Herald* had kind words . . . Ann Rutherford was "a vivacious and alluring Lydia," Marsha Hunt, "the surprise of the group, her character is a gem," and as for Karen Morley as Charlotte Lucas, "it makes us wonder why we don't see her in more pictures."

The 1940 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, as Parrill observes, lent itself to the mainstreaming ideology of screwball comedies of the 1930s and 1940s (*Jane Austen on Film* 49).[12] One of the distinguishing traits of a screwball comedy is the comic antihero. Wes Gehring describes the antihero as having five key elements: "his abundant leisure time, his childlike naïveté, his life in the city, his apolitical nature, and his frustration" (10). Greer Garson's Elizabeth Bennet mostly fit the mold of the antihero (only as a woman) spending her time in a leisurely fashion looking for a husband, enjoying conversation with others through witty repartee, and ending up frustrated at Darcy's treatment towards her. Garson's Elizabeth Bennet not only fit the traits of the antihero, but also what Gehring calls the "talkie" through her rapid and sharp wordplay: "Appropriately, only the picture-plus-sound

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[12] Screenwriter Jane Murfin was known for her experience in working in the genre of romantic and screwball comedy (Parrill, *Jane Austen on Film* 49).

could adequately showcase the marriage of slapstick to witty dialogue, which was screwball comedy's method of portraying the antihero" (10).

The essence of screwball unconventionality can be seen in the status of the families. In the novel, Darcy belongs to a higher social class than Elizabeth because he is much wealthier and has connections with aristocracy. In the first scene of the film between Elizabeth (Garson) and Darcy (Olivier) at the Meryton assembly, Darcy snubs Elizabeth by saying he is in "no humor . . . to give consequence to middle classes at play." In the novel, he says, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men" (Austen 8). The difference in Darcy's reasons for not dancing with Elizabeth could be seen as a result of Elizabeth's lower social class in the 1940 adaptation, which in turn displays more of a proud and stubborn childlike behavior in Darcy than in his friend Bingley. Darcy's childlike behavior was a common trait of screwball comedy. Gehring notes that "the screwball comedy male is often in a situation where he quite literally is being taken care of" (40), and we see this evidenced especially when Lady Catherine's (Edna Mae Oliver) role is changed in the adaptation to be a mother figure for Darcy, instructing and guiding him and ultimately giving her stamp of approval for him to marry Elizabeth. In the novel, however, Darcy's snubbing is more ambiguous, a mixture of social prejudice and pride. In the film, there is no gradual development to show a change in Darcy's character as in the novel; Darcy changes on a whim, further showcasing the sudden emotional changes that characters often go through in screwball comedies.

Nowhere is the farcical sense of the screwball comedy more evident than in the scene where Lady Catherine confronts Elizabeth on the question of whether she is engaged or not.

In the novel, Lady Catherine intimidates Elizabeth with her class status and tries to force Elizabeth to concede that she will never marry her nephew, Darcy. When Elizabeth refuses, Lady Catherine snaps, "Unfeeling, selfish girl! Do you not consider that a connection with you must disgrace him in the eyes of everybody?" (Austen 307). After Lady Catherine's hasty departure, Mr. Bennet receives a letter from Mr. Collins a few days later regarding the possibility of Elizabeth's engagement with Darcy. When Mr. Bennet asks her about the letter, Elizabeth hides her true feelings for Darcy, though the narrator makes clear that Elizabeth's feelings for Darcy have grown considerably: "Her father had most cruelly mortified her by what he said of Mr. Darcy's indifference, and she could do nothing but wonder at such a want of penetration, or fear that perhaps instead of his seeing too *little*, she might have fancied him too *much*" (Austen 313). Mr. Collins' letter and Lady Catherine's visit will set up the eventual meeting of Darcy with Elizabeth, in which they acknowledge each other's faults and express the love they have for one another.

In the film, all degree of tension in the Lady Catherine scene is displaced because of the conventions of screwball comedy. The moment Lady Catherine enters the Bennet's home, she sits on Kitty's music box before she stumbles down into the seat, a parrot squawks and insults Lady Catherine, and the soundtrack plays like a scene from a farcical theatrical skit. In fact, Austen's plot is changed to show Lady Catherine revealing Darcy's generosity in helping find Lydia and Wickham, thereby short circuiting the gradual course of events that Elizabeth experiences in the novel, eventually leading to her change in feelings towards Darcy. While Lady Catherine's sudden visit to the Bennets in the novel brought about sadness and anxiety for Elizabeth, it also gave her the hope that she might still have a chance with Darcy. The adaptation does away with this process and makes Lady Catherine out to be

a hero, rather than a cantankerous villain. In the film, when Elizabeth finds out how Darcy kept Lydia from being ruined by Wickham, she replies, "did he do that? Thank you for telling me Lady Catherine!" and swans about the room happily and immediately in love with Darcy.

The novel, on the other hand, relates these events first through Lydia's inadvertent gossiping about Darcy's attending her wedding and ultimately in the form of a letter from Mrs. Gardiner explaining Darcy's motives. The third person narrator filters the information of Darcy's intercession through Elizabeth's consciousness:

> They owed the restoration of Lydia, her character, everything to him. Oh! how heartily did she grieve over every ungracious sensation she had ever encouraged, every saucy speech she had ever directed towards him. For herself she was humbled; but she was proud of him. Proud that in a cause of compassion and honour, he had been able to get the better of himself. She read over her aunt's commendation of him again and again. It was hardly enough; but it pleased her. She was even sensible of some pleasure, though mixed with regret, on finding how steadfastly both she and her uncle had been persuaded that affection and confidence subsisted between Mr. Darcy and herself. (Austen 279)

Austen's narrator's use of free indirect discourse with Elizabeth allows readers to gradually recognize her change in feelings for Darcy. The change in mood in the 1940 adaptation, however, is done very quickly. In fact, we recognize Garson's Elizabeth's quick change in her feelings for Darcy as one of the character traits in screwball comedies: childlike and "pleasantly potty to begin with" (Gehring 41) and "spontaneous" (Gehring 42). In short,

Garson's Elizabeth seems reduced to a stock character as her defiance turns on a whim into childlike playroom glee once Lady Catherine reveals Darcy to be the one who helped Lydia.

In fact, the 1940s version of the film reduces many of the principal characters' roles, specifically those of Elizabeth and Darcy, into one-dimensional caricatures of the original. Huxley writes, "The principal [roles] were *so* bad; the supporting cast was very good" (Dunaway 154). The supporting cast was drawn from MGM's large stable of contract players who often acted in screwball and romantic comedies. Actors such as Mary Boland, Edna Mae Oliver, Edmund Gwenn, and Melville Cooper were staples of the genre (Parrill, *Jane Austen on Film* 50). Why would Huxley call Olivier's acting "bad"? I believe the blame does not fall on Olivier; rather it falls on the minimal role Darcy plays in the film. The cathartic moments so important in *Pride and Prejudice* are often reduced to lines like, "Should we not call it quits and start again?" by Darcy, as he smiles at Elizabeth during the Netherfield Ball. Wiltshire writes, "Olivier's smile, here and in other scenes, is not completely interpretable. It might be one of mere politeness, a smile of grace and charm that is a social mannerism. Or is this smile [more a half-smile in many instances] really a sneer?" ("Mr. Darcy's Smile" 97). The ambiguity of Olivier's smile could have been used in a more effective manner, especially if the 1940 production included the key scene from the novel of Elizabeth scrutinizing Darcy's smile in his portrait during her visit to Pemberley. Seeing Garson's Elizabeth react to Darcy's smile in the portrait could have added a real resonance to what Olivier was offering to the part of Darcy. Olivier's light portrayal of the complex Darcy stands in stark contrast to his heavier role as Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, which coincidently is what brought him into consideration for *Pride and Prejudice* (Turan, "An

Informal History" 140), but the treatment of Darcy's character by the screenwriters offered little for Olivier's craft.

Similarly, Olivier's co-star, Greer Garson, who plays Elizabeth Bennet, establishes a tone different from the Elizabeth in the novel, who is shown as a young woman who must live within the confines of a male-dominated society. Instead, Garson, who was 36 at the time, plays an Elizabeth with very little concern about what society thinks of her. Nonetheless, the liberated qualities that Garson brings to the character offer an interesting take on Elizabeth, and they are often used to set up comedic situations. As Parrill notes, Garson's performance owes a lot to the script: "We may be able to blame some aspects of her performance on the director and on the script, which requires her to behave with extreme rudeness on more than one occasion. For example, at the ball she refuses to dance with Mr. Darcy, but immediately afterwards accepts Wickham as a partner" (*Jane Austen on Film* 52). Every sister possesses the same antic disposition, including Jane, who is overly flirtatious and agrees to her mother's plan to ride on horseback to Netherfield. This overt behavior, unlike anything we see from Jane in the novel, is another example of the mainstreaming ideology of the screwball genre, with characters behaving not only in childlike and spontaneous ways, but also illogically. Gehring writes, "a premium [in the screwball comedy] was set on female eccentricities, the logic no doubt being that the best defense against an illogical world is an illogical nature" (59), which allows most of the female Bennets in the 1940 production to behave rudely, act flirtatiously, and alter their moods on a whim. In the novel, one of the reasons Darcy disapproves of Jane marrying Bingley was her reticence towards Bingley, as he indicates in his letter to Elizabeth: "Your sister I also watched. —Her look and manners were open, cheerful and engaging as ever, but without any

symptom of peculiar regard, and I remained convinced from the evening's scrutiny that though she received [Bingley's] attention with pleasure, she did not invite them by any participation of sentiment" (Austen 169). The departure in the film, again, can be better understood within the conventions of the screwball comedy genre, where characters behave unconventionally, even changing Jane's character from that of a reserved and agreeable nature to one of aggression and desperation.

The supporting cast further heightens the comedic effect. For example, Mr. Bennet (Edmund Gwenn) is not seen as an irresponsible father and Mrs. Bennet (Mary Boland) becomes the primary reason for the family's downfall (as hinted in the Netherfield Ball scene when Darcy overhears Mrs. Bennet proclaim that Jane will be married soon to Mr. Bingley, much to the shock of Mr. Darcy). Mr. Collins (Melville Cooper) is no longer a clergyman, but Lady Catherine's librarian. He still dotes on Lady Catherine and plays the officious toady well. The most startling change, of course, is Lady Catherine as a comic villain turned hero. Unlike the novel, where Lady Catherine visits Elizabeth to dissuade her from Darcy, Edna May Oliver's Lady Catherine visits Elizabeth to test if she is the right woman for Mr. Darcy. When Lady Catherine leaves to meet Mr. Darcy outside in the carriage, she tells him, "She's right for you Darcy. What you need is a woman who will stand up to you. I think you found her." She then gives her blessing to a content Mr. Darcy. One possible reason for this change, suggested by Lester Asheim, is that Edna May Oliver wanted to retain the gruffness of her previous roles, but also remain the good-hearted curmudgeon that the public expected (Bluestone 142), which shows the intertextual nature of how audience expectations of Edna May Oliver's role can lead to changes in the presentation of characters from the novel.

Aside from the characters, the overall plot of Jane Austen's novel has been simplified. For example, the elapsed time from Darcy's dismissal of Elizabeth as "middle class" to his having a newfound interest in her is exactly one minute and two seconds—all in the same scene from the Meryton Assembly Ball, which also combines material from the first sixteen chapters and compresses two dances into one. As George Bluestone writes, "all the dramatic relationships are enunciated in terms of dance relationships" (127). Bingley dances with Jane, Wickham dances with Lydia, and Elizabeth dances with Wickham. In the novel, Darcy and Elizabeth's perception of each other changes over several episodes, beginning slowly with Elizabeth's stay in Netherfield when her sister is ill. Despite Elizabeth's best efforts to stand up to Mr. Darcy, we begin to see the opposite effect gradually take place: "Elizabeth, having rather expected to affront him, was amazed at his gallantry; but there was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody; and Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her. He really believed that were it not for the inferiority of her connections he should be in some danger" (Austen 44). The narrator shows that Elizabeth's wit and manner are something Darcy has rarely encountered, especially given the artificial façade of other females like Caroline Bingley, who never misses an opportunity to poke fun at Elizabeth in front of Darcy. The transformation of a four-hundred-plus page novel into the broadly comic treatment of screwball comedy sacrifices much of the budding relationship we see between Darcy and Elizabeth. Parrill writes, "Rapid pacing is a desideratum in a screwball comedy and credibility of action has never been a strong point in the genre, but in this film the rapid pacing has the unfortunate effect of reducing both the credibility of action and plausibility of characterization" (*Jane Austen on Film* 54). Gone is the careful development that reveals the

ongoing changes in Elizabeth and Darcy. As noted by Parrill, the swiftness of events and reversals of feeling in the film are common in screwball comedies, but they tend to flatten character development.

To a certain degree, even though this 1940 adaptation has not aged well, it is a good example of what was popular with the film audiences at the time. With the impending presence of World War II, it is no surprise that audiences would prefer a lighthearted screwball comedy to a dramatic period piece. This sentiment is best stated in a letter from Southampton, England addressed to the director, Robert Z. Leonard:

> My husband is a Naval Officer and a few days ago he had one of his rare afternoons in port and a chance to visit the cinema. We went to see your film made from the book we know and love so well and to our delight were carried away for two whole hours of perfect enjoyment. You may perhaps know that this city has suffered badly from air raids but we still have some cinemas left, and to see a packed audience enjoying *Pride and Prejudice* so much was most heartening. (qtd. in Turan, "An Informal History" 143)

The letter's praising of the film, as well as the fact that it was kept by the director, shows how a film can be appreciated on different levels, as the married couple in the letter enjoyed the 1940 production as an escape from the day-to-day horrors of war. As evidenced in the letter, the film's reception met with both critical and public success. Its opening at Radio City Music Hall in August 1940 set a new record for the largest weekly audience for the month of August in the theatre's history. It grossed $1,849,000 in its four-week run there (Troyan 108-109). Bosley Crowther, of the *New York Times*, wrote: "It isn't often that a cast of such uniform perfection is assembled. Greer Garson is Elizabeth—'dear, beautiful

Lizzie'—stepped right out of the book, or rather out of one's fondest imagination: poised, graceful, self-contained, witty, spasmodically stubborn and as lovely as a woman can be. Laurence Olivier is Darcy, that's all there is to it—the arrogant, sardonic Darcy whose pride went before a most felicitous fall." Crowther goes on to conclude, "For pure charm and romantic diversion, for bubbling and wholesome life, we most heartily recommend this exquisite comedy." It seems Crowther focused mainly on the physical attraction of Garson's and Olivier's presence rather than the characters in Austen's novel. Moreover, Crowther seems to accept the film based on the mainstreaming ideology of the popular romantic screwball comedy genre of the 1930s and 1940s rather than lament the different treatments of the novel's plot, characters, and comic tone. Given the box office receipts and reception from the general public, this may have been a good choice for the times.

1995 Production of Pride and Prejudice

It would be fifty years later, with "Austenmania" was well on its way, that almost every Austen novel would be made into a film or television mini-series. 1995 saw the release of Ang Lee's *Sense & Sensibility*, the BBC six hour mini-series of *Pride and Prejudice*, the cinema release of *Persuasion*, which was originally made for television, as well as *Clueless*, a teen comedy drawing on the plot of *Emma*. *Mansfield Park* would eventually follow in 1999. Almost all the adaptations were presented and received under the brand name of Jane Austen. Of these adaptations, BBC's *Pride and Prejudice* made the greatest impact. The 1995 adaptation was immensely popular in both England and America. An audience estimated at 10.1 million watched the final episode on the BBC (Thynne) and about 3.7 million households in the USA watched the adaptation on A&E (Knoll 66-67). It

was both a commercial and critical success. In a review for *Literature/Film Quarterly*, Sue Parrill offers high praise: "It creates the world of the novel imaginatively and clearly. And, most important, it expresses the novel's central theme of clarity of vision in striking visual images. This film must be considered the definitive cinematic treatment of *Pride and Prejudice*" (*A&E* 147). Since its release, the popularity of Langton's production has not waned. The DVD "Special Edition" (2001) is presented in widescreen (2.35:1) versus fullscreen television (1.33:1) and includes a featurette on the making of the film, a Jane Austen biography and bibliography, as well as biographies of the actors. Not to be outdone, the release of the Blu-ray in 2009 adds to the video and audio quality with A&E going back to the original 16mm film negatives and doing a frame-by-frame restoration, as shown in the Blu-ray featurette, "Uncovering the Technical Restoration Process." Clearly, the studios felt this adaptation would attract a large enough audience for it to invest in an expensive restoration of the film.

The 1995 BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice* moved away from the 1940 production by adding a different pace and delivery that had not been evident in costume drama before. Here is an excerpt from the narrator of the *Pride and Prejudice* featurette, "Lasting Impressions":

> The success of *Pride and Prejudice* also inspired a new approach to historical dramas, with the traditional stagey productions being left behind in favor of the more pacy, modern interpretations that obviously appealed to today's audiences. This interpretation isn't compromised by the trends of the current day and, consequently, *Pride and Prejudice* still has a timeless, legitimate and authentic feel to it.

Sue Birtwistle, the producer of the television serial, feels its success comes specifically from adhering to the novel: "I think people think we've done an updated version but what I would say we've done is actually gone back to the book and really, really looked at what Jane Austen was doing" ("Lasting Impressions"). The philosophy behind the BBC production was to make the mini-series as faithful as possible to Austen's novel. It should also be noted that the BBC serial's episodic nature alleviated the need to condense Austen's prose into a two-hour film, allowing most of the novel's narrative to remain intact. It can be argued that the episodic nature of the mini-series fits in well with the episodic nature of *Pride and Prejudice's* chapters, giving viewers from the most casual to Janeites a more "faithful" experience of the novel than most film adaptations. The BBC production also added scenes not in the novel and expanded scenes from the novel that Austen had only briefly described.

Unlike the 1940 adaptation that relied on the romantic screwball genre as a mainstreaming ideology, the 1995 adaptation displays two seemingly contradictory motives: faithfulness to the events of the novel and a new emphasis on the physicality of the characters, with equal emphasis on the sexual appeal of both the male and the female leads. According to screenwriter Andrew Davies:

> All the previous dramatizations of Jane Austen had just been, I suppose, very *Cranford*-like, they'd concentrated on the little details and they'd always been about young ladies and gentlemen buttoned up to the neck, having polite conversations in wobbly sets and I wanted to make it very out-of-doorsy, and emphasize the physical aspect, that these people were bodies as well as minds, and found lots of opportunity for showing them doing energetic things like galloping horses and diving in lakes. ("Lasting Impressions")

The 1995 adaptation begins with Darcy (Colin Firth) and Bingley (Crispin Bonham-Carter) riding on horseback. The viewer is made aware through an exchange of dialogue between the two men that Bingley is looking to lease Netherfield, but wants Darcy's approval before moving ahead. Upon Darcy's approval, the men gallop away as the camera cuts to a long shot of Elizabeth (Jennifer Ehle) running through the country, pausing at a clearing to observe the two men riding. Viewers are given a full shot of her face as she inquisitively watches them ride away before she runs off to Longbourn and the family is formally introduced. Though this first scene is not in the novel, Davies' screenplay establishes early two of the motifs in the film—gazing and the physicality of the characters. As with the example above, we are often given medium and full shots that linger on the expressions of characters as they observe each other.

The screenwriters provided Ehle with a characterization of Elizabeth Bennet that was spunky and free-spirited. Davies comments that he wanted Elizabeth to be physically lively and active, with a sexual energy able to captivate Darcy. Davies wanted a "tomboyish, gipsy-ish" quality in Elizabeth (Birtwistle 4). He goes on to add that "she's full of whatever chemicals are released by healthful exercise and the chaps unconsciously respond to it" (Birtwistle 4). So, in addition to the scenes suggested in the novel, such as walking three miles through mud to visit her sister Jane, and walking through the woods and fields at Rosings, Ehle's Elizabeth runs in the first scene back to Longbourn, walks for long periods of time in other scenes, and even in one scene climbs upon a rock to see the countryside of Derbyshire**.** On the other hand, Greer Garson's Elizabeth has only two scenes showing Elizabeth active—walking in the streets with her sisters in the opening scene and dancing at the Netherfield Ball; moreover, most of the key dialogue occurs indoors. On a practical note,

it would be difficult to imagine Garson's Elizabeth doing much in her Civil War period piece dresses, which were elegant to be sure, but physically restrictive.

The 1995 BBC television serial capitalizes on the physicality of both Darcy and Elizabeth. As mentioned before, Elizabeth is consistently seen running outdoors, in a low neckline blouse, while Darcy is also seen riding on horseback. According to screenwriter Andrew Davies:

> I wanted to emphasize the men in this story, especially Darcy himself and didn't make it all a girly thing. So I started off with these men on great big horses kicking up the dirt, and galloping into this area and creating a bit of a stir, you know, to try to get into the story in a way that anybody who's read a girl's romance in a comic can respond to it. ("Lasting Impressions")

The physicality of Davies' adaptation is a departure from the 1940 version by accentuating minor characters, developing major characters, and expressing a latent quality in the novel by bringing out an energy and sexuality in both Elizabeth and Darcy that literally fleshes out their characters. In the 1940 adaptation Garson's Elizabeth is always formally attired, while Ehle's Elizabeth wears no high-necked dresses or tuckers in or out of doors. She exhibits décolletage in most of her costumes—day or evening. In this production, it would be difficult for either Mr. Darcy or the viewer to be unaware of Ehle's sexual appeal. Firth's role as Darcy is slowly developed over the duration of the five-hour plus series and Davies' screenplay adds scenes not in the novel to further give the viewer a more physical view of Darcy's experiences when he is away from Elizabeth. Examples include a bathing scene where he gets out of the tub naked, and a servant covers him with a towel as he watches Elizabeth through a window, Darcy's diving into the lake at Pemberley where the camera

actually follows Darcy into the lake, and a fencing scene where Darcy is drenched in sweat, shirt open, and out of breath uttering to himself, "I shall conquer this," a reference to his growing love for Elizabeth. All of these extra scenes clearly are meant to show a man who is not only sensitive, but also who is physically active with sexual desires. As Davies notes, "I wanted to remind people of the physicality of it. So I did have Mr. Darcy taking a bath in one of those tin baths on the floor with the servant pouring water over him" ("Lasting Impressions"). Sue Parrill further expands on the physicality that Firth's Darcy bought to the production: "This Mr. Darcy sweats. The spectacle of Colin Firth in a shirt open at the throat, a look of frustrated passion on his face, may have been responsible for the Darcymania that swept over England after *Pride and Prejudice* appeared on the BBC" (*Jane Austen on Film* 66). Others like Mimi Spencer, writing for the *Evening Standard* believes, "It was his button-front breeches and Irish-linen shirt that sparked off the contagion of Darcy fever" (19).[13]

Colin Firth is often known as the definitive cinematic Mr. Darcy.[14] In an interview Firth called Darcy "rather inscrutable, very taciturn," and "used to keeping his emotions in check." He goes on to stress that "what Darcy *doesn't* say" is just as important as what he does say (Collin). Most of the early episodes of *Pride and Prejudice* show Darcy gazing through windows and distancing himself from others, even, to a certain degree, from members of his own party. The film's multiple instances of characters looking at each other

[13] Colin Firth's "jumping into the lake scene" made it into England's Channel 4's *Top 100 TV Moments* at number 26 (McDaid). Darcy's status as a romantic hero has even made its mark in the medical research industry. When a protein sex pheromone in male mouse urine was found to be sexually attractive to female mice, it was named Darcin in honor of Darcy (Moskowitz).

[14] Firth was voted the best Mr. Darcy of all time ahead of actors such as Laurence Olivier and Peter Cushing by the second annual Regency World Awards organized by the city's Jane Austen Centre. According to the website: "The awards celebrate and reward the work of actors . . . associated with the writer who lived in Bath at the end of the 18th century, and are voted for online by fans from around the globe" ("*Firth is first*").

suggest an ideology of gazing in the production. In her essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey focuses on the cinematic male gaze that privileges the patriarchal structure of Hollywood cinema in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, a gaze she associates with "scopophilia," or the pleasure of looking. According to Mulvey, in classic Hollywood cinema, scopophilia takes the form of men looking at women as erotic objects with men being active spectators and women taking on the passive role of the spectacle:

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (719)

The 1995 adaptation provides a response to Mulvey's notion of the male gaze, specifically in two scenes where Firth's Darcy becomes the object of the female gaze. In the first example, we see Darcy in a medium shot as he is sitting in a bathtub scrubbing himself with soap. A servant walks in as he bends over, exposing his back. The servant then pours water over his head as the camera follows the water down Darcy's back. Darcy then shakes his hair and leans back into the tub. The scene then cuts to Elizabeth walking through the woods when she happens upon Darcy's dog. The camera cuts to a medium shot of Elizabeth as she looks with affection at his pet. The dog begins to run to the house and Elizabeth immediately follows. The scene then cuts back to Darcy who is leaving the bathtub as a servant comes from behind, clothing him in a robe. He walks to the window in the bathroom and the camera cuts to a medium close-up of Darcy as he gazes intently

outside. The camera cuts to a high angle shot of Elizabeth playing with Darcy's dog. As the camera cuts back to Darcy's face, we begin to see what is a hint of interest in Elizabeth, while composer Carl Davis' lush strings provide the emotional soundtrack. In this scene, while it is true that Darcy gazes at Elizabeth from his window, she is not coded as an erotic object, rather she is seen as playful and friendly as she plays with Darcy's dog. Moreover, Elizabeth is clothed with an extra jacket over her dress and wearing gloves, clothing meant to be worn outdoors on a chilly day. Instead the scopophilic gaze is directed to the male in this scene; Darcy becomes the erotic object of the look. Mulvey writes, "Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator in the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen" (719). In this case, the spectator in the audience gazes upon Darcy in a very private moment, as he is taking a bath. Though we do not *see* any nudity, the camera objectifies Darcy by framing him in a situation where he is vulnerable, as the viewer is allowed to gaze upon Darcy as he leaves the tub and gets dressed.

The producers and director of this *Pride and Prejudice* television mini-series not only focused on getting historical details right to claim authenticity, but they also made sure to exploit the physicality of the actors, clearly as a bid to appeal to the contemporary audiences of the 1990s. The production displays a feminist quality especially in relation to the ideology of gazing. This ideology of gazing is especially present in the Pemberley scene when Elizabeth is led through the house by the caretaker and gazes at two pictures of Darcy, one a miniature version under a glass and the second an almost full body painting of Darcy smiling in his art gallery. Of the erotic gaze within the film and within the audience of the film, Mulvey writes, "the device of the show-girl allows the two looks to be unified technically

without any apparent break in the diegesis. A woman performs within the narrative, the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude" (720). The portrait scene switches the erotic gaze from the male to the female subject. Here it is Elizabeth with whom we the audience identify in her specularization of Darcy as an erotic object. The scene then cuts to Firth's Darcy as he returns to Pemberley on horseback, tells his servant that he will walk back instead of riding his horse and decides to strip to his undershirt before plunging into the lake, showing both a sensitive and vulnerable side to Darcy as he reconnects with nature and his home. As Firth strips down, the scopophilic camera turns Darcy into an erotic object for the viewing audience. The camera's lens allows audiences to gaze upon Darcy as in the bathing scene before, showcasing both his sexuality and his vulnerability as he sheds his aristocratic sensibilities. This private "show-girl" performance is what sparked the "Wet-shirt" nickname for Firth from female viewers, allowing female viewers to take ownership of a central male figure in the production.

Unlike the 1940 adaptation, the 1995 adaptation paints Darcy sympathetically through the film's omniscient point of view, allowing us to see his feelings and actions that are otherwise only mentioned by the narrator or shown through Elizabeth's selective point of view in the novel. In the adaptation, we have more sympathy for Darcy because the omniscient point of view allows the depiction of a more rounded, private, and introspective portrayal of Darcy. We are able to see a Darcy who is suffering, at conflict with himself, physically exhausted, and capable of atonement. Most of these actions in the novel are nonexistent or are only shown through the biased view of Elizabeth's selected omniscience, which as the title suggests is highly prejudiced against Darcy. The 1995 adaptation, to a

certain degree, evens the playing field. Moving the focus away from Darcy's gaze on Elizabeth as an object of his affection to the audience's gaze on Colin Firth, allows the production to showcase Darcy's physicality, as shown in the bathing and lake scenes, while also imbuing him with sensitivity and emotional vulnerability.

In the novel, the first impression of Darcy at the assembly is a man of arrogance, who not only makes a negative impression on the community, but especially upon Elizabeth. When Bingley urges Darcy to dance, Darcy replies, "I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this, it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with" (Austen 8). When Bingley singles out Elizabeth to be his partner, the narrator captures Darcy's reaction: "'Which do you mean?' and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, 'She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men'" (8). Though Darcy comes across as patronizing, he does make clear that he does not want to dance with anyone unless he is "acquainted" with her. Whether this is true or an excuse made up in the moment, the narrator relates that Darcy catches the eye of Elizabeth before dismissing her. In the novel, it is clear that he says these words within earshot of Elizabeth because she goes off to tell her friends about it. The question is, did Darcy intentionally mean to slight Elizabeth with the firm intention of her knowing, or was he simply overheard? I believe he said those words so Elizabeth could hear them. Why else would he catch her eye and speak in a volume audible to Elizabeth? His haughty actions would thus paint Darcy as proud and cruel indeed. This makes Elizabeth's opinion of him as

well as the consensus of the inhabitants of Meryton as being spot on—that he is a proud and disagreeable man.

In contrast, the 1995 serial blurs the intentionality of Darcy's barbs. When Colin Firth's Darcy says to Bingley, "She is tolerable, I suppose, but she's not handsome enough to tempt me," the camera cuts to a medium shot of Elizabeth's poised reaction to Darcy's line. The scene then cuts back to both men before Darcy says, "Bingley, I'm in no humor to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. Go back to your partner; enjoy her smiles. You're wasting your time with me." The camera cuts to a now visibly angered, yet amused Elizabeth who gets up and walks past Darcy to her friend, Charlotte Lucas. As the camera follows Elizabeth, it stops on Darcy and we see on him an expression of embarrassment as the medium-close-up remains on his face until it cuts to a medium long shot of Elizabeth and Charlotte laughing and giggling as they give side glances at Darcy, who looks visibly shaken as the sound of the girls' laughter continues, causing him to promptly walk away. Viewers are not able to immediately discern if Darcy had intended for Elizabeth to hear his barb. This change in dynamic between the novel and the 1995 adaptation presents a more impartial view of Darcy, allowing us to be more open to his eventual change, unlike the novel's limited omniscient point of view, which is squarely focused on Elizabeth's focalization, leaving little choice for the reader but to see Darcy the same way she does—proud and arrogant.

The novel's limited omniscient narrator's focus on Elizabeth's perceptions continues in the Netherfield Ball chapter as Darcy tries to make up for his affront at Meryton by asking Elizabeth for a dance. Elizabeth's initial impulse is to refuse Darcy's offer, but Darcy catches her off guard as she blindly consents only to say, "Heaven forbid! —*That* would be the

greatest misfortune of all! —To find a man agreeable whom one is determined to hate! —Do not wish me such an evil" (Austen 78). The dance, given Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy, is decidedly awkward. She does her best to make him feel uncomfortable by forcing conversation upon him only to tell him to remain silent and eventually bringing up the topic of Wickham, so that "a deeper shade of *hauteur* overspread [Darcy's] features" and he "seemed desirous of changing the subject" (Austen 79-80). The reader is well aware by now that Darcy is attracted to Elizabeth. He has spent time with her at Netherfield when Jane was taken ill and his affinity for her has grown. During the dance he tries to change the subject by talking about books, a subject dear to Elizabeth because he has seen her engaged in many hours of reading during her stay with Jane at Netherfield. Instead she replies, "No—I cannot talk of books in a ballroom; my head is always full of something else" (Austen 81). Though Elizabeth's actions towards Darcy are rude, we are not as critical towards Elizabeth because the narrator's shared focalization with Elizabeth allows us to understand her motives of engaging in a *quid pro quo* with Darcy during a dance, especially given his insult of her at Meryton and the recent account of Darcy from Wickham, of whom she is enamored. In fact, when Darcy asks, "May I ask to what these questions tend?" Elizabeth replies, "Merely to the illustration of *your* character. I am trying to make it out" (Austen 81), which is also how we feel about Darcy's character at this point in the novel, thereby allowing us to identify more with Elizabeth than Darcy. When the dance is done, Darcy says, "I could wish, Miss Bennet, that you were not to sketch my character at the present moment, as there is reason to fear that the performance would reflect no credit on either" (Austen 81). Though Darcy is being careful to warn Elizabeth not to judge him at present, it is difficult for Elizabeth to take his

advice, given her perceptions of him at Meryton as well as Wickham's negative portrayal of his past with Darcy.

In contrast, the 1995 adaptation keeps the camera on Darcy the moment he spots Elizabeth in the room during the Netherfield Ball, allowing for a more objective point of view of Darcy. The medium close-up of Darcy is a look of determination, and interest for Elizabeth. Firth does an excellent job of hinting at the feelings he has for Elizabeth with seemingly subtle changes in facial expression, which are often looks of curiosity mixed with desire. Austen herself makes effective use of these understated glances and gestures in the novel, as noted by Ariane Hudelet: "the dialogue or scenes are interspersed with elements related to an alternate kind of language made of very simple signs: a gesture, a movement, a smile or a particular tone of voice. This 'secondary' language, although largely inconspicuous, is nevertheless constantly present in the text and influences the words sometimes so radically that it changes their meanings, or substitutes itself for them entirely" ("Beyond Words, Beyond Images" 59). Firth is particularly good at showing this "secondary" language during the Netherfield Ball. The camera's omniscient lens shows Darcy smiling ever so slightly when Mr. Collins missteps during a dance with Elizabeth and continues to follow Darcy as he patrols the room and watches Elizabeth during her dances. The third person omniscient lens clearly shows how Darcy is taken with Elizabeth, never letting her out of his sight. In fact, it is the first time audiences get a slight glimmer of a smile from Darcy, which allows us to see a kinder and more humane side to him. In the BBC production, it is evident that Darcy is trying his best to atone for his behavior at Meryton despite Elizabeth's incivility; furthermore, he hopes Elizabeth won't simply judge him

blindly. Darcy's discretion and good manners allow us to see him differently than when he was at Meryton, allowing us to be more open and sympathetic to his character.

Another critical scene that contrasts the novel with the 1995 adaptation's views of Darcy is his proposal to Elizabeth. In the novel, readers are given just the beginning of the proposal with the narrator filling in the rest:

> "In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."
>
> Elizabeth's astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, coloured, doubted, and was silent. This he considered sufficient encouragement; and the avowal of all that he felt, and had long felt for her, immediately followed. He spoke well; *but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed; and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority–of its being a degradation–of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit* [emphasis added]. (Austen 162-63)

Here the narrator chooses to use the limited omniscient point of view, following Darcy's proposal through Elizabeth's consciousness to report its effect on her. She shows some sympathy for Darcy by stating that "he spoke well," but as my emphasis above shows, Elizabeth quickly shifts gears to focus on Darcy's pride. We are left to imagine what the rest of his proposal might have been, but it is clear that despite the first lines expressing his love

for Elizabeth, the rest of the proposal hardly makes a positive impression on Elizabeth. In the 1995 adaptation, Davies' screenplay allows viewers to see and hear what the proposal in its entirety might have been through the lens of the omniscient unlimited point of view:

> In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you. In declaring myself thus I'm fully aware that I will be going expressly against the wishes of my family, my friends, and, I hardly need add, my own better judgment. The relative situation of our families is such that any alliance between us must be regarded as a highly reprehensible connection. Indeed, as a rational man I cannot but regard it as such myself, but it cannot be helped. Almost from the earliest moments of our acquaintance I have come to feel for you a passionate admiration and regard, which despite all my struggles has overcome every rational objection, and I beg you, most fervently, to relieve my suffering and consent to be my wife.

Before his proposal, Firth's Darcy is seen sitting, pacing, breathing, and sighing, all in a matter of a minute in Elizabeth's room. As he begins his proposal, the camera shows a medium close-up of an exhausted, yet nervous Darcy. Although the proposal is clearly flawed in its execution, we are able to see that Darcy is suffering as he tries his best to cast aside his "rational" way of thinking for the passion and love he has for Elizabeth. On the other hand, during Darcy's proposal, the camera cuts back to Elizabeth's reaction a few times as she listens to Darcy, first with shock and then with anger. In the novel, Elizabeth is able to reply: "why with so evident a design of offending and insulting me you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character?"

(Austen 165). Darcy can barely respond, as his hubris has gotten the better of him. He clearly came to see Elizabeth with the full expectation that she would consent to his marriage proposal, as other women such as Miss Bingley would have. Moreover, Darcy's implied condescension to Elizabeth in the novel allows her to broach the subject of Jane's love for Bingley and Darcy's supposed responsibility for Wickham's misfortunes. The chapter does not end well as Darcy hastily leaves Elizabeth's room. However, the 1995 adaptation's omniscient point of view allows us to see the proposal not so much as a display of arrogance but as a mixture of bad timing and horrible execution. Seeing Darcy in such a nervous and discombobulated state as he slogs through his proposal to a shocked and angry Elizabeth allows us to understand him not only as an arrogant suitor, as the limited omniscient narration suggests, but also as a man completely lost in a situation he has never found himself in before—in love.

The 1995 version of Darcy's proposal is in the same spirit of the proposal scene between Olivier's Darcy and Garson's Elizabeth in the 1940 version:

> DARCY: It's no use. I've struggled in vain. I must tell you how much I admire and love you. Miss Elizabeth, my life and happiness are in your hands. These last weeks since I left Netherfield have been empty, meaningless days and nights. I thought I could put you out of my mind, that inclination would give way to judgment. I've walked the streets of London reminding myself of the unsuitability of such a marriage. The obstacles between us . . . but it won't do. I can struggle against you no longer.
>
> ELIZABETH: Mr. Darcy!

> DARCY: I've reminded myself again and again that I have obligations of family and position, obligations I was born to. Nothing I tell myself matters. I love you. I love you.

Though presented in the same spirit, there are differences between the 1940 and 1995 versions of the proposal. In the 1940 version, the mention of the lack of family connections is toned down and Olivier's Darcy offers more to Elizabeth by saying "my life and happiness are in your hands." In the 1995 adaptation, the use of "I" "me" and "my" emphasizes more how the proposal is self-centered and therefore retains the tension between Darcy and Elizabeth that we find in the novel. However, because of its omniscient lens, the 1995 adaptation presents a more balanced view of Darcy. The viewer of the 1995 serial sees how difficult it is for Darcy, as he is nervous and at a loss for words. In the novel, it is tough to have sympathy for Darcy given the narrator's shared point of view with Elizabeth. With the 1995 adaptation, we are able to see Darcy's suffering as well as his love for Elizabeth, despite the flawed execution of his proposal.

Similarly, the episode of Darcy's letter and Elizabeth's reading of it depicts the ways in which the novel and 1995 adaptation offer different readings given the different narrative mediums. In the letter that Elizabeth receives in the novel, Darcy relates the details of why he separated Bingley from Jane, his connection to Wickham and the accounts of Wickham's seduction of his sister, Georgiana. By the end of the letter he writes, "This, madam, is a faithful narrative of every event in which we have been concerned together; and if you do not absolutely reject it as false, you will, I hope, acquit me henceforth of cruelty towards Mr. Wickham. I know not in what manner, under what form of falsehood he has imposed on you; but his success is not perhaps to be wondered at" (Austen 174). Upon finishing the

letter, the novel's narrator, sharing Elizabeth's consciousness, states, "His belief of her sister's insensibility she instantly resolved to be false, and his account of the real, the worst objections to the match, made her too angry to have any wish of doing him justice. He expressed no regret for what he had done which satisfied her; his style was not penitent, but haughty. It was all pride and insolence" (Austen 175). The novel's limited omniscience recreates the same anger from Elizabeth in the proposal scene when the narrator concludes the letter revealed Darcy displaying "all pride and insolence," giving little leeway for Darcy's explanation of his dealings with Wickham or his reasons for separating Jane and Bingley. In the 1995 adaptation, the omniscient point of view presents this episode by providing a montage of scenes mentioned in the letter, overlaid by Firth's first person voiceover of Darcy as he relates the events in the letter. Viewers of the film are able to see Darcy and Wickham (Adrian Lukis) playing together as children, Darcy in academic regalia during his university years walking in on Wickham, with a look of frustration and disapproval as he discovers Wickham sitting on a chair with a half-dressed woman in his lap, and lastly, a stern Darcy sitting behind a desk in his office writing a check to an eager Wickham as he severs all ties with him. The film's montage of scenes traces Darcy's emotional relationship with Wickham, giving us a fuller sketch of Wickham's character and Darcy's generosity. Lastly, we are shown a scene in Ramsgate where Wickham is attempting to elope with Darcy's fifteen-year-old sister, Georgiana (Emilia Fox), only to see Darcy reclaim Georgiana in the nick of time, as Wickham flees, leaving Darcy and Georgiana embracing in brotherly and sisterly love. These scenes not only reveal Darcy to be morally superior to Wickham, but also allow viewers to have a clear understanding of Darcy's history with Wickham, making it impossible to doubt the validity of his letter to Elizabeth.

In the novel, Darcy's letter does very little to change Elizabeth's opinion of his character, and because of the selective omniscience of Elizabeth's focalization, we too tend to judge Darcy as being full of "pride and insolence." On the other hand, the 1995 adaptation's omniscient point of view allows us to follow Darcy in a distressed state as he returns to Rosings after Elizabeth refuses his proposal. We see Darcy refusing to see Lady Catherine as he goes straight to his room, sits down, and begins to write his letter to Elizabeth. The film reveals Darcy's physical and emotional exhaustion as he is writing with heavy breath. By the time Darcy is done writing the letter, the scene shows the first signs of daybreak as Darcy splashes his face with water. The camera then cuts to his hand as he extinguishes the candle's flame, while the camera pans to a close-up of the freshly written letter addressed to "Miss Elizabeth Bennet" as the table is littered with broken pen tips and shards of glass. In both the letter writing and reading of the letter scenes, the film reveals Darcy as a sympathetic and kindhearted brother and man worthy of respect and sympathy, something Elizabeth has yet to see.

Similarly, in the 1995 adaptation, through the narrator's total omniscience, we are able to understand better why Darcy separated Bingley from Jane via flashback. Viewers are also able to see Elizabeth reading the letter. Though we were not privy to her emotions relating to Darcy and Wickham's flashbacks, we are able to see her response to Darcy's voiceover, as she is reading the reason for Darcy's separating of Jane from Bingley. To this, Elizabeth utters, "Insufferable!" However, viewers are shown through flashback in her mind's eye, the lack of decorum the family exhibited during their social gatherings. Through the flashback, we are able to see Elizabeth's emotions, as she is made aware of her family members' improprieties. Hudelet comments on one of the scenes in Elizabeth's flashback:

"the close shot cruelly enhances [Mrs. Bennet's] red cheeks and the overall impression of vulgarity. This implicit contrast between two visions of the same scene does capture the flexibility of memory which contributes to the construction of the heroine's identity" ("Deciphering Appearances" 83). Hudelet demonstrates how biased Elizabeth's point of view can be, especially when criticisms are directed at her own family; moreover, her quotation shows how film, too, can present its own biases. In this case, the 1995 adaptation's omniscient lens is able to lend credence to Darcy's assertions that Jane seemingly lacked interest in Bingley. It won't be until Elizabeth visits Pemberley that she will be able to reconstruct with less prejudice the impression she has of Darcy. It is interesting to note that the 1940 adaptation altogether omits this letter scene, which is pivotal for the viewer to better understand Darcy's complex emotions, again leading to Olivier's and Garson's one-dimensional portrayals of their characters.

The other important letter scene, the letter Elizabeth receives from Mrs. Gardiner, again reveals the differences in narration between the novel and the 1995 adaptation. In the novel, Elizabeth learns from Lydia that Darcy was at Wickham's wedding and hastily writes to her aunt for an explanation. At this point, the reader is ready to see Darcy in a sympathetic light, especially with his cordial treatment to Elizabeth and the Gardiners at Pemberley. The letter from Mrs. Gardiner, someone Elizabeth respects and trusts, relates the events of Darcy's search for Lydia and how he had to pay off all of Wickham's expenses and debts in order for Wickham to agree to a marriage with Lydia. Mrs. Gardiner writes:

> The motive professed was his conviction of its being owing to himself that Wickham's worthlessness had not been so well known, as to make it impossible for any young woman of character to love or confide in him. He

> generously imputed the whole to his mistaken pride, and confessed that he had before thought it beneath him to lay his private actions open to the world. His character was to speak for itself. He called it, therefore, his duty to step forward, and endeavor to remedy an evil, which had been brought on by himself. (Austen 275)

The letter from Mrs. Gardiner illustrates the generosity and benevolence of Darcy by allowing us to see that he takes full responsibility for not exposing Wickham's duplicitous character earlier. Moreover, Mrs. Gardiner is seen as a trustworthy source establishing that Darcy's actions were genuine and not just for show. Because of this letter, the novel's selective omniscient narrator reveals Elizabeth's newfound feelings for Darcy:

> He had done all this for a girl whom he could neither regard nor esteem. Her heart did whisper that he had done it for her. But it was a hope shortly checked by other considerations, and she soon felt that even her vanity was insufficient when required to depend on his affection for her, for a woman who had already refused him, as able to overcome a sentiment so natural as abhorrence against relationship with Wickham. Brother-in-law of Wickham! Every kind of pride must revolt from the connection. (Austen 279)

It is clear from this point in the novel that Elizabeth is beginning to have emotional feelings for Darcy, but even in the narrator's tone there is doubt that Darcy can move beyond his abhorrence for Wickham, thereby giving her very little hope of securing his love.

The 1995 adaptation presents this episode in the same way that it presented the previous letter scene in which Elizabeth reads Darcy's letter, this time using the first-person voiceover of Mrs. Gardiner instead of Darcy as we see Elizabeth reading anxiously. Through

a flashback, we see Darcy roaming the streets of London before coming across the residence of Mrs. Younge (former housemaid of the Darcys who abetted in Wickham's planned elopement with Georgiana) and forcing himself inside. Most importantly, when it comes to Darcy's accepting responsibility for not exposing Wickham, we see Darcy telling Mr. Gardiner that he accepts full responsibility: "The fault is mine, and so must the remedy be. It was through my mistaken pride, my reserve that Mr. Wickham's character has not been made known to the world. Had I not thought it beneath me to lay my private actions openly to the world, his character would have been exposed and this elopement would never have taken place." The effect of seeing Darcy behaving humbly to the Gardiners and taking full responsibility for his actions and apologizing for his pride redeems him from his earlier display of arrogance to Elizabeth when they first met at Meryton. Parrill writes, "In these scenes Darcy appears to be a man of action and authority. Unlike the ineffectual Mr. Bennet and even the well intentioned but unsuccessful Mr. Gardiner, he gets things done" (68). We do not need Elizabeth's display of approval to forgive or feel sympathy for Darcy—we see it. In the novel, even without being able to see and hear Darcy speak, we arrive at the same conclusion, given Mrs. Gardiner's credible letter; however, the reader still depends on the narrator's focalization to reveal that our heroine feels the same way as well.

The last key scene that illuminates the difference in narration between the novel and the 1995 adaptation is Elizabeth's arrival at Pemberley. Elizabeth's vacation in the countryside with her aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, finally takes them to Lambton where they are no more than five miles away from Darcy's residence, Pemberley. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen often uses the descriptions of locations to reflect the character of the owner. For example, when Elizabeth is invited to visit Rosings Park, Mr. Collins incessantly

bombards Elizabeth with the description of the house and its value: “Elizabeth saw much to be pleased with, though she could not be in such raptures as Mr. Collins expected the scene to inspire, and was but slightly affected by his enumeration of the windows in front of the house, and his relation of what the glazing altogether had originally cost Sir Lewis de Bourgh” (Austen 139). When Elizabeth first sees Lady Catherine, readers are made aware of the similarity in self aggrandizement: “Lady Catherine was a tall, large woman, with strongly-marked features, which might once have been handsome. Her air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them, such as to make her visitors forget their inferior rank . . . but whatever she said was spoken in so authoritative a tone as marked her self-importance” (Austen 140). By the time Elizabeth arrives at Pemberley, she is curious to see where an “arrogant” man like Darcy resides, especially having just refused his hand in marriage. Austen leaves very little out of the narrator’s description of the landscape of Pemberley through Elizabeth’s focalization:

> The park was very large, and contained great variety of ground. They entered it in one of its lowest points, and drove for some time through a beautiful wood, stretching over a wide extent.
>
> Elizabeth’s mind was too full for conversation, but she saw and admired every remarkable spot and point of view. They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road with some abruptness wound. It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; —

> and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something! (207)

Elizabeth jokingly admits to Jane later in the novel that her feelings for Darcy began to change when she first saw Pemberley. Looking at the description of Pemberley, the reader can easily see that Austen is painting a much different portrait of Darcy, this time allowing the natural scenery to speak for his character. The description of the banks being "neither formal, nor falsely adorned" offers a stark contrast to the ostentatiousness of Lady Catherine's Rosings Park. Moreover, when Elizabeth and the Gardiners enter Pemberley, the housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, speaks nothing but kind and generous words about her master.

Lastly, Elizabeth is able to see a portrait of Darcy "with such a smile over the face, as she remembered to have sometimes seen when he looked at her. She stood several minutes before the picture in earnest contemplation, and returned to it again before they quitted the gallery" (Austen 212). Without Darcy's physically being present, Elizabeth is finally able to relax some of her prejudices against him to see what has possibly been there all along, a man enamored of her. Hudelet correctly notes that "the vision of Mr. Darcy's smile in the portrait at Pemberley reactivates Elizabeth's past, passive perception of his previous smile" thereby allowing her to see him differently ("Deciphering Appearances" 83). To make sure the reader understands her feelings, the narrator states: "There was certainly at this moment in

Elizabeth's mind a more gentle sensation towards the original than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance" (Austen 212). As chance would have it, before Elizabeth's party leaves, Darcy arrives home early and runs into her, catching her off guard: "Her coming there was the most unfortunate, the most ill-judged thing in the world! How strange must it appear to him! In what a disgraceful light might it not strike so vain a man! It might seem as if she had purposely thrown herself in his way again! Oh! why did she come?" (Austen 213-14). The narrator's free indirect discourse enables the reader to know that despite her slight change in view of Darcy, Elizabeth ultimately still sees him as a "vain man." The novel hints that Elizabeth, since her first impression of Darcy at the Meryton assembly, cannot see Darcy physically without prejudice. However, when left alone, reading his letters, and taking in Pemberley, she is able to reflect on his manners and actions towards her. It is very fitting that Austen wanted to initially title the novel *First Impressions*, as that is what continually drives Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy.

Omitting this important scene altogether, the 1940 adaptation has all of the interaction between Elizabeth and Darcy occur in Longbourn. Because of this, Elizabeth does not get to learn about Darcy gradually as in her visit to Pemberley. Instead, the 1940 adaptation shows Elizabeth's feelings for Darcy making an abrupt change because she realizes he has paid off Wickham's debts and helped arrange the marriage for Lydia. This changes the character of Elizabeth because her change in attitude may suggest a sense of obligation for a favor rather than going through a genuine change in mind and heart. Again, the omission of the Pemberley scene speeds the events of the film to its quick conclusion, indicative of screwball comedies.

The 1995 adaptation presents the events that occur at Pemberley through the film's omniscient point of view, so we are able to see Darcy in ways not shown in the novel. When the party agrees to go to Pemberley, the camera does a slow reveal from Elizabeth's point of view from the carriage, until the house is in full sight, where the camera then pauses. The house is situated next to an enormous lake adding to the beauty of the natural landscape. When asked by Mrs. Gardiner about the house, Elizabeth replies, "I don't think I've ever seen a place so happily situated. I like it (pause) very well indeed." Mrs. Gardiner responds by saying, "Perhaps the beauty of the house renders its owner a little less repulsive, Lizzy." To which she responds, "Yes, perhaps. Perhaps a very little." The film shows the house upon a natural landscape; moreover, the dialogue takes a cue from the novel to decidedly make the house and its pleasant surroundings connected to its master. By the time the party is well on their tour of the house, Mrs. Reynolds has given an outstanding account of Mr. Darcy. The bewilderment on the party's faces, especially Elizabeth and Mrs. Gardiner's, shows that they are beginning to question the validity of Wickham's accusations:

> Mrs. Gardiner: This fine account of Darcy is not quite consistent to his behavior to poor Wickham.
>
> Elizabeth: Perhaps we might have been deceived there.
>
> Mrs. Gardiner: That's not likely, is it?

Though Elizabeth admires the house, it is the composition of the house and its relation to the landscape that interest her the most. During the tour of the house, Elizabeth stops to take a full view of the lake as she says to herself, "Of all this, I might have been mistress." During Elizabeth's tour of the gallery, the scene cuts to Darcy on horseback, returning home a day early.

As the scene cuts back to the party in the gallery, we see Mrs. Reynolds introduce the painting of Darcy as the camera focuses on his portrait. Elizabeth examines the full-length painting of Darcy, as the camera shows a medium close-up of her face as she stares at it. The scene cuts to Darcy shedding his coat and scarf as he sits near the lake, unbuttoning his shirt. As the scene cuts back to the gallery, we see Elizabeth begin to smile approvingly at Darcy's portrait before the camera fixes on the portrait of Darcy. It is evident that Elizabeth's view of Darcy is slowly changing as the scene immediately cuts to a medium close-up of Darcy followed by a long shot of him standing at the edge of the lake. We see him jump in as the camera follows him underwater, showing an affinity with nature as master and property blend into one. It isn't long before Elizabeth runs into Darcy who is still wet and in his undershirt. The ensuing dialogue between Elizabeth and Darcy is initially awkward, but it allows us to see a more informal and vulnerable side to him, which the novel doesn't show because the narrator is too busy relating the shock and embarrassment of Elizabeth upon suddenly encountering Darcy. We then see Darcy excusing himself to Elizabeth, as he quickly leaves to change and meet up with the party again. When he does return, Darcy formally introduces himself to the Gardiners and finishes the tour himself before asking Elizabeth the honor of meeting his sister Georgiana. This pivotal scene in the production helps to showcase Darcy's cordiality and change in behavior to Elizabeth as well as Elizabeth's growing acceptance of Darcy. In the novel, we get bits of dialogue from Darcy, but we rely mainly on Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner's accounts of meeting Darcy to show his change in character towards Elizabeth and her friends: "The observations of her uncle and aunt now began; and each of them pronounced him to be infinitely superior to anything they

had expected. 'He is perfectly well behaved, polite, and unassuming,' said her uncle" (Austen 218).

Comparing the 1995 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* with the source text, specifically through the different narrative points of view, allows us see characters differently. With the novel's third person limited omniscience, we often only see Elizabeth's point of view and only begin to see the other side of Darcy through accounts from others such as Mrs. Reynolds. Even when Darcy details his past to Elizabeth concerning his history with Wickham through his letter, her conclusion based on reading it is that "his style was not penitent, but haughty. It was all pride and insolence" (Austen 175). On the other hand, with the camera's omniscient lens, the 1995 adaptation allows us to see Darcy's physical exhaustion and the emotional energy that it took for him to write the letter to Elizabeth. We also see flashbacks of actual scenes showing Darcy's troubled history with Wickham and his well-intentioned search for Lydia. Lastly, the scene of Darcy jumping into the lake shows us a man connected to nature, vulnerable, and sensitive to his surroundings, allowing female viewers to reverse Mulvey's notion of the male gaze so women have an opportunity to look upon a stripped Darcy as an erotic object, giving women a sense of empowerment and pleasure towards Darcy in a way the novel never does.

2005 Production of Pride & Prejudice

Joe Wright's version, like Langton's 1995 adaptation, updates *Pride and Prejudice* by giving the film a contemporary feel within the mainstreaming ideology of appealing to a younger audience. This younger audience is often used to less dialogue, young stars, sex, and a storybook ending. Today's new adolescent fans of teenage romances, like the *Twilight*

series, share many of the same expectations. As Sadoff notes, "at midcentury, studio heads viewed adolescent males as their primary audience, in the late twentieth century women and men went to the movies at about the same rate. The megaplex emerged, then, as Hollywood producers and theater owners sought to serve both male and female audiences, both action and romance" (85). For Austen, Joe Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* lends itself well to both fans of the popular novel as well as the mainstreaming ideology of a teenage romance. In the Meryton Assembly scene, when viewers are first introduced to Darcy, Bingley, and Caroline, Elizabeth (Keira Knightley) goes up to Darcy (Matthew Macfadyen) to ask, "Do you dance, Mr. Darcy?" He curtly replies, "Not if I can help it." Later, Elizabeth and Charlotte are seen under the benches as Bingley and Darcy walk into sight. As their conversation is being eavesdropped upon by Elizabeth and Charlotte, Bingley says, "But her sister, Elizabeth, is very agreeable." Darcy then responds with, "Perfectly tolerable, I dare say, but not handsome enough to tempt me." This scene makes clear that Darcy is wholly unaware that Elizabeth is hearing his comments, though the novel makes clear that he "catch[es] her eye" (8). Wright states in the audio commentary that he wanted to make the film with a bleacher scene like an "'80s teen film, like *Grease*" (Wright), which seems that it might trivialize the tension of the scene as mere gossip. However, Wright quickly reestablishes the tension in the following scene when Darcy and Elizabeth are engaged in a discussion of love. Darcy asks Elizabeth, "So what do you encourage for affection?" She responds, "Dancing, even if one's partner is barely tolerable." With that, she promptly curtsies and walks off as the camera follows her from the front, allowing us to see a look of satisfaction mixed with stress. Elizabeth's added dialogue about dancing during her conversation with Darcy allows him to immediately realize that Elizabeth did overhear his dialogue with Bingley, establishing the tension that

will gradually build between the two throughout the course of the film. The comparison by Wright of the Meryton dance to *Grease* is apt, given the way he sets up the Bennet sisters as high school girls constantly in search for the right date, as well as a nod to a younger movie-going audience. To further remind us, after the Meryton dance, that these are young girls still in their teens and early twenties, we see Elizabeth and Jane under covers, gossiping about Bingley and Darcy, with the camera panning out as the girls giggle and squirm gleefully under the sheets, reminiscent of a girls' sleepover scene, which coincidently *Grease* also depicts.

With its appeal to a younger audience, choice of rising stars, and Dario Marianelli's lush score, the film met with almost universal acclaim. Stephen Hunter of the *Washington Post* writes, "Wright's *Pride* is a boisterous, loud, dance-mad kind of place, full of ruddy-faced peasants, dirt and hay. The whole thing feels like it was art-directed by Brueghel on holiday. No minuets or waltzes here, but spirited, flashy, almost cloglike dances by firelight" (Hunter). The film would eventually gross over $120 million worldwide, garner four Academy Award nominations including best actress for Keira Knightley (*Pride & Prejudice* 2005, IMDb). Much like the success of the 1995 BBC mini-series that created newfound interest in all things Austen, the success of the 2005 film spawned more Austen films such as *The Jane Austen Book Club* (2007), *Becoming Jane* (2007), *Miss Austen Regrets* (2008), and *Lost in Austen* (2008). An off shoot of the novel, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), led to a video game and an eBook and will soon become a film as Lionsgate has officially given the project the green light (Wikipedia).

The 2005 version, adapted by Deborah Moggach, with help from Emma Thompson,[15] much like the 1940 version, uses Hollywood star power: Keira Knightley (Elizabeth), Judi Dench (Lady Catherine), and Donald Sutherland (Mr. Bennet). Matthew Macfadyen plays Darcy, a new name on the Hollywood circuit as most of his earlier work was done on television. Interestingly, Macfadyen's first role as an actor was in a television series of *Wuthering Heights*, an interesting connection back to Olivier's performance history before he played Darcy. Knightley, on the other hand, was given top billing, given her early success with *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002) and the worldwide hit, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003). In addition, Knightley's role in other films like *Dr. Zhivago* (2002), *Love Actually* (2003), and *King Arthur* (2005), gave her name recognition that spanned different age demographics. Both Knightley and Anne Hathaway (*Becoming Jane*) embody the updated image of "the Austen body for the millennial teenage set" as they bring with them recognizability from their earlier teenage orientated films *Bend it Like Beckham* and *The Princess Diaries* respectively (Stanley). Lastly, Judi Dench's role as Lady Catherine supplied the A-list caliber name that a traditional older audience would expect from an Austen adaptation.

In terms of point of view, Wright shows both Elizabeth's and Darcy's views of each other during their dance at the Netherfield Ball, unlike the novel, which focuses mainly on Elizabeth's views on Darcy. Also, unlike other adaptations, Wright cuts mid-dance into a shot with only Elizabeth and Darcy in the scene, staring intently at each other as they continue dancing alone. The sudden juxtaposition of a filled dance floor reduced to only

[15] In the director's commentary of the *Pride & Prejudice* DVD, Wright mentions several scenes, where Emma Thompson's screenwriting was used. Examples include Elizabeth's interaction with Lady Catherine while dining at Rosings Park and Elizabeth's discovery of Lydia's elopement. Emma Thompson is no stranger to Austen, having been the screenwriter of the 1995 BBC adaptation of *Sense & Sensibility*.

Elizabeth and Darcy symbolically illustrates the differing points of view, much like the novel. According to Hudelet, "Austen's texts are indeed often visual, but in an indistinct, tenuous way, relying on micro-movements which establish an intimate relationship between the reader and the scene, as if the text were bringing us very close to the characters, as the close-up or high-definition sound may do in the cinema" ("Beyond Words, Beyond Images" 57). As Hudelet suggests, Wright takes the intimate relationship of dancing and amplifies it by removing all the other dancers, forcing Elizabeth and Darcy's intimacy upon each other and highlighting the different points of view for both. For Darcy, it is the first time he is able to dance with Elizabeth and he does his best to make a good impression, given his proud behavior at the Meryton assembly; however, Elizabeth is determined not to forgive Darcy's past comments or to look past Wickham's disparaging account of him.

The other scene in which Wright masterfully shows an objective view of Elizabeth is when she is alone after rejecting Darcy's proposal. The scene shows Elizabeth in her room staring into the camera, as the light changes from day to night. The scene depicts her face reflected in a mirror; we can see how Elizabeth is weighing and reconsidering everything she has thought of Darcy. Hudelet brings insight into the potential symbolism behind a mirror: "The presence of a mirror on screen is an ambivalent symbol. On the one hand, it can represent introspection, self-knowledge and the construction of identity. On the other hand, the same object can point to a deceitful absorption in one's own image, and illustrate blindness, an illusory and vain perception of oneself and others, a stagnation on the surface" ("Deciphering Appearances" 87). I believe this scene shows both introspection and blindness on the part of Elizabeth. Elizabeth's mien is serious, almost as if she is beginning to realize that she may have been wrong in her judgment of others, blinded by her pride. The

medium close-up of Elizabeth is one continuous shot, showing the potential for duality in Elizabeth's oscillation of emotions, as the scene changes from day to night. In the same scene, we see Darcy enter her room at night in the foreground, leaving a letter for her, which he will relate via voiceover.

By the time Elizabeth returns to Longbourn, she is a changed woman. She no longer knows whom to trust, as evidenced in the bedroom scene with her sister, when Elizabeth withdraws from even her closest of kin, no longer facing Jane when they sleep together. Through this scene, Wright has shown that Elizabeth's world has been dislocated and she is forced to see everything in a new light. The film plays on and deepens Elizabeth's internal conflict over Darcy, highlighting her awareness that she could be wrong, a possibility that greatly troubles her. In contrast, the novel's selective omniscient narration sides with Elizabeth, showing us a more one-dimensional side: "His belief of her sister's insensibility she instantly resolved to be false, and his account of the real, the worst objections to the match, made her too angry to have any wish of doing him justice. He expressed no regret for what he had done which satisfied her; his style was not penitent, but haughty. It was all pride and insolence" (Austen 175). Having the camera fixed on Elizabeth's face as if she were in a trance introduces ambiguity into how we are to perceive her feelings and thoughts. As mentioned before, examining her own reflection allows us to see a side of Elizabeth that possibly acknowledges her biases against Darcy. On the other hand, Elizabeth's unblinking stare could also be a display of stubbornness on her part not to be open to Darcy's point of view. Wright's cinematic eye works well in scenes such as this, allowing us to interpret scenes from the novel that are decidedly intended as ambiguous instead of explicitly making known what Elizabeth is thinking.

Given that Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* has no sex, or even any display of physical affection, Wright is able to bring out sexual and sensual overtones during Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley. When she arrives at Pemberley with the Gardiners, the house is depicted as grand and fronted by a lake, similar to that of the 1995 BBC production. In one of the most telling transformations from the novel, Wright changes Darcy's painting to a bust, situated in a room filled with multiple porcelain white marble statues. The sculpture gallery has many nudes with the camera often lingering on breasts and buttocks, thus bringing out the erotic nature of the sculptures, as Elizabeth trails her finger along them. In his DVD commentary, Wright states that the scene is a discovery for Elizabeth about sex, sensuality, and bodies, so by the time she gets to the three dimensional sculpture of Darcy, she is admiring not only his wealth, culture, and sensitivity, but also his sexuality (Wright). Wiltshire further echoes Wright's idea of sensuality by noting how "the sequence underscores the erotic aspect of Elizabeth's feelings about Darcy" ("Mr. Darcy's Smile" 109). The camera's position in front of Elizabeth, gives us an omniscient point of view of Elizabeth at her most unguarded, as she is examining the bust. We see Elizabeth as she begins to tear up, but quickly recovers herself as she realizes she must rejoin her party; moreover, Elizabeth's expression undoubtedly shows feelings of regret and desire towards Darcy. Much of the same sentiment occurs in the novel as she stares at his painting, though with more restraint: "she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression" (Austen 212). Under Wright's direction, viewers are able to see a more sensual and erotic side to Elizabeth than is present in the 1995 BBC adaptation, as she not only touches and gazes at the nude sculptures, but also resembles them with her white dress and porcelain features. Moreover, Wright has made this scene attractive

to a younger audience by introducing a sensual and sexual awakening within Elizabeth rather than have her walk through a gallery of paintings depicting generations of Darcys, which the 1995 BBC production does.

Lastly, there are many scenes in the film between Darcy and Elizabeth that heighten emotional intensity befitting the mainstreaming ideology of the modern teenage romance. The first major evidence of this occurs in Darcy's proposal scene; Wright envelops the scene with dramatic pouring rain. The scene is shot outdoors, unlike previous adaptations of the proposal scene. As the rain falls, Darcy tells Elizabeth, "I have struggled in vain and I can bear it no longer. I love you. Most ardently." Elizabeth retaliates by not only rejecting him, but also accusing him of destroying Jane's love and Wickham's future. When Wickham is mentioned, Darcy, who so far has kept a discreet distance from Elizabeth, immediately goes towards her so their faces are mere inches apart. In essence, Wright shoots the scene so both actually want to kiss each other, but stop before it happens. Wright's narration shows that Elizabeth is emotionally drawn to Darcy and that there is a mutual attraction, which is completely unlike the novel, given that the proposal scene from the novel (as well as previous adaptations) makes it clear that there is no attraction to Darcy on Elizabeth's part; in fact, she is feeling quite the opposite. Wright's adaptation rewrites Elizabeth as a woman clearly attracted to Darcy, although Elizabeth's expression still oscillates between desire for and anger at Darcy, a testimony to Knightley's acting.

In a self-deprecating admission, Wright even admits that the film at times is "over romantic and slushy," especially when Elizabeth and Darcy meet in the early morning to declare their love for each other as the sun is rising and the fog rolls over the cliffs. In the scene, Darcy walks out of the mist via a long shot, with the top buttons of his shirt open as he

nears the camera. The camera then cuts to Elizabeth's face as she stares intently at Darcy while Dario Marianelli's lush score is dialed up and Darcy approaches Elizabeth to say, "You have bewitched me body and soul—and I love . . . I love you." This scene and these lines are not in the novel, but they seek to gratify an audience with expectations that love is explored through a display of physical affection, culminating in a happy ending, illustrating again, the film's mainstreaming ideology of the teenage romance. In an interview with Sara Michelle Fetters, Wright says, "I wanted to make something that is about young people, about young people experiencing these emotions for the first time and not understanding the feelings they are having." The tagline for the film also suggests a tale of popular romance: "This holiday season, experience the greatest love story of all time," and "a romance ahead of its time" (*Pride & Prejudice* 2005, IMDb). In the 1995 adaptation, the word "love" is never mentioned; instead like the novel, Darcy and Elizabeth talk about their past and how much they have learned from each other—a harder sell for today's younger audiences expecting a standard romance. Given the nature of the television mini-series, screenwriter Andrew Davies was able to flesh out the novel, staying faithful to much of the novel's characters, dialogue, and plot. Wright chooses not to replicate the BBC production; instead he has created a film that decidedly has his own signature look, stressing his own thematic interests.

The mainstreaming ideology of teenage romance is especially shown in the ending of the film that was released in America.[16] Darcy and Elizabeth sit together at night, fires blazing, overlooking the lake. Both are informally attired, and Elizabeth tells Darcy, "You may only call me Mrs. Darcy when you are completely, perfectly, and incandescently

[16] Stanley elaborates on the controversy of Wright's alternate ending: "The different endings caused a trans-Atlantic stir, but also a backlash. The film's director, Joe Wright, chose to cut the final kiss for the domestic market after test audiences in England complained, but kept it for the American market, figuring, not wrongly, that Americans are saps with a lighter allegiance to literary accuracy. Or as he put it, 'I guess, in America, you just like a little more sugar in your champagne.'"

happy." Darcy then says, "How are you this evening, Mrs. Darcy?" as he touches her face and kisses her forehead. He then repeats "Mrs. Darcy" four times with each utterance accompanied by a kiss on a different part of Elizabeth's face with the last kiss on her lips. The scene takes us back to Wright's comment about making a teenage romance, where the ending should reward audiences with a kiss between the two lovers. According to Alessandra Stanley, the last scene of the film is "a swoony moonlit scene of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy in deshabille, kissing and cooing in a post-coital clinch." This image is in stark contrast to the reserved and simple kiss between Elizabeth and Darcy in their carriage after they are married in the BBC version.[17]

I hope that examining the three adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* with the original text in relation to studio style, charismatic stars, point of view, and mainstreaming ideology will enable high school students to have a better understanding of the source material. Moreover, as I have shown, each respective adaptation brings to the discussion something unique. Close readings of the source text intertextually with its multiple adaptations will reveal to students the issues germinating in the source text. As an example, let's again take Elizabeth's gaze on Darcy's portrait at Pemberley. The narrator states "there was certainly at this moment in Elizabeth's mind a more gentle sensation towards the original than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance" (Austen 212); though it is clear Elizabeth's opinion of Darcy is being revealed introspectively, readers are not able to *see* her feelings registered physically. In the 1995 BBC adaptation, Elizabeth says nothing but there is a slight smile that creeps onto her face, which retains the spirit of the text, while the film cuts to Darcy as he jumps in the lake. Showing Darcy strip before he dives into the lake allows

[17] Langton does play into showing a kiss scene, but he made his audience wait a month to see it, as the mini-series ran from September 24, 1995 to October 29, 1995. There were a total of six episodes at 55 minutes each. (*Wikipedia*, *Pride and Prejudice* [1995 TV Series]).

viewers to gaze approvingly upon him as an erotic object, with a physical and sensual side that the novel doesn't show, so that we too can partake in the smiling approval shown in the film by Elizabeth. The same scene in the 2005 adaptation has no painting; rather the camera pans through several nude sculptures before we see Elizabeth's eyes resting on a bust of Darcy. Though sexual tension can be discerned in the 1995 adaptation with Darcy emerging from the lake, wet and shirtless, the 2005 adaptation is infused with sensuality, as the camera focuses on the eroticism of the nude sculptures. From this reading, students of the texts can have multiple perspectives on a given scene, moving from just "gentle sensation" to eroticism, thereby allowing for what Stam calls "the infinite and open-ended possibilities" between texts ("Beyond Fidelity" 500).

CHAPTER 2

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: An Intertextual Reading of Mark Twain's Novel and Stephen Sommers' Film Adaptation, *The Adventures of Huck Finn*

The naïve narrator is one of the distinguishing characteristics of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.[18] In fact, Horst H. Kruse points out how Twain saw the value of a child's narrative long before the publication of *Huckleberry Finn.* In a letter to the *New York Weekly Review* written nearly twenty years before the publication of *Huckleberry Finn,*[19] Twain comments on the value of words written by children:

> The most useful and interesting letters we get here from home are from children seven or eight years old. This is petrified truth. Happily they have got nothing to talk about but home, and neighbors, and family—things their betters think unworthy of transmission thousands of miles. They write simply and naturally, and without straining for effect. They tell all they know, and then stop. They seldom deal in abstractions or moral homilies. Consequently their epistles are brief; but, treating as they do of familiar scenes and persons, always entertaining. (qtd. in Kruse 211-12)

Kruse goes on to conclude from Twain's letter and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that "Both the letter and the novel are marked by two further characteristics proceeding directly from the use of the innocent eye. They are first, the exposure of human weaknesses and follies as well as social evils, and secondly, the pervading humor" (212). Having such a naïve point of view in *Huckleberry Finn* allows Twain to present his satirical jabs at society

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[18] See Leo Marx's, "The Pilot and the Passenger: Landscape Conventions and the Style of *Huckleberry Finn*," for a discussion on the narration and style of *Huck Finn*.

[19] According to Kruse, "The date of composition would seem to be either the end of 1865 or the beginning of 1866" (207-8).

in a seemingly simple and straightforward manner, often coupled with a childlike humor. More specifically, Henry Nash Smith points to three main elements of Mark Twain's novel. The first element of the novel is "Huck's and Jim's adventures in their flight toward freedom" (114). Examples include Jim's escape from slavery, and Huck's escape from the cruelty of his father as well as the "sivilizing" efforts of Miss Watson and Widow Douglass (114). The second element "in the novel is social satire of the towns along the river" (114). This aspect includes scenes involving the antics of the Duke and King and the violence of the Grangerford-Shepherdson feuds (Smith 114). The third major element "is the developing characterization of Huck" (114). Smith sees Huck's narrative becoming more complex as the novel progresses: "The narrative tends to increase in depth as it moves from the adventure story of the early chapters into the social satire of the long middle section, and thence to the ultimate psychological penetration of Huck's character in the moral crisis of Chapter 31" (114). Another way to understand the complexity of Huck's narrative as well as Twain's use of Huck's first-person narration is to examine the difference between what Huck *has* to do versus what he *wants* to do.

Huck's narration often shows the struggle between what Huck thinks society wants him to do versus what he actually feels comes "handiest at the time" (Twain 69). The two are confusing for Huck because what he often thinks is the right thing to do doesn't always make him feel good. One way to make the distinction between Huck's ideologically dominated actions versus actions based on his own instincts is to apply Mikhail Bakhtin's terminology from his essay, "Discourse in the Novel." In his essay, he uses the terms "authoritative word" and "internally persuasive word":

> Both the authority of discourse and its internal persuasiveness may be united in a single word—one that is simultaneously authoritative and internally persuasive—despite the profound differences between these two categories of alien discourse. But such unity is rarely a given—it happens more frequently that an individual's becoming, an ideological process, is characterized precisely by a sharp gap between these two categories: in one, the authoritative word (religious, political, moral; the word of a father, of adults and of teachers, etc.) that does not know internal persuasiveness, in the other internally persuasive word that is denied all privilege, backed up by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged in society (not by public opinion, nor by scholarly norms, nor by criticism), not even in the legal code. The struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual ideological consciousness. (342)

Bakhtin goes on to elaborate that the authoritative word "demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally" (342). Meanwhile, the internally persuasive discourse "is, as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with 'one's own word' . . . Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition" (345). The third category, one's own discourse ("one's own word") was created out of others' words, and has been acknowledged and assimilated into one's language. On the other hand, the internally persuasive word is in a constant state

of flux, "freely, developed, applied to new material, new conditions; [as] it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts" (Bakhtin 346). The progression through which both the authoritative discourse and the internally persuasive discourse then become parts of one's own discourse or consciousness is called the "ideological becoming," which strives "to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior; it performs here as authoritative discourse, and an internally persuasive discourse" (342). Paul Lynch makes a persuasive argument to show the way Huck Finn's use of the "internally persuasive" word in the novel "allows Huck to be a different kind of hero, and one that is ultimately more compelling" (172). Applying Bakhtin's terms, we can see how Huck is constantly struggling to reconcile the authoritative word (religion, the Bible, Widow Douglass, The Duke and King, pap, Tom Sawyer) and the internally-persuasive word (his own instincts), but as Bakhtin notes "such unity is rarely a given." Lynch goes on to add that Huck "struggles to trust his own instincts, to listen to his sound heart, and to get out of the way of his own words; he also struggles against the hypocrisy of the authority that he encounters along the river" (173).

One of the surest ways Huck navigates within the authoritative word is by relying on his own experiences. At the beginning of the novel, Tom Sawyer creates a "band of robbers" called "Tom Sawyer's Gang" (Twain 5). According to Tom, whose sole knowledge of robbing comes from the books he reads, the purpose of the gang is to "stop stages and carriages on the road, with masks on, and kill the people and take their watches and money" (Twain 6). As Tom's romantic notions get more farfetched, including having a guard to watch prisoners all night, gang member Ben Rogers asks, "I think that's foolishness. Why can't a body take a club and ransom them as soon as they get here?" Tom immediately

replies, “Because it ain’t in the books so—that’s why” (Twain 7). Ben immediately submits, as do the other boys, deferring to the literate authority of Tom Sawyer. Later, Tom tries to explain to Huck the concept of a genie in a lamp: “[Genies] belong to whoever rubs the lamp or the ring, and they’ve got to do whatever he says. If he tells them to build a palace forty miles long, out of di’monds, and fill it full of chewing gum, or whatever you want, and fetch an emperor’s daughter from China for you to marry, they’ve got to do it—and they’ve got to do it before sun-up next morning, too. And more—they’ve got to waltz that palace around over the country wherever you want it, you understand” (Twain 10). In one of the few instances in the novel, Huck follows his internally persuasive word by arguing back with Tom, “I think they are a pack of flatheads for not keeping the palace for themselves ’stead of fooling them away like that. And what’s more—if I was one of them I would see a man in Jericho before I would drop my business and come to him for the rubbing of an old tin lamp” (Twain 11). Tom argues back and calls Huck a “perfect sap-head,” prompting Huck to try the experiment himself:

> I thought all this over for two or three days, and then I reckoned I would see if there was anything in it. I got an old tin lamp and an iron ring and went out in the woods and rubbed and rubbed till I sweat like an Injun, calculating to build a palace and sell it; but it warn’t no use, none of the genies come. So then I judged that all that stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer’s lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me I think different. It has all the marks of a Sunday school. (Twain 11)

Huck’s internally persuasive word is troubled by the logic of Tom’s explanation, but at the same time, Huck defers to the authority of Tom’s influence based on Tom’s knowledge of

books. Furthermore, the reference to Sunday school implies the Bible, the ultimate written authority, which coincides with Bakhtin's notion of the development of the internally persuasive word as "an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values." (345). In this case, Huck is willing to test the authority of Tom's genie tale based on Tom's knowledge of books, in much the same why he has tested the Bible through prayers. Huck's internally persuasive word *wants* to believe in Tom's tale, but concludes that Tom is a liar. Huck with the lamp dramatizes that struggle between the internally persuasive word and the authoritative word, with the consequences of choosing not to listen to Tom's bookish authority because when he tried to act upon it, it failed to be useful.

Much like the genie episode, Huck is able to navigate the authoritative word and his internally persuasive word through practical common sense experiences, a major source of the internally persuasive word. A good example is when Miss Watson, who is often trying to "civilize" Huck, teaches Huck to pray, but he finds that his assimilation of the authoritative word through praying does not work:

> She told me to pray every day, and whatever I asked for I would get it. But it warn't so. I tried it. Once I got a fish-line, but no hooks. It warn't any good to me without hooks. I tried for the hooks three or four times, but somehow I couldn't make it work. By-and-by, one day, I asked Miss Watson to try for me, but she said I was a fool. She never told me why, and I couldn't make it out no way. (Twain 8)

Miss Watson explains to Huck that praying only brings "spiritual gifts," which Huck finds useless on a practical level: "I went out in the woods and turned it over in my mind a long

time, but I couldn't see no advantage about it—except for the other people—so at last I reckoned I wouldn't worry about it any more, but just let it go" (Twain 8). Unlike Tom Sawyer's genie episode, Huck does not dismiss Miss Watson as a liar; rather, he recognizes the authoritative word of Miss Watson as a figure he not only has to respect, but one who is also respected by the community. Huck sidesteps the authoritative word of Miss Watson, by "let[ting] it go," meaning he is aware of Miss Watson's authority, but, based on his experiences and beliefs, he does not see the personal gain in prayer. The same can be said when Huck first meets the scam artists, the Duke and King. Given Huck's own propensity for lying, he is quick to deduce who these men are:

> It didn't take me long to make up my mind that these liars warn't no kings nor dukes, at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds. But I never said nothing, never let on; kept it to myself; it's the best way; then you don't have no quarrels, and don't get into no trouble. If they wanted us to call them kings and dukes, I hadn't no objections, 'long as it would keep peace in the family; and it warn't no use to tell Jim, so I didn't tell him. If I never learnt nothing else out of pap, I learnt that the best way to get along with his kind of people is to let them have their own way. (Twain 94-95)

Unlike his view of Miss Watson, Huck knows the two men are disreputable, even though they have the authority of adults brandishing an air of knowledge (e.g. reciting mish-mashed lines of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*). Huck chooses to not confront the lies of the scam artists in favor of "keep[ing] peace" on the raft. Here Huck realizes, through his experiences with pap, that in order to keep peace for *himself*, it is best to "let them have their own way."

Ironically, Huck is able to recognize the Duke and King as frauds based on his own experiences with lying. Both the examples of Miss Watson and the Duke and King show how the authoritative word and the internally persuasive word cannot be easily separated. Bakhtin makes clear that the struggle between the authoritative word and internally persuasive word is a constant struggle: "the struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual consciousness" (342). In the case of Huck, whenever he is struggling between the authoritative word and internally persuasive word, he relies on practicality and real life experiences (e.g. his experience with pap's abusive nature). Huck's reliance on experience is the closest approximation to Bakhtin's notion of "one's own word." It is Huck's real world experiences that act as a litmus test, allowing him to question and challenge the authoritative word.

Like Huck, Jim finds it difficult to question the authoritative word, because as a slave, he is used to yielding to others, including Huck. However, their relationship as friends allows Jim to be more comfortable around Huck, especially as the novel progresses. Early in the novel, when Huck and Jim are separated on the Mississippi by fog, Huck, after discovering Jim asleep, tricks Jim into thinking that none of it happened. However, Jim is quick to dismiss Huck's action as mean and even convinces Huck to apologize:

> "En when I wake up en fine you back agin', all safe en soun', de tears come en I could a got down on my knees en kiss' yo' foot I's so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin 'bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed."

> Then he got up slow, and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed *his* foot to get him to take it back.
>
> It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger—but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way. (Twain 65)

Much like the practical experiences that Huck uses to leverage the authoritative word, Jim too relies on his real world experiences with others to allow his internally persuasive word, in this case, "trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed" to question Huck's authoritative figure. Given Jim's predicament as a runaway slave, traveling with Huck gives Huck more authority and control over situations because he is white. This dynamic between Jim and Huck brings out the conflicts of friendship vs. slavery and emotion vs. the law. Both Jim and Huck believe in the authoritative word "slavery," so when Jim decides to use the idea of "friendship," he is trying to negotiate with Huck's internally persuasive voice, hoping to steer Huck away from the hierarchy of a society based on slave labor. Though Huck struggles between the two words, he ultimately follows his internally persuasive word and apologizes to Jim. That is why when Jim reproaches Huck for his actions, we sense that Jim is leveraging the authoritative figure of Huck with his internally persuasive word, leaving Huck to think about his actions as Jim disappears into the wigwam. Ultimately, it is Huck who learns a lesson as he apologizes to Jim, as the novel shows the clear racial divide. Huck's belief in the ideology of slavery makes his apology all the more significant as he decides to go against his authoritative

ideology. However, as Bakhtin notes, the authoritative and internally persuasive word are not easily separated. This is made especially clear when Huck takes fifteen minutes to apologize to Jim; moreover, he chooses not to let us hear the apology and he still consciously or unconsciously chooses the authoritative word "nigger" instead of Jim.

The same dialogic interrelationship between the authoritative word and the internally persuasive word can be seen in the King Solomon story where Jim is able to label Solomon's action as despicable, despite the fact that the story came from the Bible, a key source for many who would speak with an authoritative voice:

> "Blame de pint! I reck'n I knows what I knows. En mine you, de *real* pint is down furder—it's down deeper. It lays in de way Sollermun was raised. You take a man dat's got on'y one er two chillen; is dat man gwyne to be waseful o' chillen? No, he ain't; he can't 'ford it. *He* know how to value 'em. But you take a man dat's got 'bout five million chillen runnin' roun' de house, en it's diffunt. *He* as soon chop a chile in two as a cat. Dey's plenty mo'. A chile er two, mo' er less, warn't no consekens to Sollermun, dad fetch him!"
>
> I never see such a nigger. If he got a notion in his head once, there warn't no getting it out again. He was the most down on Solomon of any nigger I ever see. (Twain 59)

The narrative is comical due to Jim's misunderstanding of the tale of Solomon, but more importantly, his reaction shows he is able to question Huck or even the Bible's authoritative word, allowing him to make a decision based on experience. It is clear that Jim sees all humans as equal, arguing that Solomon takes advantage of the lives of humans because he

sees them as objects. Jim also identifies with the children in the story, given how slaves too were bought and sold like objects. Similar to the apology scene, Huck uses the authoritative word "nigger" to refer to Jim. But unlike the apology scene where Huck had to navigate between the authoritative and internally persuasive word, in this example, the authoritative word "nigger" is used to summon the fact that Jim is not only property, but also to dismiss "niggers" as inherently ignorant and stubborn.

In arguably the most dramatic scene near the end of the novel, Huck decides he will "go to hell" for Jim by ripping up his confessional letter to Miss Watson confiding that he has been helping Jim to freedom all along, which is the strongest case in the novel of Huck's listening to his internally persuasive word, despite the authoritative power of Miss Watson, religion, and the law. Huck's ideological becoming, a process between choosing God (the authoritative word) versus his friendship for Jim (the internally persuasive word), does not come easy. In fact, Huck's "going to hell" is in direct relation to how he feels God sees him: "And at last, when it hit me all of a sudden that here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness was being watched all the time from up there in heaven, whilst I was stealing a poor old woman's nigger that hadn't ever done me no harm . . . I most dropped in my tracks I was so scared" (Twain 160). At first Huck cannot bear the guilt and fear of the authoritative word of God, so he immediately composes a letter to Miss Watson explaining the whereabouts of Jim and feels relieved: "I felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life" (Twain 161). But even as Huck is following the authoritative word by writing his letter to Miss Watson, his meditation dramatizes the ideological process of the authoritative word and the internally persuasive word as a constant struggle:

> [I] got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me, all the time, in the day, and in the night-time, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a floating along, talking, and singing, and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind . . . and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had small-pox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the *only* one he's got now. (Twain 161)

Interestingly, Huck goes back to Jim's comment about being not only his best friend, but also his only friend. Huck's internal struggle in this scene shows how he has to negotiate through multiple authoritative voices beginning with Miss Watson, who is seen not only as a mother figure, but also a religious authority within the broad spectrum of a society (including Huck and Jim) that sees slavery as normal. Such authoritative figures participate in an ideology that constantly threatens Huck's friendship with Jim. When Tom Sawyer returns in the "evasion" chapters, we again see how Huck struggles with Tom's authoritative voice, based on his dime-store-novel authority. Huck has experienced first hand how Jim has been there for him as a friend, whereas Miss Watson simply uses her authority to threaten Huck with punishment from God while Tom again lies to him. The moment of repudiating the confessional letter is crucial for Huck's internally persuasive word because he commits to the consequences of "going to hell" that in his eyes are dreadful: "It was awful thoughts, and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head; and said I would take up wickedness again, which was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn't" (162). In the

previous scenes involving Tom and Miss Watson, Huck's motivations were self-serving. In this scene Huck realizes through his valuable experiences with Jim that following an ethic for personal gain isn't the only option. In essence, Huck is navigating between the internally persuasive word (his experiences with Jim) and his own word (selfishness), which will lead to his own ideological becoming when he agrees to go "to hell" for Jim.

However, the reemergence of Tom Sawyer in the evasion section of the novel demonstrates that despite Huck's commitment to Jim, he ultimately fails to follow through with his internally persuasive word, which leads to his deferring to Tom Sawyer's authority once again. In the final chapters of the novel, Tom Sawyer is coincidentally going to visit his Aunt Phelps, only to run into Huck as he is trying to free Jim from the Phelps's farm. Huck agrees to role-play as Tom Sawyer, while Tom pretends to be his brother, Sid Sawyer. At first Huck is amazed that Tom, whom he sees as respectable, would help him in freeing Jim: "It warn't no use to say any more; because when he said he'd do a thing, he always done it. But *I* couldn't make out how he was willing to go into this thing; so I just let it go, and never bothered no more about it. If he was bound to have it so, *I* couldn't help it" (Twain 177). As Tom Sawyer explains his elaborate plan to Huck, Huck questions the use of items such as a case knives, rope ladders, pies, and the like, but ultimately relents:

> He told me what [his plan] was, and I see in a minute it was worth fifteen of mine, for style, and would make Jim just as free a man as mine would, and maybe get us all killed besides. So I was satisfied, and said we would waltz in on it. I needn't tell what it was, here, because I knowed it wouldn't stay the way it was. I knowed he would be changing it around, every which way, as

> we went along, and heaving in new bullinesses wherever he got a chance. And that is what he done. (Twain 176)

Huck has clearly deferred to the authoritative word of Tom, despite knowing that Tom's methods are far from practical. However, it should be noted that Huck is aware of Tom's games and will go along as long as he is able to free Jim. A good example from the novel is when Tom Sawyer tells Huck the best way to free Jim is to dig him out with a case-knife: "It might answer for *you* to dig Jim out with a pick, *without* any letting-on, because you don't know no better; but it wouldn't for me, because I do know better. Gimme a case-knife" (Twain 186). Huck hands Tom a pickaxe and he promptly gets to work without saying a word. Therefore, Huck is willing to defer to Tom's whims (as cruel as they may be to Jim) as long as Jim is rescued. Huck's submission could also be a masked objection to Tom's authoritative ideology, as the end of the novel shows his difficulty in navigating between the authoritative word and the internally persuasive word to what Bakhtin calls a higher "individual ideological consciousness" (342). Embedded in Huck's individual ideological consciousness is a clear desire to save his friend, but he is not interested in the abolition of slavery. Twain's use of Huck's first person narration shows Huck's struggles with his consciousness; furthermore, Bakhtin's terminology of the "authoritative word" and the "internally persuasive" word not only help us better understand those struggles presented in Huck's narration but also arms us with terminology to use in our examination of the adaptation.

I would now like to turn my discussion to the film adaptation, *The Adventures of Huck Finn* (1993) directed by Stephen Sommers, who also wrote the screenplay. A search through IMDb shows at least a dozen adaptations; however, many of the adaptations are only

loosely based on the novel, with the focus more on following Huck Finn on adventures, rather than his journey with Jim down the Mississippi.[20] Sommers notes in the DVD commentary that Twain's book has never really been wholly adapted: "My agent says 'it's been done a dozen times,' but nobody has used the book! Till this day, I still feel that's true. Before I made this movie I watched many of the other *Huckleberry Finns*. They usually used a couple of scenes from the book or a character, and usually they would be light comedies. I thought, 'jeez, wouldn't it be great if somebody used the whole book?'" (Sommers). Sommers includes most of Twain's basic plot and characters from the novel, yet even his adaptation omits the reemergence of Tom Sawyer in the evasion chapters. Sommers states, "[Mark Twain] felt the last fifth of the book falls apart once you know Jim is free. Tension and drama leave the book, so I play[ed] with the ending and use[d] all the elements from the book and reprogrammed and reformatted the ending" (Sommers). Though Twain never felt that way, Sommers seems to have misunderstood the point of the evasion chapters, especially in regard to the difficulties in overcoming an ideology like slavery. More likely, Sommers was under pressure by Disney Studios to keep the film under two hours (the film's running time is listed at 108 minutes) and there is evidence of heavy editing in the film based on the DVD commentary from Sommers and film editor Bob Ducsay.[21] A family orientated company such as Disney Studios understandably had a basis for concern, not only in the

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[20] Several examples include *The New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1968) (TV series), *Huckleberry Finn and His Friends* (1979) (TV Series), *Rascals and Robbers: The Secret Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn* (1982) (TV), *Tom and Huck* (1995), *Born to Trouble: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (2000) (TV), and *Back to Hannibal: The Return of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn* (2000) (TV) (IMDb).

[21] Sommers and Ducsay mention the pressure from Disney to adhere to a PG rating and that studio head Jeffrey Katzenberg "felt there was 20% too much [lengthwise, as well as violence]," so both Sommers and Ducsay "took out 20%" to appease Katzenberg, which Ducsay says was ultimately the right choice (Sommers). Having heard this, I wish Sommers had commented more on the 20% that had to be cut in order to give us more specifics on Disney's ideology for the film.

length of the film, but also in the violence shown in several scenes, which I will show was quite traumatic and graphic for children.

Though the film did not win any awards, it did well at the box office. The budget was estimated at $6.5 million and the film's opening weekend earned over $5 million, with total gross from America at over $24 million (*The Adventures of Huck Finn* 1993, IMDb). The reviews in general were good, usually mentioning the beauty of the location, as the film was shot on and near the Mississippi River, all the while infused with cinematographer Janusz Kaminski's beautiful hues of gold, red, and green. Critic James Berardinelli writes, "One of the things that impressed me the most about this movie is the realism of the river scenes. Of necessity, less of the movie takes place on the Mississippi than in the book, but the river remains an important part of the plot. It's genuinely awe-inspiring, and a little frightening, to see a giant steamboat bearing down on a little raft" (Berardinelli). Other critics like Hal Hinson feel the film lacks the satiric edge of Twain's novel: "Still, given what's available for kids at the movies these days, any film that's even moderately appropriate is celebrated, even if it is only a passably entertaining, handsomely produced, Little Golden Book bowdlerization of a great book by one of our history's greatest novelists. The folks at Disney could have done worse, I suppose, but certainly they could have done better" (Hinson). Hinson could have been alluding to the film's failure to dramatize Huck's internal battle between society's ideology and his personal feelings for the runaway slave Jim.

The fact is *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is not a story for children: many of the scenes hit upon issues of slavery and represent violence, thus being too complex and terrifying for children. It is possible that much of the misconception of *Huckleberry Finn* as a children's novel stems from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, which decidedly works as a

children's novel, given the focus on Tom's adventures in contrast to *Huckleberry Finn*, where Twain's satire on society is more front and center. Therefore, when Disney decided to adapt *Huckleberry Finn* into a film, it chose not to focus on the problematic issue of slavery. Instead, the film pivots laterally to focus on the theme of friendship. Critic Roger Ebert's review captures the fine line Sommers walks between the novel and the film as wholesome family entertainment:

> The movie, of course, doesn't use the word ['nigger'], nor does it really venture very far into the heart of Huck's transformation. It wants to entertain and fears to offend. But it is a good film with strong performances. Nothing in it is wrong, although some depths are lacking. I admired the performances, and Sommers' sense of time and place, and I hope the movie guides more people toward the book—which contains values that sometimes seem as rare today as when Jim was first teaching them to Huck.

As I will show, Sommers does employ Huck's first person narration in the form of a semidiegetic voiceover once to show Huck's internal conflict. Throughout the rest of the film, Huck's first person narration via semidiegetic voiceover is mostly used to further the plot. In contrast, the novel uses Huck's first person narration not only to detail the plot, but also to show Huck's conflicts within himself as well as his honest commentary on the society around him. To be fair, Sommers dramatizes the novel's social commentary cinematically by showing scenes of child abuse, the horrors of slavery, as well as a child murdered, so when we see Huck's (Elijah Wood) vivid expressions, we are left with little doubt about his feelings.

In Sommers' adaptation*, The Adventures of Huck Finn*, Huck's first person narration, presented in a semidiegetic voiceover,[22] is used effectively in one scene early in the film when Huck decides to turn Jim (Courtney B. Vance) in, revealing his conflict between the authoritative and internally persuasive word. Early in the film, as Jim and Huck begin their adventure down the Mississippi, Jim gives a speech to Huck that isn't in the novel about how "slavery ain't right [and that] all men should be free." We then hear Huck's first person voiceover say, "right then I knew what I was doin' was wicked. And I could feel the hand of God about to take a swing at me. Then suddenly I knew what I had to do. I had to turn Jim in." This quotation is not the novel, but Sommers effectively uses the semidiegetic voiceover as well as Huck's troubled countenance to show what Huck was experiencing in the novel: "I got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead. I fidgeted up and down the raft, abusing myself to myself, and Jim was fidgeting up and down past me" (Twain 66). In the film, we are able to see through Sommers' medium long shot how Huck and Jim at opposite ends of the raft dramatize with their bodies the conflict and heavy tension between them.

In this same scene, Jim tries to reason with Huck, but Huck is resolved to stay firm in his beliefs about slaves. Feeling an immediate need to take action, Huck tells Jim he wants to ask others where Cairo is, as a way to alert others of Jim's whereabouts. Jim, sensing something is amiss, reassures Huck they won't miss it, but Huck immediately snaps "But we might miss it! Best make sure," in contrast to what Huck tells Jim in the novel: "I'll take the canoe and go see, Jim. It mightn't be [Cairo], you know" (Twain 67). Through the camera's third person omniscient view, we are able to see Huck getting more impatient and tense as

[22] Much of the dialogue in the screenplay has been rewritten in an attempt to recast the interiority of the novel into cinematic terms. Most notable of the changes is Twain's vernacular voice, which has been changed into an easier to understand modern dialect.

Jim is talking about being a free man. When Huck snaps at Jim to "best make sure," we immediately see Jim's expression, as his body language shows fatigue and his face is filled with doubt, and he answers with a simple lackluster response, "Yeah, sure Huck." All the while, Kiminski's cinematography bathes Huck and Jim in golden hues as the background along the Mississippi is steeped in darkness. The scene in the film is visually beautiful and serene, yet like the darkness of the Mississippi around them, there is danger and tension. Jim is clearly aware by the end of the conversation that Huck wants to turn him in.

When daybreak arrives, Huck gets on a log as the camera gives a close-up of Huck's determined expression as he paddles out to turn Jim in, and we hear Huck's semidiegetic voiceover: "I'd come mighty close to helpin' set Jim free and goin' to hell for it. But now I was gonna do what's right, and I was startin' to feel real good (as we see Huck smiling as he paddles away in a long shot)." The camera cuts to a medium long shot of Jim looking in desperation as he attempts to win Huck over in a final attempt by yelling a speech that is very close to the original: "There he goes . . . true blue Huck Finn. The only white gentleman ever kept his promise to old Jim. Huck Finn—a man of his word. A man who sticks by his friend come hell or high water. I'm mighty proud to know him." The camera cuts back to a close-up of Huck as he mutters out loud to himself, "Ah, shut up, Jim," which isn't in the novel. Sommers makes the scene all the more tense by removing the usual accompanying musical score and instead relying only on the diegetic soundtrack of the water as Huck paddles, reinforcing the tension between Jim and Huck. The scene then cuts back to Jim with a look of dismay as he says to himself, "Never forget 'ya Huck. Best friend I ever had," as he begins to grab his belongings, a gesture that can show either Jim's attempt to hide (as he does in the novel by submerging himself in the water with only his head visible behind the raft) or

to leave because he is aware of Huck's intentions. In the novel, it can be assumed that Jim knows what Huck is up to, but it is never made absolutely clear, as he simply helps Huck with the oars and says, "Dah you goes, de ole true Huck; de on'y white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim" (Twain 67). Huck then narrates, "Well I just felt sick. But I says, I *got* to do it—I can't get *out* of it" (Twain 67). Though the adaptation shares the same spirit as the novel, the adaptation makes clear Jim is onto Huck as we see him pick up his clothes with a look of disappointment as he mutters to himself. In addition, Conti's musical score in the film further emotionalizes the scene with a soundtrack that evokes sadness and anticipation.

In the same scene in both the novel and the film, the use of the word "friend" is mentioned to reflect this core theme in Sommers' adaptation. In the audio commentary, Sommers says, "Huck decides their friendship is important. At the core of the book, [Huck] is taught one thing [friendship] and his heart wins out and he does the right thing" (Sommers). A display of Huck's friendship in both the novel and the film is seen when the men on the skiff question Huck. In the film, we see Huck paddling, as we cut to a close-up of Huck's troubled face and we hear his voice-over as three men urgently approach Huck in a skiff: "I felt just sick, but I says to myself, 'Self, you's got to tell on 'im. It's the only right thing to do." As the three men approach looking for runaway slaves, they ask Huck, "The man on your raft, is he white or black?" After a small delay, Huck answers, "He's white," as the scene cuts to Jim smiling as he watches behind a tree. Huck then promptly comes up with a lie about his family having the pox, immediately dissuading the men from searching the raft. As Huck is lying, Conti's playful score highlighted with trumpets begins,

reinforcing the Disney ideology to give the scene a comedic impression rather than one of gravity and anxiety, given what is at stake for Jim.

As in the scene in the novel, Huck follows his internally persuasive voice in the face of authority. After the men leave, the scene cuts back to Jim looking out behind a tree as he smiles approvingly saying, "True blue Huck Finn," as Conti's lush score begins and Huck narrates through a voiceover: "It's always so damn troublesome doin' right and so damn easy doin' wrong. But I decided from now on, I'm just gonna do whatever come handiest." In the novel, Huck narrates:

> Then I thought a minute, and says to myself, hold on, —s'pose you'd a done right and give Jim up; would you felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel bad—I'd feel just the same way I do now. Well, then, says I, what's the use you learning to do right, when it's troublesome to do right and ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? I was stuck. I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time. (Twain 69)

Here, we are able to see the internal conflict between the authoritative word and the internally persuasive word. The adaptation condenses the speech above, reducing it to two sentences, which gives us less of an imprint of the conflict within Huck. In the same scene in the film, even as we hear Huck's voiceover say those lines, we see him in a long shot sitting on a floating log, arms crossed, with an expression of resignation. The long shot emotionally distances us from Huck, which again could be Disney's ideology to lessen the impact of the struggle within Huck that the novel shows. Moreover, showing a scene of Jim smiling in approval of Huck's actions refocuses our attention on the friendship between Huck and Jim

rather than the conflict within Huck. The novel makes clear that Huck's decision did not come easily, while the scene from the adaptation highlights the friendship between Huck and Jim as well as his ability to lie.

Because Sommers does such an effective job in this important scene, he may have benefitted by taking advantage of Huck's semidiegetic voiceover to further reveal more of Huck's internal conflicts rather than to employ his voiceover thereafter in the film to narrate plot. Here are some examples of Huck's semidiegetic voiceover used to further the plot throughout the film. In this scene, Huck is narrating about the King and Duke's plot to learn about the Wilks' brothers: "The King and the Duke found out that the dead guy's brothers lived over in England. They hadn't had much time to get the letter and might not have gotten it at all. So those two rat bags grilled that flathead about everything and everybody in his village, right down to the damn dog next door." Here again is another example where Huck's narration is strictly plot centered: "Mary Jane was safe, the gold was safe, them reptiles would soon be in jail, and at 10:00 tonight, Jim and me would be on a steamboat headin' for Cairo. All I had to do was find that deputy, steal his keys, and break Jim out!" Having access to an adaptation of this nature that changes the intentions of Twain allows teachers to ask questions such as, "if Sommers had opted in these two scenes to make Huck's voiceover reveal more of his internal conflicts, how would we view Huck's character differently? A question like this can prompt students to reexamine the text to see what changes were made in the scenes, hopefully bringing up for discussion the differences in Huck's character between the novel and adaptation. Intertextually exploring the differences between the novel and the adaptation challenges students to question what Sommers was trying to accomplish in his adaptation.

As an example of such questioning, one of the more interesting differences between the film and novel is the portrayal of the character Boggs. In the novel, Boggs is seen as a harmless drunk, who "never hurt nobody, drunk nor sober" (Twain 107). Boggs drunkenness leads to him harassing Colonel Sherburn, who eventually has enough of his verbal abuse and shoots Boggs even though he has both hands up. The scene is even more troubling when we learn that Boggs's sixteen-year-old daughter sees her father shot. Sherburn throws his pistol down, shows no remorse and goes home. The next chapter has the crowd going to Sherburn's house to have him lynched, only to be turned away by Sherburn's speech that "the pitifulest thing out is a mob" (Twain 111).

In the film, Boggs is not the town drunk; rather he works for the Grangerfords, and his primary role is to keep the slaves working, often keeping them in check with a whip. When Huck and Jim are riding with Billy (Buck in the novel), they see via a long shot slaves baling hay. We then see a medium shot of Boggs mercilessly throwing one of the slaves to the ground as he whips him repeatedly. Billy immediately says, "Hey Boggs, you know Pa don't want you doing that anymore!" We then see Boggs staring directly into the camera as the scene cuts to Jim, who looks disgusted and afraid at the same time. In essence, Sommers has relocated a name. The Boggs of the novel has no direct connection to the Boggs of the film. On the other hand, the introduction of Boggs as a slave driver allows the film to introduce the slave-driving scene on the Grangerford plantation.

This scene allows Disney to pivot its focus from friendship to the cruelty of slavery. We never actually see any shots of slaves being whipped in this scene. Instead, as Boggs is about to whip a slave, the camera cuts to the faces of Huck and Jim flinching in horror and fear with each crack of the whip; moreover, the soundtrack of the whipping is dialed up to

further showcase the violence subjected to the plantation slaves. In this scene, once Billy leaves, Jim immediately grabs Huck by the arm as he leaves to join Billy and says, "Huck! On that river, I had a taste of freedom. And now bein' a slave again—Well, it feels so . . . so very bad. Let's get on to Cairo, Huck. Please. Let's get on outta here." Huck immediately responds with "All you think about is yourself, Jim. Well, what about me? Don't I deserve somethin'? I ain't had it so good in all my life." The scene then cuts to a shot of Billy as he yells to Huck, "Come on, George, we're goin' fishin'!" Huck immediately gets up and jumps off the carriage as he looks at Jim and says, "And I ain't in no hurry to leave." The scene cuts to Billy as Boggs enters and Billy says to him, "Hey, Boggs, this one's all yours." We get a medium shot of Boggs as he approaches the carriage with whip in hand and a gun tucked in his belt. As Huck is running towards Billy he stops with a look of apprehension as he stares at Boggs' whip. The scene then cuts to Jim, showing us his expression of disappointment and resignation. The scene cuts back to Huck, as we see a look of conflict on his face as Boggs says to Jim, "All right, come on, get down outta there. Come on, over here." We then see Jim being taken away by Boggs as a look of sadness comes over Huck's face. Huck begins to walk away but stops to look back before leaving to find Billy. In this scene, Sommers is able to hint at the ruthless treatment of slaves, something Jim never mentions in the novel while being owned by Miss Watson. The novel shows that Jim is conscious of being picked up, but unlike the film, is in no immediate danger. Jim says:

> When you landed I reck'ned I could ketch up wid you on de lan' 'dout havin' to shout at you, but when I see dat house I begin to go slow. I 'uz off too fur to hear what dey say to you—I wuz 'fraid o' de dogs—but when it uz all quiet agin, I knowed you's in de house, so I struck out for de woods to wait for day.

> Early in de mawnin' some er de niggers come along, gwyne to de fields, en dey tuck me en showed me dis place, whah de dogs can't track me on accounts o' de water, en dey brings me truck to eat every night, en tells me how you's a gitt'n along. (Twain 84)

Though Jim knows to keep a low profile, unlike the adaptation, the novel shows that Jim is taken care of, kept abreast of Huck's business, and even fed.

The violence and danger of being a slave is physically shown in a later scene when Huck returns from fishing to look for Jim, only to see him shirtless as he looks in shock at Jim's back covered with slash marks, which we see when he turns to face Huck. In this scene, Sommers accentuates only the sound of Huck's panting and shoes on the gravel as he borders on sobbing when he sees Jim and in his conflicted way says, "Jim. It weren't my fault. If you think I feel bad, well, you're wrong! If you think I'm gonna apologize to a slave, a runaway slave at that, well, hah. I didn't mean for this to happen, Jim. It's the worst thing I ever done in my life. [Conti's score begins to play] I'm real sorry, Jim. Honest, I am." By now, Huck is crying, and Jim, who is visibly in pain as he tries to sit, gets up to embrace Huck. Though the novel does not have this scene, the adaptation is effective in showing Huck and Jim's friendship as it grows stronger in the face of brutal slavery. At first, Huck *says* everything to Jim that he was ideologically taught from the authoritative voice, but then breaks down and gives Jim a heartfelt apology. Moreover, Huck's crying shows the conflict between the authoritative and internally persuasive voice. Unlike the novel, where we never hear Huck apologize to Jim, Sommers let's us hear Huck's words of apology while he cries, punctuating his apology by adding the word, "honestly." This scene captures all three levels of Bakhtin's words, moving from the authoritative to the internally persuasive

and ultimately to Huck's own voice as he apologizes to Jim. Moreover, this scene shows the physical brutality resulting from slavery, something Twain hardly shows in the novel, despite its anti-slavery implications. Asking students to examine this scene and others in such ways enables them to explore what is gained and lost in the changes made by the adaptation and will aid them in understanding the adaptation while also encouraging students to reexamine the novel to discover why those changes were made.

Sommers also does not shy away from a major motif in the novel: the cruelty of human beings towards one another, surprising given Disney's family-orientated image. The first example I want to look at is the portrayal of Huck's father. Pap looks like he could have stepped right out of the novel, with a few creepy twists from Sommers. Here is Huck's description of pap from the novel:

> He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers. There warn't no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl—a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white. As for his clothes—just rags, that was all. (Twain 14)

In the film, pap (Ron Perlman) is depicted in much the same way except Sommers adds a steel brace on his leg that creaks and cranks whenever he moves, giving him an even more sinister appearance to go along with his awkward gait. Sommers notes:

> Ron Perlman was so scary in the film. When we screened the film, his scenes were terrifying, so kids were scared. Kids in the audience empathized with

> Huck. We got away with it because it was in the book. Kids were running out of the theater during the pap scene. We saw three to five exits. Our hands were tied when making a [Disney] movie for kids. There should be no violence and you can't make it overly dramatic, but at the same time we felt pap was an important dramatic element—pap Finn as a nasty guy is important in the film." (Sommers)

The physical description of pap was not only scary, but his character was also abusive. In pap's first scene in the film, he is introduced with thunderous drums and his hands clutch Huck's mouth and head. The first view of him is a close-up of his face as it moves closer to the camera with a menacing grin. He then picks up Huck by the head with both arms before throwing him down onto his bed. The scene is also shot at night with none of the golden hues we have seen in the daytime shots; instead, we see dark reds and off whites, literally transforming Huck's room into a cell. After pap chastises Huck and raises his hand to slap him, thunder rumbles before he violently snatches Huck as he tries to escape and proceeds to violently slap both Widow Douglass and Miss Watson down the stairs as they try to stop him. Even when pap leaves Huck's room and the warm golden hues of the rest of house return, pap is still shrouded in the dark as he leaves down the stairs, all the while the creaking of his mechanical leg echoes on the soundtrack, and the women are left whimpering on the stairs. We then see a medium shot of a visibly distressed Huck as his face is slowly covered by a foreboding darkness as the scene cuts to a long shot of pap, Huck and the canoe all in black with only the light of the moon reflecting off the river. In the next scene, Sommers takes us inside a cabin where a drunken pap is shown deliberating how to take Huck's money. Pap's logic leads him to believe because he is "next of kin," he simply

has to kill Huck to inherit the money Huck found with Tom in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.[23] As he comes to this conclusion, we see a drunken pap getting up to lock the door, as he menacingly stares at Huck. The scene cuts to a medium shot of Huck, who looks visibly frightened. Pap then grabs a knife from the table and chases Huck around the cabin, as he tries to kill him. Eventually pap passes out, but not before we see a long shot of Huck defending himself with a rifle pointed at pap.

Another example of the film's unflinching portrayal of violence is when we witness Billy Grangerford shot during a feud with the Shepherdsons. In the scene, we see Billy carrying a rifle and actually shooting at several Shepherdson men on horseback as the feud between the two families has escalated. These same men chase Billy down a river after we see a relative of Billy's getting shot from behind. Eventually the Shepherdsons double back from behind, Huck spots them, and screams Billy's name. The camera frame rate goes into slow motion, capturing the Shepherdsons on horseback with water beads dramatically splashing from the river as the horses gallop in pursuit of Billy. We see Billy run towards the river's bend, chased by Shepherdsons on horseback, as the scene cuts to a medium shot of Huck as he stares ahead with horror on his face, before we see his body quiver in shock at the inevitable pistol report. Though we don't actually see Billy shot, we do see Huck running through the river looking for Billy's dead body, which he does find floating face up along the river. Like pap's scene, the colors are dark and muted, with Huck's face taking center stage. Elijah Wood's expressive face shows the remorse and sadness he feels for Billy as he tells a dead Billy his real name just before Jim arrives and they depart. Unlike the violence between

[23] As narrated by Huck, "Tom and me found the money that the robbers hid in the cave, and it made us rich. We got six thousand dollars apiece—all gold. It was an awful sight of money when it was piled up. Well, Judge Thatcher, he took it and put it out at interest, and it fetched us a dollar a day apiece, all year round—more than a body could tell what to do with" (Twain 1).

Huck and pap, here a child actually dies. In the film as well as the novel, Billy/Buck comes from a well to do family, but it is engaged in a thirty-year-old feud with the Shepherdsons. When Huck asks what the feud was over, Buck responds, "Laws, how do *I* know? it was so long ago" (Twain 82). Buck's death in the novel makes Huck realize how easily it could have been him (notice the similarity in their names) and that people are cruel enough to kill each other over something long forgotten. Huck narrates in the novel, "It made me so sick I most fell out of the tree. I ain't agoing to tell *all* that happened—it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wished I hadn't ever come ashore that night, to see such things. I ain't ever going to get shut of them—lots of times I dream about them" (Twain 87). Though Sommers does not include Huck's thoughts about Billy in the film, we can see how disturbed Huck is from the death of Billy. In the DVD commentary, Sommers remarks, "it's extremely violent to see a kid be shot on screen. I would argue [showing Billy get shot] would be effective in telling a story to a young audience, but you don't want to traumatize them, so I think it was a good cut." (Sommers). I agree with Sommers that we don't need to see Billy get shot as the gunshot followed by Huck's expression of shock is traumatic enough; moreover, we actually see Billy's dead body floating in the water as Huck kneels beside him.

A major difference between the film and the novel is the omission of Tom Sawyer in the film. As I argued earlier in this chapter, Tom Sawyer's reemergence shows that Huck has difficulty overcoming the authoritative word. Huck not only defers to Tom, but often accepts Tom's rules, even though he clearly can see through the hollowness of Tom's plans to help Jim escape. Near the end of the film, Huck gets shot as he and Jim are running away from an unruly mob as they attempt to board a boat for Cairo. In the novel, it is Tom who gets shot, allowing Jim to show himself at his most heroic through the noble action of staying to help

the Doctor with Tom. In the adaptation, Sommers still makes Jim the hero as he stays to help Huck after he is shot. In the scene, Jim tells Huck, "I don't care what happens to me Huck. I just want to get you well." They both exchange declarations: "You're the best friend I ever had, Jim," to which Jim responds, "You're the *only* friend I ever had." As Jim is captured and about to be lynched, Sommers introduces a whole new story with Mary Jane coming to his rescue as she forces the mob to stop with a shot of her shotgun. (Mary Jane is one of the Wilks family and a gullible target for the Duke and King until Huck reveals to her their scam). In the novel, Tom decides to keep the bullet as a souvenir, which he then turns into a necklace, symbolically showing how Tom saw everything as a game, especially when we find out later that he knew beforehand from Miss Watson's will that Jim was set free. If Sommers had decided to include the Tom Sawyer episodes, the film may have benefited by bringing to the forefront the issue of slavery as well as society's dependence on ideologies. However, refocusing on the ideology of slavery through Tom Sawyer's reemergence distracts from the film's central theme of friendship between Huck and Jim that is clearly forged. Ironically, repackaging *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a film about friendship allows Sommers to depict scenes of family violence, slavery, and murder as long as the film returns to its family orientated theme of friendship.

Though Sommers includes many violent scenes in the film, the film itself may have been served better under the distribution of a different studio, *if* the purpose, as Sommers suggests, was to make an adaptation "like the book." These scenes of violence undoubtedly push the boundaries of how much children are able to tolerate, as evidenced by Sommers' account of children running out of the theaters. Critic Marjorie Baumgarten writes as a warning to parents who will be taking their kids to the film, "Be prepared to explain why, at

the film's outset, Huck's father kidnaps his son and tries to kill him. Make no mistake; this is not wholesome family entertainment. But where did we ever get the notion that Mark Twain was?" (Baumgarten). As Baumgarten mentions, even under the banner of Disney, Sommers unflinchingly shows some of the violence Huck goes through in the novel. Though Disney clearly wants the film's focus to be about friendship, Sommers was able to navigate around the family-orientated ideology of wholesomeness to show scenes of violence, slavery, child abuse, and murder. This circumvention shows that Sommers must have been aware that his audience wasn't simply going to be a standard Disney audience, comprised mainly of children. The film earned a PG rating rather than the usual G rating for most of Disney's films. The abusive and violent nature of pap along with the murder of Billy Grangerford shows that Sommers was willing to push the Disney ideology toward more adult content. In fact, Sommers cleverly strikes a balance between showing the violence depicted in the novel, while maintaining the theme of friendship in the forefront. On the other hand, to make a film that *truly* touches on those themes as illustrated by Twain requires the filmmaker to be free to explore the novel's multiple themes, rather than simply friendship. I believe, given the Disney studio ideology of family orientated products, Sommers' adaptation of *Huckleberry Finn* strikes a balance for Disney's target audience of children and adults, retaining many of the characters and events of the novel while accentuating the theme of friendship and even takes risks with the terrifying portrayal of pap, the brutality of slavery, and the depiction of murder in the Grangerford-Shepherdson scenes. One can't help but wonder if a studio will eventually buck the Hollywood ideology that *Huckleberry Finn* needs to have a young audience in order to be successful, opting instead to create a film for adults, showcasing the human brutality, prejudice, and violence Huck encounters along the Mississippi.

Adapting a first person narration presents challenges for filmmakers because it is impossible to see only a first person point of view in a film given the nature of the camera's omniscient lens. For *The Adventures of Huck Finn*, the film's use of a voiceover as an attempt at replicating a first person point of view hints at the possibilities of creating tension and conflict within Huck, especially in the scene where Huck is about to turn Jim in as a runaway slave. Director Stephen Sommers doesn't employ Huck's voiceover in the rest of the film to show the same tension and conflict; rather, he mainly uses Huck's voiceover to further plot. Instead, Sommers' film focuses on the theme of friendship as a Disney family orientated ideology, while also showing scenes of abuse, violence, murder, and slavery. His choice to show these adult themes makes clear that he knows his audience goes beyond the standard young adult Disney audiences. As a consequence, we are able to see an adaptation that shows the horrors of slavery in a way Twain never does in the novel. Inherently, it seems all previous film adaptations of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* have the common misconception of treating the novel as if it were written for children. Therefore, most adaptations tend to promote the "adventures" aspect of the novel rather than the heavier theme of slavery. Sommers' deserves credit for a film that features a strong cast, excellent cinematography, and scenes shot on location, as well as an unflinching look at weightier themes from the novel not seen in other *Huckleberry Finn* adaptations.

CHAPTER 3

An Intertextual Reading of First-Person Narratives in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Jack Clayton's Film Adaptation

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* has often been dubbed "the great American novel" with its depiction of the "new American dream."[24] It would be hard to pinpoint one thing that makes the novel such a success, but undoubtedly, one of its strengths is its use of Nick Carraway as the first-person narrator and the way we experience Gatsby through his eyes. Nick's first-person point of view reveals to us how *he* saw Gatsby; consequently, what Nick chooses to tell us is colored by his own biases. According to Louis Giannetti:

> All of our information is filtered through Nick's consciousness, is conveyed to us through his words. Except for Nick's thoughts and feelings, we can never be absolutely certain about what the other characters are experiencing, though in general Nick is a perceptive and sensitive observer. He's also very cautious and seldom ventures to speculate about the psyches of his acquaintances. (14)

A perfect example of Nick's dramatic observation is his deliberate way of describing Gatsby when he first meets him: "I had taken two finger bowls of champagne and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental and profound. At a lull in the entertainment the man looked at me and smiled" (Fitzgerald 51). The man, of course, is Jay Gatsby and this is Nick's first meeting with him. What stands out in Nick's description is how the presence of Gatsby brings about "significant, elemental and profound" changes in how he views things. Though it is arguable that the champagne could be partially responsible for Nick's feeling this way, it is clear that Gatsby's presence elicits an emotion of

[24] Several lists, including "Modern Library's 100 Best Novels", include *The Great Gatsby* either as their number one selection or in the top 5 (Modern Library).

awe and attraction from Nick. Nowhere is Nick's admiration of Gatsby more evident than when he describes Gatsby's smile immediately after meeting him:

> He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on *you* with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just so far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. (Fitzgerald 52-53)

Here Nick's description of Gatsby's smile shows the degree to which Nick is attracted to Gatsby. There are about a dozen instances of "you," "yourself," and "your" in only two sentences, allowing us (notice the switch to second-person) to imagine the spectacle of a man with such a smile. Most crucially, Nick portrays Gatsby as a romantic figure with an "extraordinary gift for hope." Gatsby's "gift of hope" was not only to be wealthy, but also to transfer that same hope to Nick. Unfortunately for Gatsby, his hope to return to the past when he and Daisy were lovers ends tragically.

Others in the novel do not see Gatsby in the same way. The gossip from strangers at various parties often paints him as a shady character, complete with a murder record and a mysterious past. Nick states, "[Gatsby's] tanned skin was drawn attractively tight on his face and his short hair looked as though it were trimmed every day. I could see nothing sinister about him" (Fitzgerald 54). Consequently, Nick's filtering of Gatsby allows us to see Gatsby not only in a sympathetic light, but also later as a tragic figure when his quest for the woman

he loves leads to his murder. As Norman Pearson explains, "We share Carraway's experience of it. Gatsby's story is indeed one with which we are familiar, not uniquely as Americans by any means but certainly on terms which we have characteristically made our own during our nation's history" (27). The American dream can mean many things to different people, but Gatsby's dream, like that of many Americans, is to be wealthy. Though Gatsby's wealth came illegally, his reasons for being wealthy, including wanting to be accepted and loved by Daisy, a wealthy and beautiful woman, are romantic notions many people can identify with, American or not. One of Gatsby's famous lines in the novel is "Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!" (Fitzgerald 116), which Nick shows to portray Gatsby as a man dedicated to recapturing the love he and Daisy shared. Despite his social standing, Gatsby misunderstands "repeating the past" as a second chance to begin where he left off with Daisy before leaving for the war. Nick eventually narrates Gatsby's past when Gatsby was just "a penniless young man" who used his uniform to get acquainted with Daisy. Nick makes clear that "he had certainly taken her under false pretenses" (Fitzgerald 156) and that it would be a quick and harmless affair, but it wasn't long before Gatsby falls in love with Daisy and becomes obsessively committed to her:

> He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go—but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail. He knew that Daisy was extraordinary but he didn't realize just how extraordinary a "nice" girl could be. She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby—nothing. He felt married to her, that was all. (Fitzgerald 156-57)

By then, not only had his love for Daisy grown, but she had come to symbolize a "grail," turning his romantic obsession with Daisy into mythic proportions: "Well, there I was, way

off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do?" (Fitzgerald 157).

In the novel, Gatsby makes clear, as does Daisy, that they love each other, and even though at first he does not have the wealth to sustain such a relationship, Nick's romanticized point of view tries to elicit sympathy for Gatsby, a man who decides to dedicate his life in search of a woman he knows he shouldn't have. Nick's narration further celebrates Gatsby's and Daisy's love by describing their month together in a nostalgically romantic flashback:

> On the last afternoon before he went abroad he sat with Daisy in his arms for a long, silent time. It was a cold fall day with fire in the room and her cheeks flushed. Now and then she moved and he changed his arm a little and once he kissed her dark shining hair. The afternoon had made them tranquil for a while as if to give them a deep memory for the long parting the next day promised. They had never been closer in their month of love nor communicated more profoundly one with another, than when she brushed silent lips against his coat's shoulder or when he touched the end of her fingers, gently, as though she were asleep. (Fitzgerald 157-58)

Nick's narrative flashback continues with Gatsby's return from the war, still with a "romantic readiness" as he promptly returns to Daisy's home, only to find her gone, leaving us little option but to feel sorry for him:

> He came back from France when Tom and Daisy were still on their wedding trip, and made a miserable but irresistible journey to Louisville on the last of his army pay. He stayed there a week, walking the streets where

> their footsteps had clicked together through the November night and revisiting the out-of-the-way places to which they had driven in her white car. Just as Daisy's house had always seemed to him more mysterious and gay than other houses so his idea of the city itself, even though she was gone from it, was pervaded with a melancholy beauty. (Fitzgerald 160)

Given how difficult these days must have been for Gatsby, Nick makes a point of saying that Gatsby saw her house pervaded with a "melancholy beauty." Readers are prompted to feel more than sympathy for Gatsby, knowing the first trip he made coming back from the war was to see Daisy. We know that he had found out about Daisy's marriage, yet he still stayed there a week while she was away on her honeymoon with Tom.

As Gatsby finally leaves Daisy's hometown, Nick's romantic, even poetic narration illustrates Gatsby's final attempt to capture the memory of his shared love with Daisy: "He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever" (Fitzgerald 160). The placement of this narrative flashback is structurally important; it occurs immediately after Chapter VII, where Gatsby confronts Tom and forces Daisy to tell Tom that she "never loved him" (Fitzgerald 139), leading to Tom's exposure of Gatsby's criminal connections. Aside from Gatsby's connection to Meyer Wolfshiem, there is no clear-cut evidence of illegal activities, only gossip. So for Nick to place this romanticized narrative flashback deliberately after the revelation of Gatsby's allegedly criminal connections shows how Nick tries to slant our perception of Gatsby as a romantic figure rather than a corrupt one, which according to critic Joy Boyum, leaves us with the feeling of Gatsby as "a

generous, idealistic man, run through with 'romantic readiness' and bearer of an 'incorruptible dream'" (101). Fitzgerald's placement of the flashback also reinforces the nostalgic nature of Nick, who chooses to focus on the romantic side of Gatsby when clearly Gatsby's exposure as a criminal is just as important.

Turning to Jack Clayton's 1974 adaption of *The Great Gatsby*, I want to first give a brief history of the film, to show how the film's priorities were fixated on the commercialization of the 1920s as well as the finding of high profile stars. The production history of *The Great Gatsby* could be easily summarized as hyped.[25] Paramount Pictures, riding the success from box office hits like *Love Story* (1970) and *The Godfather* (1972), wanted to make *The Great Gatsby* its next blockbuster.[26] The idea for an adaptation began in 1970 when Robert Evans, the studio's production chief, wanted his wife Ali MacGraw to play the role of Daisy. Evans contacted producer David Merrick because he was a good friend of Scottie Lanahan Smith, Fitzgerald's daughter, who owned the rights to the novel. It took Merrick a year and a half to close the deal for $350,000 and a generous percentage of the profits. Truman Capote was the first choice to write the adaptation, but Paramount found his treatment "unacceptable," thus turning to *Godfather* Director and Academy Award Winning Screenwriter (for *Patton*) Francis Ford Coppola. Coppola agreed and turned in his screenplay in three weeks. Directors Peter Bogdanovich, Arthur Penn, and Mike Nichols were initially interested, but only if MacGraw would not play the leading lady. Eventually in March of 1972, Evans settled on British Director Jack Clayton (*Room at the Top*) for $315,000 and cast approval. Actors Warren Beatty and Jack Nicholson were also interested

[25] I am indebted to *Time* magazine's cover story, "Ready or Not, Here comes Gatsby" for the content in these two paragraphs.

[26] *Love Story* grossed $84 million and *The Godfather* grossed $145 million.

in the lead, but also on the condition that MacGraw not play the role of Daisy. Evans was set in his decision: "There was no equivocating. My wife was going to play Daisy." Evans even went to Marlon Brando for Gatsby, but he made a salary-and-percentage demand that Paramount balked at. Eventually in May of 1972, Robert Redford, on Merrick's suggestion, was chosen for the role of Gatsby. Ironically, Evans wanted Steve McQueen to play the lead role, who unbeknownst to Evans was having an affair with his wife, Ali MacGraw, during the filming of *The Getaway* (1972). Once the affair came to light, MacGraw filed for divorce from Evans and after two months of dispute was finally released for $1 from the movie that was begun for her. The search for another Daisy immediately began. Established actors such as Katherine Ross, Candice Bergen, and Faye Dunaway were screen-tested, and photographers, much like the paparazzi of today, shot their comings and goings. Evans had a preconceived notion of Mia Farrow as Daisy, having already tested her in London. According to Evans, "She brought a mystical quality, a kind of spoiled arrogance, which made her especially interesting." By July, Farrow had been signed and production was finally underway. The filming took about twenty weeks before the film was released on March 27, 1974.

Before the release of the film, the hype for *Gatsby* had been building. According to Paramount President Frank Yablans, "After *Love Story* and *The Godfather*, I think of *Gatsby* as the Triple Crown." Evans called *Gatsby* "the most talked-about film since *Gone With the Wind*. Even MacGraw, who eventually gave up the role of Daisy, indirectly contributed to much of the hype and gossip with her withdrawal. The film, even before it was released, earned $18.6 million in advance bookings—nearly three times its $6.4 million cost. According to Yablans, "by the time the word gets out, we will have played to so many

[theaters]" that a good profit was a certainty. Evans saw the value of romance and romanticizing by adding nostalgia to his equation in *Gatsby* much like *The Godfather*. Yablans believed in the enduring nostalgia for the 1920s as well as an assumption of the affection many Americans had for Fitzgerald's novel. Fitzgerald himself could be seen as a romantic figure, a brilliant American novelist doomed by ambition and alcoholism, someone who acted out the excesses of the Roaring Twenties. So before anybody even saw a frame in the theater, Yablans and Evans supersold the film with hype: "There has never been a promotion campaign like this before. Bob and I did it totally together, and it began the day we decided to do the film. We target one jewel a year. Once the gem is decided upon, then we work on the mounting. And we make an incredible setting."[27] According to Redford, all of the actors were aware that Paramount was "trying to steamroll a superhit" and that everyone was expected to cooperate with the game plan by "producing superhit performances." However, before the film was theatrically released in March, the results of the test screening were inconclusive and divided. Many found the film visually beautiful but also "very slow in getting started, ran awfully long, and the characters were about impossible to get into at all." After the film opened, negative audience buzz and harsh critical reviews led to slower sales, but, given the hype and presell of the film, profit was a given. According to Evans, "The making of a blockbuster is the newest art form of the 20th century." Though it is important to recoup the costs of a film and hopefully make a profit, the risk of superselling a film with merchandizing and hype may lead to a different set of expectations

[27] One of the major promotions for clothing included Women's Wear Daily working on *Gatsby* fashion for the 1973-74 season. The red-and blue bordered tennis sweaters and boxy white flannel pants were dubbed "The Gatsby look." The studio claims to have turned down more than a dozen manufacturers eager to be a part of the *Gatsby* franchise. Paramount Promotion Director Charles Glenn said, "anything that was not in keeping with the taste level of the film itself was not considered. We looked for companies that would put their money where their mouths were." The idea, according to Glenn was "to Gatsbyize the entire country."

such as tickets sold, reaction from the audience, and the quality of the film. When a film is given so much hype, if even one of those expectations falls short, the film can be considered a failure.

One of the key reasons critics admire the novel is Fitzgerald's use of Nick's narration, which paints a romanticized view of Gatsby. In the film, Nick's thoughts are presented via semidiegetic voiceover, but very few of them are used to provide commentary on Gatsby and other characters, which Nick employs to his full advantage in the novel by showing only what he wants to show us. In the beginning of the film, when Nick (Sam Waterston) is arriving at the Buchanans by motorboat, we hear his first voiceover, most of which is taken directly from the first paragraphs of the novel: "In my younger and more vulnerable years, my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since. 'Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone,' he told me, 'just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.' In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all my judgments." This is a wonderfully duplicitous line from Nick because readers will find out that he does pass judgment on almost every character, including Gatsby. Nick then continues his voiceover by explaining to us his relation to the Buchanans and their lifestyle:

> It was a matter of chance that I should have decided to spend the summer on that slender, riotous island which juts out into the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound, 20 miles due east of New York. I lived at West Egg on the . . . well, less fashionable side of the courtesy bay and my cousin Daisy Buchanan lived in one of the glittering white palaces of East Egg with her husband, Tom, whom I'd known in college. They had spent the years since their

> marriage drifting here and there unrestfully, wherever people played polo and were rich together.

After the evening with Tom and Daisy, as Nick is returning home across the sound, he narrates:

> It had been a golden afternoon, and I remember having the familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer. By the autumn, my mood would be very different. I would want no more privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only my neighbor, Gatsby, would be exempt from my reaction—Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn—for Gatsby turned out all right in the end. It was what preyed on him, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams.

Coppola's script omits a line from Nick's narrative in the text about Gatsby: his "extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again" (Fitzgerald 6). Though Nick's voiceover from the film hints at how he favors Gatsby, we are not given an indication as to why. With the novel, Nick's reasons are clear, as he describes Gatsby as a romantic with an "extraordinary gift for hope."

In the novel, the presentation of the characters through Nick's first person narration persuades us to stay emotionally invested in characters like Gatsby and Daisy because of what he chooses to show us. In the film, Daisy's character is immediately revealed, as she comes across as impetuous and spoiled. Gatsby comes across as confident, losing much of the vulnerability that made the character sympathetic in the novel. While the director could have employed more of Nick's voiceovers to make characters like Daisy appear more

favorable, or to give less screen time to Farrow in order to keep audiences in the dark about Daisy's true character, Clayton seems to have favored a more unsentimental portrayal of the characters. As I will show, the film relies more on stylized shots to give the impression of romanticism. Clayton's film ultimately shows, through the failed romance between Gatsby and Daisy, the impossibility of their love. In the novel, Nick's portrayal of Gatsby as lovesick and sentimental allows us to not only have sympathy for Gatsby, but also encourages us to wish for Gatsby to be reunited with Daisy.

What the film tries to do instead is portray Gatsby and Daisy as they are, accentuating the physical qualities of Redford and Farrow while dressing them to perfection. The film's third person omniscient camera reveals their character traits rather than conceals them. In the novel, Nick paints Gatsby as awkward upon first meeting him at a party: "I was looking at an elegant young rough-neck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd" (Fitzgerald 53). Their meeting is amidst partygoers without Nick even aware that he speaking to Gatsby until Gatsby apologizes and introduces himself. It isn't long before a butler comes and interrupts their conversation to tell Gatsby "Chicago was calling him on the wire" (Fitzgerald 53). In the same scene from the film, when Nick arrives at Gatsby's party, he finds Jordan Baker and they both make the rounds, giving us an opportunity to take in the opulent set decoration and costumes of seemingly hundreds of partygoers. We eventually cut to a scene where a butler interrupts Nick and Jordan and asks Nick to follow him alone into Gatsby's private office.

The adaptation establishes a feeling of danger as Nick is taken into Gatsby's house and led into an elevator because the camera cuts to a close-up of a pistol in the butler's jacket. The camera then slowly pans to a close-up of the butler's stolid face as Nick's

reflection in the mirrored elevator comes into focus and Nick asks the butler, as he is staring at his gun, "Are you sure you've got the right person?" Waterston does an excellent job of conveying fear and humor at the same time when the butler nods to his question and we see Nick's reflection as he looks at the butler, gulps, smiles and says, "yeah." The whole scene plays out as if Nick is about to be executed for possibly being the only one *invited* to Gatsby's party. When Nick is ushered into a room, Gatsby is shown looking out the window before he turns around and introduces himself.

When we are given a formal introduction to Redford's Gatsby, we don't see the awkward character of the novel; rather, we see a self-assured man, confident in getting what he wants with an air of arrogance and contemptuousness. When Gatsby introduces himself to Nick, his reaction is stiff, almost as if reluctant to shake hands with Nick, a strange decision on Gatsby's part when it was he who summoned Nick. Clayton chooses to portray the darker side of Gatsby, showing him standing half in shadow behind a desk staring at Nick, ready to strike a deal, before he awkwardly says, "I thought we should get acquainted because we're neighbors." The phone rings and Nick overhears him saying, "I don't give a damn what Philadelphia wants. I said a small town. If that's his idea of a small town, he's no use to us." A disconcerted Nick then agrees to have lunch with Gatsby the next day, leaving Gatsby to finish his business on the phone. Edward Jones writes:

> As a means of introducing Robert Redford, superstar and portrayer of Gatsby, Clayton ignores the casual way Nick meets his host, Gatsby, and substitutes a sequence narrated in the novel by Jordan Baker about her command appearance before Gatsby in his inner sanctum; Clayton takes Nick through

> the corridors and private elevator of the mansion in a scene more appropriate to *The Godfather*. (233)

Jones makes a valid point about the hype and buildup of Gatsby's persona being further amplified, with the scene depicting a private and formal meeting with Gatsby rather than his public and casual introduction to Nick from the novel. In the film, when Gatsby hesitates to shake hands with Nick, we see the cautionary side of Gatsby—a man who is distrustful of everyone. His Godfather-like persona is further accentuated when he displays zero tolerance for those who don't see eye to eye with him, as evidenced in his remark on the phone about Philadelphia. In the novel, the Philadelphia phone call is also mentioned, but there is no threat behind it. Gatsby is outside mingling with guests as they leave when his butler interrupts and says, "Philadelphia wants you on the phone, sir." Gatsby replies, "All right, in a minute. Tell them I'll be right there . . . . Good night" (Fitzgerald 58). Nick then narrates, "He smiled—and suddenly there seemed to be a pleasant significance in having been among the last to go, as if he had desired it so all the time" (Fitzgerald 58). Nick's statement shows how drawn he is to Gatsby's personality. While the novel chooses to give Gatsby more of a humane and approachable persona at the party, the screenwriters and director chose to have Redford portray Gatsby as cautious and all business. Redford's Gatsby is poised, confident, and detached from everything around him. Seeing Gatsby's haughty demeanor and hearing him speak in a forceful way shows the production's choice to portray a Gatsby that reinforces the negative gossip we hear from partygoers, rather than in a romantic light.

As mentioned before, Fitzgerald, through Nick's point of view, chooses to portray Gatsby in a more sentimental light; however, there are times in the novel when Nick hints at the darker side of Gatsby. Examples include Gatsby's close relationship with Wolfshiem,

who when introduced to Nick responds with "I understand you're looking for a business gonnegtion" (Fitzgerald 75). Gatsby immediately responds with, "This is just a friend. I told you we'd talk about that some other time" (Fitzgerald 75). When Wolfshiem leaves, Gatsby tells Nick that Wolfshiem was responsible for fixing the 1919 World Series. When Nick asked why he isn't in jail, Gatsby responds, "They can't get him, old sport. He's a smart man" (Fitzgerald 78). In another instance after Daisy and Gatsby are reunited, Nick has a moment alone with Gatsby as Daisy is freshening up. Gatsby tells Nick that it only took him three years to earn the money to buy his house. When Nick says, "I thought you inherited your money," and asks what kind of business he is in, Gatsby curtly responds, "That's my affair" (Fitzgerald 95). The novel casually hints through the denizens of the party as well as through the conversations between Gatsby and Nick that Gatsby is hiding something. On the other hand, the film often highlights Gatsby talking on the phone about private business matters and more importantly, portraying Gatsby as someone who is not only handsome and confident, but also cautious and associated with criminals.

Daisy Buchanan's portrayal in the film loses much of the charm that we get from Nick in the novel because Mia Farrow (at no fault of her own) plays Daisy as she really is in the novel—full of energy and excitement when she is interested, but otherwise spoiled with an air of pretentiousness and falsity. In the novel, Nick is able to obscure through his first-person point of view, Daisy's selfishness and pretentiousness:

> [Daisy] began to ask questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth—but there was an

> excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour. (Fitzgerald 13-14)

The Daisy Nick paints is a woman full of attraction and excitement. Dennis Cutchins writes, "Fitzgerald, of course, recognized [Daisy's] importance and consequently took almost complete control over the reader's knowledge of her by filtering all perceptions through Nick. Thus, though she 'appears' in the novel early on, the reader's knowledge of her is limited primarily to Nick's impressions" ("Adaptations in the Classroom" 297). As noted by Cutchins, the reason many find Daisy tolerable is because Nick describes her just enough to create a sketch of her in our minds, but deliberately chooses to gloss over her less desirable traits. Cutchins' use of the word "appears" is appropriate because what we imagine is an embellished version of Daisy, as Nick wants us to see her. We are only given a short description of her face from the quotation above as "sad and lovely," while Nick repeats the word "bright" three times to let our imagination fill in what "bright" eyes and mouths are. Moreover, Nick spends more time describing her voice poetically, molding the image of Daisy through sound rather than fleshing out her character. In essence, Nick through his own biases colors his description just enough to let our imagination complete Daisy's profile and join in his infatuation with her. Because many of the characters are impressionistically described, we tend to flesh them out based on the little we are given. Robert Carringer shares this same sentiment when he suggests that Fitzgerald's "narrative strategy involves the reader or viewer as an active participant in the 'discovery' of the subject" (312).

On the other hand, in the film adaptation, the camera's third-person apparatus clearly shows us what Daisy looks and sounds like when Mia Farrow says to Nick, "I'm p-paralyzed with happiness" at seeing him. After those same lines are spoken in the novel, Daisy introduces Jordan Baker: "She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming)" (Fitzgerald 13). Even in Daisy's nonchalant introduction of Jordan, Nick qualifies her introduction of Jordan with an aside that enables the reader to look past her haughtiness to find her "charming." In the film, both Daisy and Jordan are presented realistically, with artificial airs about them, as they seem disinclined to even get up when Nick enters.

Examining Cutchins' idea of Nick's filtered perceptions, she writes, "Because Nick is the novel's narrator, and the reader's only source of information, those reading the novel learn about Gatsby, Daisy, Tom, and Jordan slowly and in small pieces. Furthermore, everything presented to the reader is colored by Nick's perceptions" ("Adaptations in the Classroom" 297). Rather than see a clear picture, the novel gives impressions that we need to fill in for ourselves with those impressions changing from chapter-to-chapter depending on Nick's revelations, portraying Daisy romantically in the greater part of the novel. It isn't until later in the novel that Nick passes judgment on Daisy and Tom as "careless people" who "smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they made" (Fitzgerald 187-88). By then, the novel is near its end and Daisy's selfish actions have allowed us to reexamine Nick's depictions of her. Unlike the novel, the film gives us a full reveal of Daisy's personality the moment she appears on screen; her character

at the end of the film reaffirms the spoiled demeanor shown earlier, making clear the intentions of the filmmakers to ignore Nick's point of view. Instead the film showcases the world of the rich, ambitious, and criminal as they truly are, drawing on the excesses and enduring nostalgia for the Roaring Twenties that highlighted much of the pre-filming hype.

Given its principle actors, the film replaces Nick's romantic vision of Gatsby and Daisy in the novel with an emphasis on the physical features of Robert Redford and Mia Farrow. In the film, we often see close-ups of Redford confidently smiling or pensively detached. An example of Gatsby's confidence is shown in the film during his reunion with Daisy, which Nick has set up at Gatsby's request. In the novel, on the day of the meeting, Gatsby is nervous and a bit scared. Nick narrates how "He sat down, miserably, as if I had pushed him" (Fitzgerald 90). By the time Daisy arrives and enters the house, Gatsby had disappeared to another part of the house: "With his hands in his coat pockets he stalked by me into the hall, turned sharply as if he were on a wire and disappeared into the living room. It wasn't a bit funny" (Fitzgerald 91). When Daisy finally meets Gatsby and says, "I certainly am awfully glad to see you again," Nick elaborates on the awkwardness of the situation: "A pause; it endured horribly. I had nothing to do in the hall so I went into the room" (Fitzgerald 91). Gatsby is too mortified to speak and Nick has to save him. Nick leaves to go to the kitchen and Gatsby immediately follows him before Nick scolds Gatsby by saying, "'You're acting like a little boy,' I broke out impatiently. 'Not only that but you're rude. Daisy's sitting in there all alone'" (Fitzgerald 93). The Gatsby in the novel may be rude in leaving Daisy alone, but it is evident that he is too petrified to speak to her, an action that makes him more endearing than rude.

In the film, before Daisy arrives, Gatsby is visibly nervous, and he shows his nervousness by being curt and rude with Nick as they sit waiting for her. Gatsby, who is waiting impatiently, tosses aside the paper he is reading and says, "I'm going home. There's nobody coming. It's too late." Despite Nick's reaffirmations that "it's only five minutes till 4:00," Gatsby looks down gravely, shakes his head and says, "This is a mistake. This is a terrible mistake." A few seconds later, Daisy shows up admiring the flowers Gatsby has sent over when suddenly Gatsby appears in the mirror and Daisy slowly turns around to face him. The camera does a close-up of Daisy, in which Farrow's delicate features remain in a stunned expression for a full five seconds, while the lush strings of Nick Riddle's soundtrack adds a sense of romance and nostalgia. We then see a medium close-up of Gatsby lasting even longer than Daisy's. When Nick introduces them to each other, Gatsby interrupts Nick by saying "We've met before." Several medium close-ups focusing on Redford's handsome features replace the shyness and nervousness of Gatsby in the novel, as his piercing blue eyes stare intently into Daisy's eyes without blinking. Daisy musters what seems like a fake laugh while Gatsby simple stares. Eventually we see a shot that positions Nick in the middle and Gatsby on camera left facing Daisy on the right. The composition of the scene tries to be true to the novel by showing the awkwardness of their reunion as it lasts more than ten seconds without a single word or gesture. All the while, Riddle's lush score accentuates the scene, painting an air of nostalgia and romance.

As in the novel, much of how we perceive Gatsby and Daisy's relationship hinges on the scene of their first meeting after years of not seeing each other. Redford has none of the anxiousness and nervousness we see from Gatsby in the novel when he reunites with her, given that his reunion with Daisy is the moment for which he has waited eight years. When

the camera captures Gatsby's rigid body language, we are made more aware of his cautious and business side. Understandably, both Daisy and Gatsby are stunned to see each other, but the long pauses and stares show very little emotional warmth, especially from Gatsby. In order to entertain Daisy, Gatsby resorts to showing off his newly accumulated wealth by taking both Daisy and Nick on a tour of his house, ending in his bedroom where he throws his newly purchased shirts about the room for Daisy to see. We then see a shot of Daisy holding a shirt to her face as she sobs lightly saying, "I've never seen such beautiful shirts before." As Nick leaves, we get a close-up of Gatsby, who is shown staring without smiling at Daisy. It isn't until we get a few forced laughs from Daisy that Gatsby feigns a smile. The film makes clear that the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy isn't going to come easily, foreshadowing their eventual breakup. The novel includes the same scene, but Nick does not mention the expressions on Gatsby's and Daisy's face after she sobs. Instead, Nick shows Gatsby continuing with the tour of the house stopping to comment on the green light at Daisy's end of the dock.

As the rain is falling, Daisy looks out the window and says to Gatsby, "I'd like to just get one of those pink clouds and put you in it and push you around" (Fitzgerald 99), as Nick decides to make his exit. Before he leaves, Nick remarks, "As I went over to say goodbye I saw the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby's face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness" (Fitzgerald 101). As Nick leaves he notes, "As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion" (Fitzgerald 101). Again, though Nick lets us know there is an expression of doubt on Gatsby's face, he ends the scene with them alone allowing us to imagine the possibility of

Gatsby and Daisy's successful reunion. The film also includes Daisy's line about the pink clouds, but unlike the novel that ends the scene allowing us to imagine Gatsby as he is hit with a "rush of emotion" from Daisy whispering in his ear, the film ends with the shirt throwing scene, choosing instead to focuses on Gatsby's "faint doubt" as to "the quality of his happiness" shown in their feigned smiles. The adaptation shows the forced awkwardness of Gatsby and Daisy's reunion from Nick's living room all the way to Gatsby's bedroom. On the other hand, the novel shows an initial awkward moment between Gatsby and Daisy during their reunion in Nick's home transition into a seemingly intimate moment between the two at Gatsby's home when Nick says, "They had forgotten me but Daisy glanced up and held out her hands; Gatsby didn't know me now at all. I looked once more at them and they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by intense life. Then I went out of the room and down the marble steps into the rain, leaving them there together" (Fitzgerald 102). The novel shows Gatsby as nervous and anxious, afraid of what to expect when he is reunited with Daisy. Gatsby's nervousness gives him an endearing human quality. By the time Nick leaves Gatsby's house, Nick makes clear the "rush of emotion" coming over Gatsby as Daisy whispers in his ear a "deathless song," showing the results of a successful reunion and the beginnings of a possible romance. The film highlights the physical beauty of Redford and Farrow with close-ups that fixate on their physical features. Unlike the Gatsby of the novel, Redford's Gatsby is more impatient than nervous and even displays a sense of confidence when he sees Daisy. In the novel, Nick ends the chapter by offering us a "gift of hope" between Gatsby and Daisy. In the film, Riddle's score evokes nostalgia and romance, but as the scene comes to an end, Clayton shows the physical distance between Gatsby and Daisy as they look at each other with feigned smiles, conveying the tragic quality of Gatsby's "quest."

The film often features stylized shots, shown through a filtered cinematography, where scenes are diffused with soft lighting, which further evokes the romantic nostalgia the film has *for* Gatsby's world rather than the actual romance between Daisy and Gatsby. An example of this stylization occurs in the opening sequence of the film, which attempts to convey a nostalgic and romantic mood only to expose the opulence of the very rich. From the frames of the opening credits, we see empty shots of Gatsby's house with the camera cutting from one location in the house to another—the pool, the ballroom, the garage, before ending in his bedroom, where we see Gatsby's personal items. The camera then tracks Gatsby's objects in the bedroom: his bed, his monogrammed "JG" linen, a black and white candid photo of Daisy casually playing with her pearl necklace before cutting back to a set of monogrammed brushes and war medals, as it tracks to a full black and white portrait of Daisy before fading to black. The tracking shot shows Daisy's seamless integration into Gatsby's idealized romantic notion of her, as framed by the photographs and their prominence in his bedroom. Moreover, the nondiegetic soundtrack composed of several songs in a medley, including the ghostly laughter and peal of partygoers blends into Irving Berlin's lyrics from "What'll I Do," to evoke a nostalgic sentimentality. In essence, the beginning of the film chooses to foreshadow, through its focus on the splendor of Gatsby's belongings, the world that he lives in.

As I have shown, Nick's first-person narration in the novel pieces together Gatsby's past and the time he spent with Daisy before he left for the war. The film chooses not to show this narrative flashback from the novel. When asked about this omission, Clayton responded: "I don't like flashbacks . . . .If you put characters onto the screen, as long as you give a certain amount of information about them, they, then, in fact, become life-like. It's far

more fascinating than to have a diary of somebody's life. That's a bore, I think" (qtd. in Atkins 227). Clayton's explanation points to a choice he made in allowing Redford's Gatsby to reveal more of the bootlegger-like quality than to paint him as a lovesick war soldier as Nick does. The cautiousness of Redford's Gatsby gives the impression of a man distrustful of those around him, which seems to fall in place with the novel and Gatsby's beginnings with Dan Cody.[28] The film decides to show the difficulty of reliving the past by showing the present. In a scene from the film after their affair has begun, Gatsby and Daisy are having a private conversation reminiscing on their past. One of the more painful scenes to watch is a scene not from the novel and outside of Nick's focalization with Daisy and Gatsby alone in conversation:

> Daisy: Why do you stand or sit so far from me as possible?
>
> Gatsby: I find it difficult . . .
>
> Daisy: To be close to me?
>
> Gatsby: It's been a very long time since I've been able to look at you.

The camera provides a medium shot of Daisy's face before cutting to a shot of her reaching out to Gatsby. Riddle's score again evokes a sense of romance and sentimentality in the scene, juxtaposed with Gatsby's hesitancy to touch Daisy's hand. Even in this scene, the camera's close-up of their hands never shows them touching as Daisy quickly brings her hand down and changes the subject. When Daisy asks Gatsby if he still has his uniform, he responds that he does and she says, "then you are a sentimental man."

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[28] Dan Cody, a multimillionaire from the Gold Rush, took Gatsby in when he was a young man to work on his yacht, giving Gatsby a taste of wealth and opulence. Gatsby worked for Cody for five years, traveling the world in his yacht, before Cody died. After Cody's death, he left Gatsby $25,000, but all the money went to Cody's ex-wife Ella Kaye, who used a "legal device" against Gatsby. As Nick notes, "He was left with his singularly appropriate education; the vague contour of Jay Gatsby had filled out to the substantiality of a man" (Fitzgerald 107). Jay Gatsby's "education" was to get back what was taken away from him, until he too became a multimillionaire, with the major difference being that Gatsby got his wealth illegally.

The reinforcement of Gatsby and Daisy's lack of chemistry is often juxtaposed in the production with highly stylized shots and scenes. What the film tries to convey through the juxtaposed image of Gatsby and Daisy's incompatibility and romantic stylized shots is the inevitable tragedy of their love that is made clear through the third-person omniscient lens. Riddle's lush soundtrack begins as the scene fades into one of the most stylized scenes in the film with Gatsby and Daisy: both at a picnic alone with one plate piled high with sandwiches and the other full of fruits, accompanied with a bottle of champagne. Gatsby and Daisy are bathed in golden hues as the sun is setting. They are sitting near the edge of a lake facing each other with at least three swans as the camera zooms into a medium shot of the couple as they are talking. Redford has a fixed grin as he looks at Farrow, who is sipping champagne as it sparkles in the sun. These scenes show the lengths to which Gatsby will try to make the romance real; moreover, the film's use of stylized romantic scenes represent the wishes of Gatsby rather than reality.

The film's omniscient point of view makes transparent that despite their romantic past, Gatsby and Daisy shouldn't be together. Cutchins writes: "Because [film viewers] are not privy to Nick's or Gatsby's perceptions they never quite understand Gatsby's attraction to Daisy or his reasons for seeking her attention. From the film's first scenes she looks like what she is—selfish and shallow. Gatsby's struggle to win her love therefore seems misguided from the start, and film audiences are never able to fully sympathize with either Nick or Gatsby" ("Adaptations in the Classroom" 300). Cutchins point is understandable, but I argue that Daisy's selfishness and shallowness is exactly what the film wants to capture; moreover, showing Gatsby's quest for a girl like Daisy illustrates how obsessed he is with the *concept* of being in love, rather than actually being in love with her. Critic Janet Maslin

simply states, “Redford and Farrow never for one minute give the impression of being in love, and that’s the film’s single most astonishing shortcoming” (266). Though Maslin’s criticism seems harsh, she makes a valid point. If there were an “impression” of love between Redford and Farrow like the picnic scene, it is too staged for us to believe as genuine. This again reiterates my point that many critics seem to overlook—that the film may do too good a job of showing the true character of Gatsby and Daisy, not the embellished version that Nick presents to us in the novel.

Nick’s narration in the novel allows us to identify with Gatsby’s quest for wanting to be accepted, living the American dream, and ultimately searching for everything that Daisy had come to represent for his American dream: love and the seduction of money. Nowhere is this more echoed than in the famous last lines of the novel: “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning——So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past” (Fitzgerald 189). Even in Nick’s last lines, he moves from the “Gatsby” proper noun to the collective pronouns “us” and “we,” showing the universality of Gatsby’s quest and our identification with some aspect of it. Nick’s narration via semidiegetic voiceover in the film doesn’t use this line. Instead we hear Nick saying, “I thought of Gatsby’s wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock. He had come a long way to this lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him.” The line is almost verbatim except the omission of the word “blue” before lawn. In a way, the choice to end the film with Gatsby focuses on his failed pursuit of Daisy rather than including “us” as Fitzgerald does to universalize the

difficulty of achieving dreams in America. Moreover, the film, for all its visual beauty, feels cold and unromantic because it chooses to portray Gatsby as very businesslike, hardened by his involvement with criminals.

Jack Clayton's adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* captures well the look of the Roaring Twenties with the flapper fashion, sleek short hair, cigarettes, girdles, cloche hats, wrapover coats, and excellent examples of the foxtrot and waltz.[29] Though hype and marketing saved the film financially, the overall critical response hurt Clayton's career.[30] Unfortunately for Clayton, *The Great Gatsby* is a prime example of audience expectations over the intentions of the film. Critics wanted to see a blossoming romance between Gatsby and Daisy, but Clayton chose to present a more realistic portrayal of the characters. Baz Luhrmann's release of *The Great Gatsby* on May 10, 2013 will give another fresh perspective on the novel. Given Luhrmann's creative prowess and excellent adaptation of *Romeo + Juliet*, I will be curious to see how he will use Nick's narration and point of view, especially with the film being shown in 3-D. Leonardo DiCaprio, who will play Jay Gatsby, recently shed some light on the adaptation: "Baz wants to try it [3D] for dramatic purposes. He was saying that he's never seen one done that way yet. But Baz insists that *The Great Gatsby* is a voyeuristic novel where you feel like you're inside the room and the characters' minds, and he wants to use 3-D for that purpose" (Harris). Showing *The Great Gatsby* in 3-D may just be Luhrmann's way of commenting on America's obsession with celebrities' private lives and reality television shows, with audiences putting their 3-D glasses on in the dark as they peer into the lives of the rich.

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[29] The film adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* did win two Academy Awards: Best Costume Design and Best Music, Scoring Original Song Score and/or Adaptation (*The Great Gatsby*, IMDb).

[30] Clayton did not make another movie for nine years because of the film's critical failure until he did a Disney production, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, based on a Ray Bradbury novel.

Jack Clayton's adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* utilizes voiceover to simulate the first person narration of the novel; however, the voiceover in the film does little to further the development of the characters, choosing instead to take a more objective stance to describe events and locations. In the novel, Nick's first person narration has a quality of looking back over time and making meaning from it. Throughout the novel, Nick chooses to give symbolic weight to characters and locations, while providing multiple flashbacks to Gatsby's earlier years from when he and Daisy were dating to when he returns from the war in search of her. The introspective nature of Nick's first person narration allows him to frame his descriptions of Gatsby's search for Daisy's love as nostalgically romantic.

Nick's voiceover in the adaptation is not used in the same way as the narration in the novel. Most of Nick's voiceovers are more like those of an outsider, describing parties, the behavior of partygoers, physical descriptions of locations, and events that occurred after Gatsby's death. Instead of a voiceover, Clayton relies on the omniscient lens of the camera to show a realistic view of Gatsby and Daisy's relationship. Clayton captures all too clearly the lack of chemistry between Gatsby and Daisy, showing instead the doomed nature of their relationship. In the novel, Nick poetically describes the extent of Gatsby's adoration of Daisy: "He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart" (Fitzgerald 101). Clayton's film does just that, as it juxtaposes the lack of real love between Gatsby and Daisy with the use of stylized romantic shots to show the "creative passion" with which Gatsby *wanted* to view their love.

CHAPTER 4

The Streetcars Named Desire

For over forty years, the 1951 version of director Elia Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire* has been the film audiences saw in theaters, rented or bought from stores. However, in 1993 a DVD rerelease of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, also called the "The Original Director's Version," restored roughly four minutes of footage deemed unsuitable by the Production Code and the Legion of Decency during its release in 1951. The 1993 rerelease gave us Kazan's original version, which, since the 1951 version was pulled from circulation after the 1993 rerelease, is probably the version most people have seen since then.

The discussion that follows focuses on comparisons of both the original 1951 release and the 1993 rerelease with the playscript,[31] in addition to Glenn Jordan's television adaptation (1995), to intertextually show how choices made in the adaptations affect our understanding of the characters and their motivations.

Stage Performance vs. Film

A Streetcar Named Desire began as a stage play, so it is useful to begin the discussion with a general discussion about the nature of the stage as a medium and some of the differences between stage productions and film.

There are many similar conventions between a stage production and a film. Marion Sheridan mentions some of these similarities in her discussion of adapting plays into film:

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[31] It should be noted that the playscript is itself a work of literature that is different than a finished novel. The playscript also serves as a template for performances either in a theater or by actors in a film. These performances, whether on stage or on film, may change or amplify aspects of the production the director deems necessary to fulfill his artistic vision. Putting those considerations aside, this chapter chooses to use the playscript as a literary work rather than a template for actors in a theater or for actors and filmmakers in a movie version.

> Both [theater and film] are interested in relating stories. Both recreate worlds; both use actors, props, and sets to produce desired effects. In each, movement is essential. Each uses the present tense, primarily, although the flashback is available to it. Finally, both are presented to an audience gathered together in a darkened theatre, an audience that has paid an admission fee and waits with certain expectations. (53)

I agree with Sheridan in most respects, as many of the conventions listed above are immediately apparent to those who have been in an audience for a film or a stage production. Homing in on Sheridan's "certain expectations," I feel audiences' expectations change from person to person given their interests and reasons for attending a particular showing. A major audience expectation is to be entertained, although this expectation can range from wanting to see a favorite actor to wanting to be immersed in the story. The following discussion explores some of the differences in audience expectations given the media of stage performance and film.

One of the major differences between stage performance and film is that stage performance is live, while a film uses mechanical means to record its performances. One of the joys of attending a stage performance is being able to see real people perform. In fact, many would argue that seeing real actors perform on stage is clearly superior to seeing actors on screen. The human connection that is established by seeing a live performance could be likened to attending a music concert versus listening to a recording of the music at home. One of the major benefits of attending a theatrical stage performance is its intimate setting with the actors, especially in smaller venues. With smaller venues, it is easier for actors to project their emotions to an audience, while bigger venues make it more difficult for actors to

project that same emotional connection to audience members seated far-off from the stage. While it is true that an on-stage actor needs to literally project his voice and persona, the best actors will also project far enough to evoke an emotional response within the audience members (even in the farthest of seats), which is often challenging for a stage production set in a bigger venue.

Another aspect of a live stage production is that an actor's performance may vary from day to day. For example, during *A Streetcar Named Desire*'*s* run on Broadway, Jessica Tandy, who played Blanche, was always frustrated with Marlon Brando, who played Stanley, because she would never know what to expect from him. Sam Staggs writes:

> Jessica Tandy, having no antidote to Brando's battering-ram talent, and baffled by it, froze her own performance so that it never varied. Brando, on the other hand, changed something every night—an inflection, a gesture, a bit of stage business—often to the chagrin of his colleagues. The plus side of varying a performance is that it keeps a characterization fresh. Such modulations also permit artistic exploration, and they ward off boredom during a long run. (92)

Though it may have frustrated Jessica Tandy, Brando's improvisations kept the play and Stanley's character in constant flux, though it should be noted that Brando's fresh readings didn't always improve his performance. According to Tandy, "He would be *brilliant* one night and the next night, if he was tired or bored, he would play tired or bored. He didn't have the discipline. I used to get very cross at him" (Staggs 92). In essence, Brando's day-to-day Broadway performance of Stanley would give each performance a unique quality. On the other hand, in motion pictures, the performances by the actors do not change. Watching

Elia Kazan's film of *A Streetcar Named Desire* in a theater will be the same no matter what screening you choose to watch or what theater you watch it in. Though films are called motion pictures, the performances themselves remain unchanging.

Though the acting may vary from one day to the next in a stage performance, the setting rarely varies and is limited by the dimensions of the stage. On the other hand, motion pictures are not confined by space, as shots can move from one location to another by a simple cut or fade-in or fade-out. Sheridan mentions that one way to compare the two is to see motion pictures as primarily visual while stage performances are more of a verbal medium:

> Because the film is primarily visual, it depends largely upon those conventions which affect the eye—imaginative shooting and editing of shots, and sequences intelligently joined. If the film content is thematic, appropriate images and symbols must be sought to produce the desired effect.
>
> The stage performance, stagebound and less flexible, is primarily a verbal medium depending on a richness of language, augmented by expression and movement, to carry its freight of meaning. Film, free from the confining physical limits of time and space, ranges quickly across distances and can suspend time or withdraw into the back reaches of earlier time periods. In its rapid sequence of realistic, alternating shots, the motion picture can leave one setting, return shortly, and leave again—depending on the director's purposes. The juxtaposing of pictures heightens the sense of immediacy. (53-54)

I do feel Sheridan's distinctions between film and stage performances are too simplified. The balance between verbal and visual can vary enormously in both films and stage plays. A film can be dominated by the verbal, while a stage play can be entirely visual and wordless. The physical restrictions of time and space have also been reduced further with the advent of new technology. For example, special effects and computer graphics can create scenes that not only take us to different locations, but also to other worlds and galaxies while adding an immersive experience for the audience.[32] In his film adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Kazan is able to show us the bustling streets and trains of New Orleans, the crowded streets of Elysian Fields, and the bowling alley at the Four Deuces, all within a matter of minutes before we enter Stanley's home. However, Kazan ultimately decided to emphasize the setting of Stanley's home as a symbol of Blanche's confinement, thus relying less on opening up the play to New Orleans or depicting scenes from Blanche's past. In his biography *A Life*, Kazan writes:

> But when I reread the "opened-up" screenplay, I found it was a fizzle. The force of the play had come precisely from its compression, from the fact that Blanche was trapped in these two small rooms, where she'd be constantly aware that she was dangerously irritating Stanley and couldn't escape if she needed to. Everything we'd done to "open up" the play diluted its power. I threw our screenplay into File and Forget, decided to photograph what we'd had on stage, simply that. (384)

[32] With advances in technology, movie studios are trying to bring audiences "closer to the action" in a film. In fact, many stage performances such as Shakespeare's productions are now filmed in much the same way as a film by using close-up and angle shots. These filmed performances are shown in theaters to give audiences the feel that they are watching a soundstage performance. Standard films are also marketed as an immersive experience by presenting them in IMAX and 3D. Will stage productions also find ways to further engage the audience, possibly bridging the gap between actors and the audience? Recent productions like Julie Taymor's *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* (2011) on Broadway go even further by showing action sequences that move beyond the stage to show action sequences above the audience.

So though Kazan does use exterior shots of New Orleans and Elysian Fields, the focus remains primarily on the relationships that occur in Stanley's claustrophobic two-room apartment.

Unfortunately, a video recording of Kazan's Broadway production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* does not exist. However, using Williams' playscript, we can get a good idea of the stage setting: "Two rooms can be seen, not too clearly defined. The one first entered is primarily a kitchen but contains a folding bed to be used by Blanche. The room beyond this is a bedroom. Off this room is a narrow door to a bathroom" (8). Given the description above, we can get an impression of how cramped Stanley's quarters must be, especially with a folding bed added to the kitchen. In his film, Kazan certainly employed the sense of claustrophobia with furniture right next to each other and knickknacks cluttering every available space. On the stage, most *Streetcar* sets usually include a table, a refrigerator, Blanche's bed, a desk, and Stanley and Stella's bed.[33] Given the openness of the stage with its missing "fourth wall," Stanley's home may not have the same claustrophobic feel of Kazan's film, although it can be argued that the sparseness of the setting on stage further shows that Blanche has nowhere left to hide from the impending brutality of Stanley.

With films, instead of seeing everything at once as we do on a stage, the camera focuses on what the director wants to show, allowing for close-up shots, angle shots, framed visual shots, etc. The close-up shot allows us to see details that even audiences with the best seats can't see. Again, Sheridan offers more examples of the differences between films and stage productions:

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[33] A search through the Internet reveals many different still images of the production. The more elaborate productions may include a spiral staircase to the side for the famous "Steellaaah!" scene, but mostly the stage consists of two rooms, the kitchen and Stanley's bedroom. In the kitchen we usually see a table with a few chairs, a refrigerator, maybe a stove, and a writing desk. Stanley's bedroom usually includes a bed, a drawer with a mirror, and a chair.

> Powerful cinematic close-ups, soul searching or symbolic, add another technical dimension to film art. The camera can focus on details that would otherwise go unnoticed; it adds the power of a fresh viewpoint even when applied to familiar faces or objects. The stage play is like a series of long shots. In a play significant meaning can be attached to inanimate objects only when the director has called attention to the objects. The director of a motion picture has greater flexibility with his camera. The close-up not only focuses intensely but also serves to eliminate whatever the director does not wish to show. (61-62)

Sheridan's quotation shows the flexibility and the fixedness of film, which can often go beyond a few simple domestic settings to settings that are larger in scope, and which can also vary perception through different types of technical shots, such as close-ups or angle shots. On the other hand, we are limited to seeing only what the director wants us to see.

On stage, it would be harder to show the intense focus on a character. Vivien Leigh expressed the same sentiment about the film production of *Streetcar*: "The camera, in bringing the characters so close to the audience, was able to highlight nuances in expressions on the actors' faces and to reveal subtleties of feeling that were lost in their passage over the footlights" ("Blanche DuBois on Stage and Screen" 311). The closest comparison to an intense focus on a character would be a Shakespearean soliloquy when the actor steps to the forestage and speaks alone. Thus it should be noted that good stage actors could still "command the stage" and force audiences to focus their attention on them. In film, however, the camera can provide an extreme close-up of a person or thing. A powerful scene in *Streetcar* that takes full advantage of the flexibility of the camera is when Mitch goes to visit

Blanche after he has found out about her past at the Hotel Flamingo. It is evening and we see a full shot of Blanche sitting alone in a chair as we hear Mitch banging on the door. When Mitch enters, he is disheveled and bothered. He then asks why he never sees Blanche in the light: "You never wanna go out till after 6:00, then it's always someplace not lighted much." Blanche runs into the bedroom as Mitch turns on the kitchen light. In a long shot we see Blanche hiding in the dark near the curtains as Mitch enters the scene, goes up to Blanche and says, "I've never had a real good look at you. Let's turn the light on in here." As Blanche protests, we see Mitch tearing the paper lantern from the light bulb hanging from the ceiling. The camera cuts to a medium shot of Mitch's face as he looks at Blanche with the naked light bulb in the background. Blanche then yells, "Don't turn the light on!" as Mitch switches the light on, grabs Blanche's arm and pushes her back to the wall with the light bulb glaring into her face. Then in a medium close-up of an over-the-shoulder shot from Mitch's angle, we see him grab Blanche's face in his right hand as he forces her face up to the light bulb. Blanche's face shows fear and desperation in her eyes, and the deep lines on her face are further accentuated by the harsh shadows cast from the light blub. In a stage production, it would be near impossible to see the expression on Blanche's face as the harsh light of the naked light bulb assaults her features.

Though there are more differences between stage production and film, these key differences illustrate some of the ways the experience of seeing *A Streetcar Named Desire* on the stage can differ from seeing it on film. Before I begin discussing the play in detail, I would like to give a brief history of the play, focusing on the challenges it faced with censorship.

Kazan's Battle with Censorship in A Streetcar Named Desire

A Streetcar Named Desire began with its Broadway opening in December of 1947. Elia Kazan, who directed the play, would also go on to direct the film. *The New York Post* theater critic Richard Watts Jr. called the play, "feverish, squalid, tumultuous, painful, steadily arresting and oddly touching" (30), while Harold Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune* called it a play of "heroic dimensions" (35). During its two-year run, it won not only the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award but also the 1947 Pulitzer Prize for drama (Williams "Chronology" 187). When it came time to think about the film adaptation of *Streetcar*, Kazan's name was naturally at the top of the list, though he did say, "It would be like marrying the same woman twice; I don't think I could get it up for 'Streetcar' again" (qtd. in Turan, "A 'Streetcar' Named Entire"). Kazan eventually agreed to direct the film with many of the principal stage actors (Marlon Brando, Kim Hunter, and Karl Malden), with the notable exception of Jessica Tandy,[34] who would be replaced by Vivien Leigh.[35] Because Williams' play included controversial subjects such as homosexuality, rape, and domestic abuse, bringing it to the screen would be a challenge. However, Kazan was up to this challenge because Williams presents some of those themes more implicitly than explicitly.

When the script for *Streetcar* arrived in April 1950, Joseph Breen, head of the Production Code Administration, a strong force in Hollywood, was concerned with three main points of the film: homosexuality, nymphomania, and rape. Most of the information in the next four paragraphs, unless noted, comes from Gregory Black's book, *The Catholic*

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[34] Jessica Tandy, the original Blanche DuBois from Broadway, was passed over because she did not have enough star power (*Wikipedia*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* 1951 film).

[35] Vivien Leigh at this time was well known for her role as Scarlet O'Hara from *Gone with the Wind* (1939). Leigh was also playing the role of Blanche in London as the casting decisions were being made for the film (Black 111).

Crusade Against the Movies, 1940-1975, specifically Chapter 4, "The Legion Fights Back" (111-116). Here is the memo sent to Warner Bros. Studio in reference to Breen's concerns:

> Number 1: The script contains an inference of sex perversion. This principally has reference to the character Blanche's young husband, Allan Grey [not seen in the play or film]. There seems little doubt that this young man was a homosexual.
>
> Number 2: There seems to be an inference of a type of nymphomania with regards to the character of Blanche herself. Her peculiar and neurotic attitude toward sex and particularly to sex attraction for young boys has about it an erotic flavor that seems to verge on perversion of a sort.
>
> Number 3: The third problem has reference to the rape which is both justified and unpunished. (Behlmer, *Inside* 323)

The PCA then offered several solutions that would rid *Streetcar* of these "offenses." One such example from the PCA is the omission of Blanche's rape: "the [rape] scene could be told from Stanley's point of view, and that although he contemplates the rape he does not go through with the act, and leaves the room when he realizes that Blanche is demented. It was agreed by Mr. [Geoff] Shurlock and Mr. [Jack] Vizzard [of the Breen Office], that this would be far the most satisfactory solution to this difficult problem" (Behlmer, *Inside* 324). Eventually, each of these concerns was softened by Kazan but not eliminated. As an example, when Blanche tells Mitch about her past with Allan, she doesn't say she found him in bed with another man, instead she says, "At night I pretended to sleep. I heard him crying. Crying. Crying the way a lost child cries." The issue of homosexuality was glossed over, though adults could infer Allan's homosexuality through Blanche's references to him as

"tender," "sensitive," and liking "poetry." On the other hand, altering the rape scene would prove to be more difficult because it was central to the theme of Stanley's brutality. Williams wrote a letter to Breen to explain the importance of keeping the rape in the film:

> *Streetcar* is an extremely and peculiarly moral play, in the deepest and truest sense of the term . . . The rape of Blanche by Stanley is a pivotal, integral truth in the play, without which the play loses its meaning, which is the ravishment of the tender, the sensitive, the delicate, by the savage and brutal forces of modern society. (Behlmer, *Inside* 324)

Nonetheless, Breen demanded that the rape be removed. By the end of April 1950, Warner executives and Charles Feldman[36] met with Jack Vizzard and Geoff Shurlock to consider solutions. Kazan accepted the first two points of the compromise, but was not happy with the PCA's third point on the omission of the rape. In late May, Breen eventually told Kazan politely that "the Code is the Code" and that there would be no rape. Kazan then immediately announced his withdrawal from the project unless he was allowed to do the rape scene. If Kazan left, so would Williams, which would mean the end of *Streetcar* as a film. This prompted Feldman and Warner to work independently on Breen, who eventually relented as long as the rape would be "done by suggestion and delicacy" and that justice would be served to Stanley through "his loss of his wife's love"[37] (Behlmer, *Inside* 327).

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[36] "Charles Feldman, a successful talent agent with higher aspirations, purchased the screen right to *Streetcar* for a reported $350,000. Feldman and Williams then sought to convince a reluctant Kazan, who had directed the play, to undertake the screen version." (Leff and Simmons 177). "Eventually Kazan signed, partly out of friendship for Williams, partly because of the $175,000 offer. Feldman then sold the entire package to Warners, which agreed to furnish half the purchase price and lease its facilities in return for distribution rights and a share of the profits" (Lee and Simmons 178).

[37] "Though Kazan's talent and Feldman's desperation contributed to [Breen's] decision, he was probably more motivated by fear—supported by early news stories and Hollywood rumor—that Warners would make the film without a Seal, market it as an American classic, and lure even more theater chains" (Leff and Simmons 180).

Kazan later explained to the *Los Angeles Times* that he shot the scene "in such a way that grownups will know what happened," while children would get a sense that Stanley "did the woman some wrong" (qtd. in Leff and Simmons 180). The film eventually earned its PCA seal of approval.

Before the film was officially released to the general public, the studio arranged previews to measure audience reactions to the film. *Streetcar* was shown to audiences in Santa Barbara and Huntington Park in California and in New Jersey and New York. The reviews were generally good,[38] though some thought it a bit long, so Kazan made a few cuts and then headed off to Mexico with Marlon Brando to begin filming *Viva Zapata!*; however, there was one more preview group, The Legion of Decency's Father Patrick J. Masterson, International Federation of Catholic Alumnae's (IFCA) Mary Looram, and Martin Quigley.[39] After viewing the film, all three said they were shocked by its raw lust and carnality. Jack Vizzard, who was also in the screening room, writes, "When Martin Quigley walked out of the projection room in New York after viewing the picture, his face wore the ashen look of man who had seen IT. When he had finally fitted the cigarette into a long holder, he lit it, inhaled with slow deliberation, and uttered his verdict. 'Jack,' he declared, 'I tell you, this fellow Kazan is the type who will one day blow his brains out'" (177).

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[38] In a letter from Kazan to Jack Warner, dated Oct. 19, 1950, Kazan stated the results as "70 percent excellent, 30 percent fair to good with a few bad ones" (Behlmer, *Behind* 222).

[39] The Legion of Decency "was an organization dedicated to identifying and combating objectionable content, from the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, in motion pictures (*Wikipedia*, "National Legion of Decency"). The IFCA comprised of the Catholic woman's organization and "had the task of determining the moral values of the movies." In 1930, Mary Looram was named head of the Motion Picture Bureau of the IFCA, a post she held for three decades. Martin Quigley, was a "staunch Catholic and owner and publisher of the industry trade journal *Exhibitors Herald*. . . .His journal would soon merge with *Moving Picture World* to form the *Motion Picture Herald*, which became an important industry trade publication" (Black 10-11). Quigley would eventually co-author the Motion Picture Production Code, also known as the Hays Code after Hollywood's chief censor at the time, Will H. Hays (*Wikipedia,* "Motion Picture Production Code").

The Legion quickly let Warner Bros. know they would condemn the film unless scenes were trimmed or eliminated. Warner Bros. immediately hired Martin Quigley to reedit the picture with David Weisbart, one of its best film cutters, in New York City. Warner Bros. did not want to involve Kazan or Williams, because Warner Bros. were fully aware that both of them would not tolerate religious censors. Some of the major edits include omitting the close-ups of Stella as she walks down the staircase, as it was seen as "too carnal" (Black 114), Stella in bed the morning after the fight, explaining to Blanche how she enjoyed the way "Stanley's always smashed things" and how on their wedding night "he snatched off one of [Stella's] slippers and rushed about the place smashing the light-blubs" (Williams 72), and Blanche's statement to the young newspaper boy: "It would be nice to keep you, but I've got to be good—and keep my hands off children" (Williams 99). When Kazan found out about the cuts, he rushed to New York to prevent the film from being reedited. He discovered that the cuts had already been made and that there was nothing he could do about it. He argued directly with Martin Quigley and Father Masterson that the cuts changed the nature of the film, but they would not relent. According to Quigley, the cuts were made to convert Stella into "a decent girl who is attracted to her husband the way any 'decent' girl might be" (Kazan 435). When Kazan questioned the Catholic Church for forcing their moral values upon Americans, Quigley simply stated that the Legion censored according to the Ten Commandments (Kazan 434-35). Kazan, knowing that the cuts would remain, wrote a letter to the *New York Times* detailing the cuts forced on him by a "Prominent Catholic layman." He ended the letter by stating: "My picture has been cut to fit the specifications of a code which is not my code, is not the recognized code of the picture industry, and is not the code of the great majority of the audience" (Kazan "Pressure

Problem" 35). The film eventually earned a "B" rating from the Legion after the cuts were made.[40]

Kazan must have felt some vindication when *Streetcar* was nominated for twelve Academy Awards, winning four, specifically for Best Actress (Vivien Leigh as Blanche), Best Supporting Actor (Karl Malden as Mitch), Best Supporting Actress (Kim Hunter as Stella), and Best Art Direction (Richard Day and George James Hopkins) (*Streetcar* 1951, *IMDb*).[41] More satisfying for Kazan must have been the U.S. Supreme Court ruling by Justice William O. Douglas on June 2, 1952 when the Court overturned a Texas conviction of W.L. Gelling for screening *Pinky* (1949) in Marshall, Texas ruling the communication of ideas through movies is considered protected speech.[42] Justice Douglas states: "If a board of censors can tell the American people what it is in their best interest to see or read or to hear then thought is regimented, authority substituted for liberty, and the great purpose of the First Amendment to keep uncontrolled the freedom of expression defeated" (Black 116). The U.S. Supreme Court finally made clear that states that required "exhibitors to obtain a license before exhibiting a film were in violation of the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment" (Black 116). The censors and the Legion still had considerable power, but the court decision weakened their power, and *Streetcar*, according to Kazan "made a bundle" (437).

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[40] There were three ratings from the Legion. A: Morally unobjectionable, B: Morally objectionable in part, and C: Condemned by the Legion of Decency (*Wikipedia*, "National Legion of Decency").

[41] The film was also nominated for Best Actor (Marlon Brando), Cinematography, Costume Design, Director, Music, Picture, Sound, Writing (*Streetcar* 1951, *IMDb*).

[42] Daryl Zanuck's *Pinky* (1949) is about a light skinned black woman who "passes" as white when she goes north for an education. "The film, daring in its time, illustrated as few films had prior to 1949 the nature of racism in American society" (Black 103).

"I don't want realism. I want magic!"—Streetcar's *Text and Film*

Examining the playscript of *A Streetcar Named Desire* alongside the 1993 rerelease of the film helps to establish focus and context.[43] The comparisons between the playscript and the film will serve to explore many of *Streetcar's* themes and motifs.

Scene Four is pivotal for introducing the themes of desire and sex for both Stella and Blanche, and the film's treatment of Scene Four highlights the major contrasts between the film and playscript. In the morning after Stanley beat Stella and then made up with her, Stella downplays the night before, not only making excuses for Stanley's brutality, but also making explicit how their relationship is based on lust. In the playscript, when Blanche rushes in to see Stella the following morning, Blanche says, "Why! I've been half crazy, Stella! When I found out you'd been insane enough to come back in here after what happened—I started to rush in after you!" to which Stella promptly replies "I'm glad you didn't" (Williams 71). This scene's dialogue makes clear that Stella's own sexual desires can easily excuse Stanley's acts of violence. In the playscript, Williams' opening description of the scene further emphasizes the transformative nature of sex for Stella: "Stella is lying down in the bedroom. Her face is serene in the early morning sunlight. One hand rests on her belly, rounding slightly with new maternity. From the other dangles a book of colored comics. Her eyes and lips have that almost narcotized tranquility that is in the faces of Eastern idols" (Williams 70). Stella then explains how on her wedding night Stanley smashed all the light-bulbs in the room with the heel of her slippers as she later tells Blanche in the same scene: "There are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark—

[43] The playscript I will be using as a reference point for the play is the authoritative New Directions edition published in 2004 with an excellent introduction by Arthur Miller. There also exists the Dramatists Play Service "Acting Edition," which is still being used by actors. Other editions such as the Penguin and Signet editions are out of print and have been replaced by the New Directions edition in 2004.

that sort of make everything else seem—unimportant" (Williams 81). We get a strong sense that, no matter what Blanche says, Stella's lust for Stanley allows her to look past Stanley's wrongdoing. Stella adamantly defends Stanley to Blanche even after he violently beat her the night before:

> "I know how it must have seemed to you and I'm awful sorry it had to happen, but it wasn't anything as serious as you seem to take it. In the first place, when men are drinking and playing poker anything can happen. It's always a powder-keg. He didn't know what he was doing . . . . He was as good as a lamb when I came back and he's really very, very ashamed of himself." (Williams 72)
>
> "No, it isn't all right for anybody to make such a terrible row, but—people do sometimes. Stanley's always smashed things." (Williams 72)
>
> "He promised this morning that he was going to quit having these poker parties, but you know how long such a promise is going to keep. Oh well, it's his pleasure, like mine is movies and bridge. People have got to tolerate each other's habits, I guess." (Williams 74)

Unhappy with Stella's answers, Blanche continues to prod Stella about her sexual desire for Stanley:

> BLANCHE: Now don't say it was one of those mysterious electric things between people! If you do I'll laugh in your face.
>
> STELLA: I am not going to say anything more at all about it!
>
> BLANCHE: All right, then, don't! (Williams 81)

As we will find out later, Blanche's own journey involves having an affair with a student and being intimately involved with "strangers" at the Hotel Flamingo, although in this scene Blanche wants to convince Stella that she never had such desires. When Stella responds to Blanche's reprimands with "I have told you I love him," Blanche responds with "Then I *tremble* for you! I just—*tremble* for you. . . ." (Williams 82). As a final blow, Blanche responds to Stella's defense of Stanley by describing him as subhuman:

> "He acts like an animal, has an animal's habits! Eats like one, moves like one, talks like one! There's even something—sub human—something not quite to the stage of humanity yet! Yes, something—ape-like about him, like one of those pictures I've seen in—anthropological studies! Thousands and thousands of years have passed him by, and there he is—Stanley Kowalski—survivor of the stone age! Bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle! And you—*you* here—*waiting* for him! Maybe he'll strike you or maybe grunt and kiss you! That is, if kisses have been discovered yet! . . . . Maybe we are a long way from being made in God's image, but Stella—my sister—there has been *some* progress since then! Such things as art—as poetry and music—such kinds of new light have come into the world since then! In some kinds of people some tenderer feelings have had some little beginning! That we have got to make *grow*! And *cling* to, and hold as our flag! In this dark march toward whatever it is we're approaching . . . . *Don't—don't hang back with the brutes*!" (Williams 83)

Blanche's diatribe against Stanley's character is insulting, painting him as subhuman and from a different social order. During Blanche's speech, we are made aware through stage

directions in the playscript that Stanley overhears her speech to Stella: "*Under cover of the train's noise Stanley enters from outside. He stands unseen by the women, holding some packages in his arms, and overhears their following conversation*" (Williams 82). After Blanche finishes her speech, Stanley slowly makes his presence known: "*Another train passes outside. Stanley hesitates, licking his lips. Then suddenly he turns stealthily about and withdraws through front door. The women are still unaware of his presence. When the train has passed he calls through the closed front door*" (Williams 83). When Stanley sees Blanche and Stella he behaves as if he has heard nothing and says, "Them darn mechanics at Fritz's don't know their ass fr'm—*Hey*!" (Williams 84), at this point, Stella has already jumped into Stanley's arms: "*Stella has embraced him with both arms, fiercely, and full in the view of Blanche. He laughs and clasps her head to him. Over her head he grins through the curtains at Blanche*" (Williams 84). The playscript makes clear Stella's lustful devotion to Stanley despite Blanche's passionate plea to Stella not to "hang back with the brutes." Stella, given her physical desire for Stanley in this scene, has no problem choosing Stanley's Stone Age over Blanche's poetry and music.

In the 1993 film's treatment of Scene Four, as Blanche continues to question Stella's actions, the scene cuts to an exterior shot of Stanley as he is coming home from the mechanic. He is wearing a cap, dark pants, and a tank top stained with grease. As Stanley is walking, we see him pause outside the house as he overhears Blanche talking. The film then cuts to Blanche and Stella inside of the house with Blanche saying, "I've got a plan for us both, to get us both out of here," to which Stella responds, "I wish you'd stop taking it for granted I'm in something I wanna get out of." The scene then cuts back to a medium shot of Stanley as he stands outside, no longer smoking his cigarette, listening intently to the ensuing

conversation inside. The film cuts back inside the apartment with Blanche and Stella arguing before the scene cuts back again to an exterior shot of Stanley. This time he is slowly moving around the house and he no longer has a look of surprise. Rather, he is slowly smiling as he makes his way to the front of the door with the scene returning to Stella and Blanche arguing. The scene cuts back to an exterior shot of Stanley, who is now near the front of the house. We see a pedestrian try to stop Stanley to talk to him, but a visibly absorbed Stanley curtly replies with a "Hi" before pulling away so he can continue hearing the conversation inside. We then hear the diegetic sound of the streetcar as it rattles louder while Stanley, who is still walking, is visibly angry. He is muttering under his breath, teeth clenched, and as he passes through the front gates of his home, he lingers outside as the camera shows a medium long shot of him staring into the house. Once the sound of the streetcar fades away, the scene cuts back to inside the apartment as Blanche begins her speech about Stanley's "subhuman" character. The metaphor of the streetcar with the name "Desire" works, not only as a symbol of Stanley and Stella's desire, but also of Blanche's own hidden desires from her past and her current desire to settle down.

Though Stanley's rape of Blanche in a later scene will complicate our response to him, the film's treatment of Scene Four depicts Stanley as a sympathetic character, a working class citizen who allows his sister-in-law to stay with him. Blanche belittles Stanley behind his back to his wife and tries to get her to leave him, turning Stanley's world upside down. In this scene, it is arguable that Stanley actually controls his animalistic behavior by not instinctively lashing out in violence whenever he feels threatened. In fact, when Stanley enters his house, he does so quietly but makes just enough noise to let Stella and Blanche know he is home; moreover, he whistles as he comes in, to downplay that he heard anything.

When Stanley greets Stella, it isn't long before she looks smilingly, even lustfully at Stanley's disheveled appearance. She immediately runs and jumps into his arms as Blanche looks on shocked while Stanley peers over Stella's shoulder, grinning as he stares at Blanche. According to Williams in an interview: "Stanley was pretty primitive and primordial in his instincts, but in many ways defensible. He was reacting with an animal's instinct to protect its own, its own terrain from invasion, by that element that he could not comprehend, which happened to be Blanche" (Brown 266). Williams' description of Stanley's character is appropriate to this scene because even though he is furious at Blanche for trying to persuade Stella to leave him, he reclaims Stella through his physical attractiveness—something he knows Stella cannot resist. With a simple flash of his smile, Stanley tells Stella, "Them darn mechanics at Fritz's don't know their axel grease from third base" before she jumps into his arms, kissing him passionately. Given how this scene ends, the clear victor is Stanley. By showing Stanley's pain and anger as he waits outside while having to hear himself be disparaged by Blanche, the film allows us to have sympathy for him, so when he does lash out at Blanche we can at least understand where his anger stems from.

Another scene highlighting the theme of desire is Scene Five when Blanche flirts with the young newspaper collector collecting money for *The Evening Star*. Both Stella and Stanley are out and Blanche is alone waiting for Mitch to arrive for their date. In the playscript, we are given stage directions, as Blanche is alone, sitting in her chair with a drink:

> [*Dusk settles deeper. The music from the Four Deuces is slow and blue*.]
>
> BLANCHE: Ah, me, ah, me, ah, me . . .

> [*Her eyes fall shut and the palm leaf fan drops from her fingers. She slaps her hand on the chair arm a couple of times. There is a little glimmer of lightning about the building.*]
>
> [*A Young Man comes along the street and rings the bell.*] (Williams 96)

When Blanche is alone, we are given hints of Blanche's lust symbolized by the glimmer of lightning. When the collector enters, the stage direction reads, "*The Young Man appears through the portieres. She regards him with interest*" as Blanche asks him, "Well, well! What can I do for *you*?" (Williams 96). Blanche then tries to strike up a conversation with the collector as she attempts to manipulate a kiss from him:

> BLANCHE: Don't you just love these long rainy afternoons in New Orleans when an hour isn't just an hour—but a little piece of eternity dropped into your hands—and who knows what to do with it? [She touches his shoulders.] You-uh-didn't get wet in the rain?
>
> YOUNG MAN: No, Ma'am. I stepped inside.
>
> BLANCHE: In a drug store? And had a soda?
>
> YOUNG MAN: Uh-huh.
>
> BLANCHE: Chocolate?
>
> YOUNG MAN: No, ma'am. Cherry.
>
> BLANCHE [*laughing*]: Cherry!
>
> YOUNG MAN: A cherry soda.
>
> BLANCHE: You make my mouth water. [*She touches his cheek lightly, and smiles. Then she goes to the trunk.*]
>
> YOUNG MAN: Well, I'd better be going—

BLANCHE [*stopping him*]: Young man!

[*He turns. She takes a large, gossamer scarf from the trunk and drapes it about her shoulders*.]

[*In the ensuing pause, the "blue piano" is heard. It continues through the rest of this scene and the opening of the next. The young man clears his throat and looks yearningly at the door*.]

Young man! Young, young, young man! Has anyone ever told you that you look like a young Prince out of the Arabian Nights?

[The Young Man laughs uncomfortably and stands like a bashful kid. Blanche speaks softly to him.]

Well, you do, honey lamb! Come here. I want to kiss you, just once, softly and sweetly on your mouth!

[Without waiting for him to accept, she crosses quickly to him and presses her lips to his.]

Now run along, now, quickly! It would be nice to keep you, but I've got to be good—and keep my hands off children. (Williams 98-99)

Blanche's actions come off as being very suggestive in this scene. It is a side of Blanche we have not yet seen in the play. It also comes across as a bit of a surprise given the moral lecture she had just given to Stella about desire. As the stage directions show, the blue piano's music infiltrates this scene. Early in the stage directions, Williams describes the blue piano as "the spirit of the life which goes on here" (3), which is especially prominent in Scene Three before Stanley screams "Stellaaahhh!" and is heard again in Scene Ten, before Stanley rapes Blanche. However this scene showing the "spirit of the life" is not limited only

to Stanley, but also implicates Blanche in this web of desire. In this case, Blanche's desire for the newspaper collector shows how she can manipulate a situation to get a kiss moments before Mitch arrives.

In the film, the same scene shows Blanche sitting in a chair, back arched as she moans, "Oh me…" and as she writhes in her chair slowly grabbing her dress near her thighs, the doorbell suddenly rings. When Blanche is in her chair we hear composer Alex North's non-diegetic soundtrack of slow bluesy music with strings. The music fades in and out, but one can argue that the same music could be diegetic coming from the Four Deuces, the bowling alley located across the street from the Kowalski residence. Blanche is visibly caught off guard as the newspaper collector appears in the shadow at the door and says "Evening, ma'am." Blanche then says, "Well, well. What can I do for you?" with a look of annoyance rather than with interest as in the playscript. Blanche then gets up to brush her hair as she looks in the mirror. When Blanche is looking in the mirror as she is talking with the young man, we see only a figure in the shadow near the door, but when he steps into the light, we are given a medium close-up of a youthful looking man in his twenties immediately accompanied by Varsouviana polka music. The Varsouviana music is not mentioned in the playscript, only the music of the blue piano, so Kazan's use of the Varsouviana suggests a connection between the collector and Allan, Blanche's young husband who committed suicide. However, unlike the other scenes when the Varsouviana music is associated with fear and death, this scene suggests a recasting of the tragedy by associating the Varsouviana with Blanche's ability to flirt with confidence in order to get a kiss from the collector. The Varsouviana music can arguably be non-diegetic as a thematic contextualization of Blanche's desire for younger men and/or semi-diegetic to reveal Blanche's inner psychology,

mimicking what she hears in her head. Furthermore, this scene also has the Varsouviana music fade in and out of the North's bluesy music, adding to the complexity of the scene as the Varsouviana's amalgamation with the bluesy soundtrack cleverly signifies the situation at hand: the excitement she feels as she flirts and kisses the young man, but also the painful remembrances of her dead husband.[44] This scene begins by showing the pent up desire within Blanche and ends with her orchestrating a kiss from the young man. Because the film has the Varsouviana accompanied with the blues music, the association of Allan with the young man shows how desire can be interpreted on multiple levels. We can see Blanche's desire for the collector as a yearning to be with someone, but we can also see her desire as an attempt to recapture moments of her youth when she was married to a young man.

Though Allan is never physically present in the text or film, his homosexuality is a recurring motif in the text, presenting itself as a driving force in understanding the psychology of Blanche. In Scene Six of the play's text, Blanche describes Allan to Mitch during their date: "He was a boy, just a boy, when I was a very young girl. . . . There was something different about the boy, a nervousness, a softness and tenderness (Which wasn't like a man's, although he wasn't the least bit effeminate looking—still—that thing was there" (Williams 114). Blanche then explains the cause of Allan's death:

> "Then I found out. In the worst of all possible ways. By coming suddenly into a room that I thought was empty—which wasn't empty, but had two people in it . . . the boy I had married and an older man who had been his friend for years . . . Afterwards we pretended that nothing had been

[44] Critic Bert Cardullo sees Blanche as less of a flirt in this scene. Rather Cardullo sees Blanche's action in a positive light, recognizing her own lost innocence. He writes, "Blanche lets the Young Man leave the apartment finally, his innocence intact (except for a kiss), as, it could be said, she would have liked her own innocence left intact" (177).

> discovered. Yes, the three of us drove out to Moon Lake Casino very drunk and laughing all the way. [Polka music sounds, in a minor key faint with distance.] We danced the Varsouviana! Suddenly in the middle of the dance the boy I had married broke away from me and ran out of the casino. A few moments later—a shot!" [The Polka stops abruptly. Blanche rises stiffly. Then, the Polka resumes in a major key.] (Williams 114-115)

We see in this scene how the Varsouviana (the polka music) is linked to her night with the tragedy of Allan at the Moon Lake Casino. Blanche goes on to tell Mitch, "Then I heard voices say—Allan! Allan! The Grey boy! He'd stuck the revolver into his mouth, and fired—so that the back of his head had been—blown away! It was because—on the dance-floor—unable to stop myself—I'd suddenly said—'I saw! I know! You disgust me . . .'" (Williams 115). Knowing that Allan kills himself as a result of Blanche calling him "disgusting" after he was caught in bed with another man, casts Allan as a tragic character. Though we can sympathize with Blanche when she discovers Allan with another man, we can also understand how devastating Blanche's accusations could be to a closeted homosexual in the 1940s.

By contrast, the film never mentions Allan's homosexuality; rather he kills himself because he is seen as "weak," consequently lessening the guilt Blanche should feel over his death. In the film, compromises had to be made with the Legion of Decency, as homosexuality was not to be hinted at, much less mentioned. Therefore, the film's reason for his weakness remains vague: "There was something about the boy, a nervousness, a tenderness, an uncertainty. And I didn't understand. I didn't understand why this boy, who wrote poetry, didn't seem able to do anything else. He lost every job. He came to me for

help. I didn't know that. I didn't know anything except I loved him unendurably. At night I pretended to sleep, I heard him crying. Crying. Crying the way a lost child cries." Blanche then goes on to tell Mitch that "[she] killed him." As Blanche continues to explain her circumstances with Allan to Mitch, we begin to hear the Varsouviana playing. Blanche says, "We danced the Varsouviana. Suddenly in the middle of the dance floor, the boy I had married broke away from me and ran out of the casino. A few minutes later a shot." Blanche then begins to sob as she explains; "he stuck a revolver into his mouth and fired. It was because—on the dance floor—unable to stop myself, I'd said—'You're weak. I've lost respect for you. I despise you.'" The Varsouviana continues to play quietly as Blanche narrates. The use of the Varsouviana works well as a semi-diegetic sound to replicate the music that was playing that night at the Moon Lake Casino, and to show what Blanche hears in her head. In essence, Allan's suicide based on Blanche's calling him weak and unworthy of her respect makes us perceive Allan as more of a pathetic figure since Blanche's accusations don't come across as being worthy of suicide. It is no wonder that the scene ends with Mitch compassionately holding Blanche as he says, "You need somebody. And I need somebody too. Could it be you and me, Blanche?" Interestingly, once Mitch proposes, the Varsouviana stops, further signifying the Varsouviana's connection to Blanche when she is under duress.

Oftentimes when Blanche is under duress, she resorts to her imagination by blurring the difference between reality and fantasy, another major theme from the text. Just as Allan is never physically in the play, Shep Huntleigh, an old beau from Blanche's college years, is never physically there either; however, his character manifests itself in Blanche's fantasy world as a means of escaping her own realities. In Scene Four, after Blanche witnesses

Stanley's brutality towards Stella, she talks about finding a way to get Stella away from Stanley by contacting Shep Huntleigh, an oil millionaire from Texas:

> BLANCHE: Listen to me I have an idea of some kind. [Shakily she twists a cigarette into her holder] Do you remember Shep Huntleigh? [Stella shakes her head] Of course you remember Shep Huntleigh. I went out with him at college and wore his pin for a while. Well—
>
> STELLA: Well?
>
> BLANCHE: I ran into him last winter. You know I went to Miami during the Christmas holidays?
>
> STELLA: No.
>
> BLANCHE: Well, I did. I took the trip as an investment, thinking I'd meet someone with a million dollars.
>
> STELLA: Did you?
>
> BLANCHE: Yes. I ran into Shep Huntleigh—I ran into him on Biscayne Boulevard, on Christmas Eve, about dusk . . . getting into his car—Cadillac convertible; must have been a block long!
>
> STELLA: I should think it would have been—inconvenient in traffic!
>
> BLANCHE: You've heard of oil-wells?
>
> STELLA: Yes—remotely.
>
> BLANCHE: He has them, all over Texas. Texas is literally spouting gold in his pockets. (Williams 76)

Even early in this scene it is difficult to tell if Blanche is telling the truth or not. Stella does not remember anyone named Shep Huntleigh and the other details that Blanche provides,

such as running into him on Christmas Eve, a Cadillac convertible, and being an oil-well millionaire all seem fabricated. Blanche begins to fiddle with the phone, thinking she wants to get the operator to call Shep but then decides to write a letter to him instead before abandoning both options. The playscript never makes it clear if Shep Huntleigh is real or a figment of Blanche's imagination, but what is clear is that Blanche relies on Shep Huntleigh as a way to escape the complicated realities of her current situation. This scene, though seemingly inconsequential in light of Blanche's "don't hang back with the brutes" speech, becomes more relevant in Scene Ten when Blanche is alone after breaking up with Mitch. Blanche is talking to herself in the dark when Stanley suddenly returns after getting Stella to the hospital after she goes into labor and asks her: "What you got on those fine feathers for?" (Williams 152). Blanche goes on to lie extravagantly about receiving a telegram from Shep Huntleigh inviting her to a cruise of the Caribbean on a yacht as a way to escape the awkwardness of not only Mitch's breakup, but having to cope with being alone with Stanley. After the rape in Scene Ten, in Scene Eleven Stella says, "I—just told her that—we'd made arrangements for her to rest in the country. She's got it mixed in her mind with Shep Huntleigh" (Williams 164-65). When the Doctor and Matron arrive to take Blanche away, she gasps at the sight of the Doctor: "You are not the gentleman I was expecting. [*She suddenly gasps and starts back up the steps. She stops by Stella, who stands just outside the door, and speaks in a frightening whisper*] That man isn't Shep Huntleigh" (Williams 174). No longer is Blanche using Shep Huntleigh as a temporary escape; rather, he has become a part of her reality through her imagination, further blending Blanche's reality with fantasy.

In the film, Shep Huntleigh is never mentioned in the earlier scene. It is only in the final scenes that Blanche mentions Shep Huntleigh. When Stanley suddenly returns after

taking Stella to the hospital, he asks Blanche why she is dressed up. Blanche is taken by surprise and gives an elaborate lie about receiving an invitation to "a cruise on the Caribbean on a yacht." When Stanley asks from whom, Blanche replies, "An old beau of mine. Shep Huntleigh. I wore his ATO pin my last year at college. I hadn't seen him for a while, then just now this wire inviting me on a cruise of the Caribbean. The problem is clothes. I tore into my trunk to see what I had that was suitable for the tropics." At this point, Blanche seems to be on the verge of madness by taking comfort in putting on clothes from the past as she talks to herself. Blanche's reality now resides half in her imagination, straddling the fine line of the real world and her fantasy world with Shep Huntleigh. At the end of the film, when Blanche sees the Doctor and Matron outside the door waiting for her, she is stunned to see them and says, "You . . . are not the gentleman . . . I was expecting.'' She then turns to Stella, who leaves and runs into the arms of Eunice, leaving Blanche alone as Blanche whispers urgently, "This man isn't Shep Huntleigh!" and turns back into the house.

Vivien Leigh does an excellent job of showing the fantastical world of Blanche's imagination, but the film's omission of Blanche's earlier narrative of Shep Huntleigh makes her descent into her fantasy world abrupt, coming only near the end. The dialogue omitted from the playscript earlier about Shep Huntleigh's history helps to establish in the later rape scene Blanche's conflation of reality and fiction, showing more of a gradual descent into her world of fantasy. Furthermore, understanding the origin of Shep Huntleigh allows us to understand Blanche's psyche as partially defined by a need for the gallantry of the past (eventually echoed in her famous last line: "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers") and why she yearns to wear her dresses and talk to herself as she tries to relive those happier times.

In addition to the fantasy world Blanche creates for herself, Blanche also gives the illusion that she is a proper woman, by relying on her genteel ideal of propriety to attract Mitch to fall in love with her. In Scene Six when Blanche and Mitch go on a date, Mitch tries to kiss her. She stops him and says, "You're a natural gentleman, one of the very few that are left in the world. I don't want you to think that I am severe and old maid schoolteacherish or anything like that. It's just—well—I guess it is just that I have—old fashioned ideals!" [*She rolls her eyes, knowing he cannot see her face*.] (Williams 108). Mitch does end up falling in love with Blanche and believes her to be a respectable woman, as he is given no reason to believe otherwise. Bedient writes, "Blanche poses as an immaculate Southern belle, complete with perfect manners, enchanting graces, pure principles, spotless dresses, a fresh-scented body, and clean hair." (53). Though Bedient is spot on in his description of Blanche, at times Blanche steps outside of her Southern belle guise, especially when she is on her date with Mitch. She asks Mitch, "*Je suis la Dame aux Camellias! Vous êtes—Armand!* Understand French?" (Williams 104). The line is adapted from Alexandre Dumas' novel *La Dame aux Camélias.* Blanche cleverly equates herself to Marguerite Gautier and Mitch to Armand Duval. The line becomes significant as a foreshadowing of the relationship between Blanche and Mitch. In Dumas' novel, Marguerite, a courtesan, forsakes Armand, thus forecasting Blanche's eventual breakup with Mitch. Blanche then asks Mitch if he understands French, when he says, "Naw. Naw," she responds, "*Voulez-vous couchez avec moi ce soir? Vous ne comprenez pas? Ah, quelle dommage!*" (Williams 104), which translates to, "Do you want to sleep with me tonight? You don't understand? What a shame!" Here, Blanche is able to give the illusion of her

innocence to Mitch, though she is clearly using French to mask the sexuality beneath her personality.

In the film's treatment of the same scene, Blanche successfully gives the illusion of being a proper lady to Mitch on their date. When Mitch tries to kiss Blanche, she stops him and says "Mitch, Mitch, we're in public. Mitch, you must behave like a gentleman . . . I don't want you to think that I'm severe or old-maid schoolteacherish or anything. It's just, well, I guess I have old-fashioned ideals" as she looks him directly in the eyes. The flirtatiousness of Blanche is toned down in the film; in fact, the only instance in this scene where we see Blanche's flirtatiousness is when she says to Mitch, "Voulez-vous couchez avec moi ce soir? Vous ne comprenez pas? Ah, quelle dommage!" Even if audiences understood French, the element of Blanche's flirtatiousness is quickly undermined by Mitch's sudden change of topic to his weight and perspiration, turning the scene into a more comic affair. In essence, the most overt example of Blanche's flirtatiousness in the film is in the scene with the young collector for *The Evening Star*. Leigh's performance of Blanche fits Bedient's description with her acting abilities showing Blanche as a woman with such over-the-top moral standards that when she is exposed, she appears even worse than if she had told the truth about her past from the beginning.

Because Blanche is so desperate to start a new life with Mitch, when he dumps her, she begins her spiral into madness, losing grip on her own reality after Stanley's brutal rape. When Mitch finds out from Stanley that Blanche isn't a woman with "old-fashioned ideals," he decides to investigate Stanley's allegations. Consequently, Mitch doesn't show up for Blanche's birthday party in Scene Eight and eventually confronts Blanche and forces her to tell him the truth in Scene Nine. When Blanche comes clean by revealing everything about

her past, including being fired as a teacher for having a relationship with a student, Mitch tells her he doesn't want to marry her anymore, but he tries to forcibly kiss her as Blanche screams "Fire! Fire! Fire!" causing Mitch to run away, foreshadowing the real rape later.

In the film, Kazan adds an additional scene. After Mitch leaves, Kazan continues to show Blanche as she runs out of the apartment with onlookers inquiring if she is okay. Blanche immediately darts back in, closes all the shutters and turns off the lights, as we hear a voice ask, "What's the matter lady?" followed by an echo of the same line. This non-diegetic echo seems to exist in the world of Blanche, which will again be heard when the Doctor and Matron come to take her away in the final scene. Furthermore, in this scene where Blanche is running back into the apartment, we hear North's score, which is partly playful with strings, blending in with urgent shots of brass. All the while we see Blanche scurrying inside the apartment. The dark shadows are accentuated, with the only lighting appearing on a close-up of Blanche as she hides near the shutters and whispers four times to herself, "I'll be good." Blanche looks disturbed, and her fingers tremble as she touches the blinds. Kazan's decision to add this scene foreshadows Blanche's eventual lunacy with North's score accentuating the madhouse carnivalesque effect. Furthermore, Blanche's shutting herself in the apartment is symbolic of her new state of mind as she moves into the darkness of fantasy and despair.

We begin to see the theme of Blanche's fantasy world manifest itself in Scene Ten as Blanche is wearing "a somewhat soiled and crumpled white satin evening gown and a pair of scuffed silver slippers with brilliants set in their heels" (Williams 151), along with her symbolic loss of reality represented by a shattered mirror. In the playscript, Blanche is described sitting alone in the dark wearing her rhinestone tiara talking to herself: "How about

taking a swim, a moonlight swim at the old rock-quarry? If anyone's sober enough to drive a car! Ha-ha! Best way in the world to stop your head from buzzing!" (Williams 151). As she continues to talk, Williams describes her in his stage directions: "[*Tremblingly she lifts the hand mirror for a closer inspection. She catches her breath and slams the mirror face down with such violence that the glass cracks. She moans a little and attempts to rise*]" (151). This scene from the playscript is the first time we see Blanche reacting violently to the reflection of *herself* in the mirror. Wendy Lesser notes that an image reflected in a mirror is "the opposite of a self: an empty shell, a soulless illusion," turning "warm tangibility into cold visibility" (264). Applying Lesser's mirror concept, we can see how Blanche sees in her reflection not only a loss of physical beauty, but a loss of self-worth as well. According to Laurilyn Harris:

> Blanche's preoccupation with how she "looks" does not spring from narcissism or vanity, but from her crumbling sense of self-worth. As she grows more and more unstable under the pressure of Stanley's unrelenting contempt and his awareness of that part of her self she most wishes to hide, she frantically seeks to create a romanticized, reassuring self-portrait that she can study endlessly in the living mirrors within her sphere of influence—particularly Mitch and Stella. (86)

Unfortunately for Blanche, at this point in the play, her "spheres of influence" have disappeared, as Mitch no longer wants to marry Blanche after learning about her past. Meanwhile, Stella has steadily detached herself from Blanche after learning about the Hotel Flamingo and her sister's affair with a student. In addition, Stella is physically unable to defend and support Blanche, because she is in labor at the hospital. Becoming increasingly

aware of her circumstances, Blanche destroys her own image in the mirror's reflection, a moment of harsh realization and frustration of her current loneliness. With nowhere left to go, Blanche retreats into the comfort of her mind, living in an embellished world of gowns and balls.

Ultimately Stanley, a product of the harsh realism of her new world, leaves Blanche helpless and delusional through the act of rape. Here is the struggle between Blanche and Stanley from the playscript of the rape scene:

> STANLEY: Tiger—tiger! Drop the bottle-top! Drop it! We've had this date with each other from the beginning!
>
> "[*She moans. The bottle-top falls. She sinks to her knees. He picks up her inert figure and carries her to the bed. The hot trumpet and drums from the Four Deuces sound loudly*]" (Williams 162)

The playscript makes clear that Blanche is no longer willing to fight. Blanche's "inert" figure relinquishes to Stanley in much the same way that she has surrendered to her world of fantasy. Blanche's resistance to Stanley by threatening him with a broken bottle reinforces the ferocious nature of her as a tiger; however, Stanley is clearly the hunter, as he overpowers Blanche with his brutal strength in a violent act of rape.

In the film, Kazan artfully employs the use of a mirror during the rape scene when the vanity mirror on the wall is shattered as Blanche is physically struggling against Stanley and he grabs her broken bottle yelling, "Tiger, tiger. Drop that bottle top, Drop it!" After the bottle is forced out of Blanche's hand, it smashes into the vanity mirror, showing her shattered reflection: Blanche's profile with her head back, eyes shut, and clearly dominated by Stanley's strength—a picture of brutal dominance. In this scene, we see Stanley's

animalism begin to take form as he contemplates rape by saying, “maybe you wouldn’t be bad to interfere with”; moreover, when he struggles with Blanche he refers to her as a “tiger,” a wild animal that is difficult to tame, as Leigh’s Blanche fights to the end in this scene. What’s more, Stanley’s remark in the playscript of “We’ve had this date with each other from the beginning!” implies an earlier lust for Blanche in the play, as noted by Linda Costanzo: “It is equally important that this purified Blanche have no share in her own rape. Deleted from the film is Stanley’s line, ‘We’ve had this date with each other from the beginning,’ a line which [at the very least] implies that in Stanley’s mind the great provocateur, Blanche, induced the attack” (75). Kazan’s portrayal of Blanche in the film shows Blanche fighting to defend her axiom that “Deliberate cruelty is not forgivable.” To give up, sinking to her knees, as she does in the text, not only goes against the determination and will of Blanche, but also puts her in a similar light as Stella, submitting to Stanley even after he beats her.

In Scene Eleven, the final scene of the play, after Blanche is taken away to a mental hospital, Stella is deeply distraught, while Stanley immediately attempts to win back his wife’s sympathies:

> STANLEY [voluptuously, soothingly]: Now, honey. Now, love. Now, now, love. [He kneels beside her and his fingers find the opening of her blouse] Now, now, love. Now, love . . .
>
> [The luxurious sobbing, the sensual murmur fade away under the swelling music of the “blue piano” and the muted trumpet.]
>
> STEVE: This game is seven-card stud. (Williams 179)

In the playscript, we can assume Stella gives into Stanley's seduction, despite how she feels about Blanche's accusation of rape. In the final scene, as Blanche is showering and Stella and Eunice are packing her clothes to get her ready to be admitted to a hospital, Stella says, "I couldn't believe [Blanche's] story and go on living with Stanley," Eunice immediately responds, "Don't ever believe it. Life has got to go on. No matter what happens, you've got to keep on going" (Williams 166). Stella, despite her instincts, has deliberately chosen to take Eunice's advice and believe Stanley, as evidenced in her agreement to have her sister institutionalized. The reference to the "blue piano," which was also present right before Stanley rapes Blanche, foreshadows in this scene that he will have his way with Stella; moreover, at the poker table, Steve's pronouncement of the next card game as "seven-card stud" shows how quickly things can change, but at the same time remain the same, just so long as the changes are made by Stanley, with the play on the word "stud." We never know if Stanley's friends realize that he is responsible for the rape or if they know what Blanche said about the rape. The slightest indications of Mitch's awareness are stage directions that read, "*Mitch lunges and strikes at Stanley. Stanley pushes Mitch back. Mitch collapses at the table, sobbing*" (Williams 177). Though this could be read as an acknowledgment of Stanley's rape, it is also ambiguous because Mitch's aggression towards Stanley could be the result of the mental anguish he feels, given his love for Blanche as well as having to see her taken away to a mental hospital. The playscript never makes it explicit that Mitch or anyone else believes that Stanley raped Blanche. Even Stella, who seems to have a feeling that Blanche was raped, is encouraged to deny that it happened. It becomes clear in the playscript that Stella's devotion to Stanley will go unquestioned, as she retakes the role of the dutiful housewife and now mother. Ultimately, Stanley goes unpunished for what he has done to

Blanche while Stella simply reverts to her role of depending on Stanley. In fact, the only time she ever questions her husband is in the presence of Blanche, who is no longer there.

In the film, the controversial ending differs from that of the playscript by making clear that Stanley's friends (Pablo, Mitch, Steve) are aware of his rape and that Stella will not tolerate or give in (at least in that moment) to his brutish behavior, providing a sense of justice for Blanche. Blanche, who is now delusional, believes she is going on a trip with Shep Huntleigh. When the Doctor and Matron arrive to take Blanche, she immediately retreats back into the apartment the moment she realizes the man is not Shep Huntleigh. In the playscript, Williams has the Varsouviana playing distinctly as she runs back into her room. Though the film does not have the Varsouviana in its soundtrack in this scene, it does give us the internal diegetic echo that Blanche hears when others speak. There are numerous instances in this scene where Stanley and the Matron's lines are echoed, further symbolizing her madness. As the echoes become more pronounced, Blanche runs into the blinds and flutters about them like a bird caught in a trap, desperately seeking an escape, mirroring the earlier scene in the film where she closes the binds, shuts herself in and whispers, "I'll be good." The film also adds dialogue from Mitch, letting us know that Stanley's friends are aware of the rape:

> MITCH [strikes Stanley in the face]: You did this to her! He did this to her, I know.
>
> STANLEY: He must be nuts.
>
> [Both Steve and Pablo (the other two poker players) stand and look at Stanley accusingly.]
>
> STANLEY: What are you looking at? I never once touched her.

The film makes explicit that Stanley's friends disapprove of what he has done as all three poker players glare at Stanley. After Blanche is taken away, Stella tries to run after her sister but is stopped by Stanley, who tries to soothe Stella by saying, "Come on, honey." Stella immediately breaks free from his arms and says, "Don't you touch me. Don't you ever touch me again." As Blanche is being driven away, we see a medium close-up of Stella with a tear in her eye as her baby's crying gets increasingly louder. She picks up the baby from its carriage as we hear Stanley yelling "Stella!" as he did in Scene Three, but this time the camera remains on Stella, as she holds her baby close to her chest and says to herself, "No, I'm not. I'm not going back in there again. Not this time. Never going back. Never!" She then runs up the stairs to Eunice's apartment and Stanley is heard bellowing "Hey, Steeeeeellaaaah!" Unlike Scene Three, when Stella lustfully returns when Stanley screams her name, the ending of the film deprives Stanley of any immediate pleasure, ultimately taking away the one thing he cares about most—his wife. The film depicts a Stella who realizes what her husband has done to Blanche and (at least for the time being) will not put up with it. The ending provides a sense of justice for Blanche and hope that Stella is now aware of her husband's brutality and that she has a choice in life—life doesn't have to be a game of "seven-card stud" where she has to play by the ever-changing rules of Stanley. However, given everything we have learned about Stella, it is hard to imagine that she would abandon Stanley, but clearly the Production Code Administration thought it made for a more morally acceptable ending.

Censored vs. Director's Cut

From as early as the 1980s, studios have been rereleasing films with restored scenes, rearranged scenes, unedited versions, director's cuts, unrated versions.[45] This trend has picked up steam in the last ten years with the popularity of DVD and now with Blu-ray. Sometimes, the changes from one version of a DVD to another go beyond just supplemental extras, to actual changes in the film that can alter not only the way we see a character, but change the meaning of the film.[46] With *A Streetcar Named Desire*, up until 1993, the only film version in existence was the 1951 version that was released in theaters. As noted above, the Legion of Decency edited this theatrical version against the will of Kazan. Since 1993, only the "The Original Director's Version" has been available. Kazan made it clear that he was satisfied with the results of his film until the Legion made cuts to the film.[47] In a letter to Steve Trilling (casting director and executive assistant to Jack Warner), Kazan wrote: "The picture is very, very dear to me. I think it's the finest picture I've ever made, bar none. I put

[45] As a typical example, a film like the Coen brother's *The Big Lebowski* (1998) DVD comes in several editions, the standard DVD edition (1988), the remastered DVD in both Full Screen and Widescreen Special Editions (2005), the "Achiever's Edition" (2005), the "10th Anniversary Edition" (2008), the "10th Anniversary Limited Edition" (packaging comes in the shape of a bowling ball), and the recent Blu-ray Book edition (2011). Each one of these iterations includes or adds something different, making it very problematic to conclude on an "authoritative" edition. Looking up almost any movie title on either DVD or Blu-ray can lead to multiple editions of a single title.

[46] As an example, *Blade Runner* (1982) directed by Ridley Scott, will have a different ending depending on what version you watch. Currently there are seven versions of the film released in several editions and formats including a "Director's Cut" in 1992 and recently "The Final Cut," coinciding with its 25th anniversary in 2007, which Ridley Scott claims is the only version where he has total control. (*Wikipedia*, *Blade Runner*) Another controversial change in a film was in George Lucas' *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977), where an alien named Greedo corners Han Solo at a table with his blaster pointed at Han. In the original, Han shoots Greedo in cold blood before Greedo fires. In the revised version, the film is reedited to have Greedo shoot a millisecond before Han. According to Lucas, "[he] wanted to make clear to children that Han had 'no choice' but to shoot Greedo." The outcry from fans have been harsh, including the boycotting of any new editions of the film because "it alters Han's initially morally ambiguous character, making his later transition from anti-hero to hero less meaningful" (*Wikipedia*, "Han shot first").

[47] Currently, there are no 1951 *Streetcar* versions in print. In order to view the 1951 version, a viewer would have to find the 1987 VHS tape or the 1983 and 1987 Laserdisc. Making it harder to find is the fact that Laserdisc is now an obsolete format and VHS is being phased out. In essence, the 1951 version of *Streetcar* has been out of circulation for about 25 years.

a hell of a lot into it, and I don't want it castrated" (Behlmer, *Inside* 332). What we have with these two versions is what W.W.Greg calls "rival substantive editions" (386). Greg defines "substantive" as **"**readings of text that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression" (376). Comparing the 1951 version to the 1993 "Original Director's Version" reveals the Catholic cleansing of all that was deemed lustful and obscene, but because of those edited scenes, the two versions consequently represent different levels of sexuality for Blanche, Stanley, and Stella.

The first instance of the Legion's censorship occurs early in the film when Blanche and Stella are getting ready to go to Galatoire's for dinner in order to avoid Stanley's poker party. While Blanche is bathing, Stanley rifles through Blanche's trunk and accuses her of selling Belle Reve, the family's estate, in order to indulge herself with "genuine fox fur-pieces, a half a mile long." Stanley adamantly believes Stella has been swindled and begins to lecture her on the Napoleonic Code: "In the state of Louisiana we have the Napoleonic code according to which what belongs to the wife belongs to the husband and vice versa." Feeling he too has been swindled, Stanley confronts Blanche on the subject of Belle Reve as she prepares to leave for dinner with Stella. Stella then gets angry at Stanley's accusations against her sister before Blanche calms her down by telling Stella to get a drink for her so Blanche and Stanley can work out their disagreements about what happened to Belle Reve.

In the director's cut, we see Stanley explaining the Napoleonic Code to Blanche as she begins to spray herself with her atomizer, then flirtatiously spraying Stanley with it. He immediately grabs her arm and says, "You know, if I didn't know that you was my wife's sister, I would get ideas about you." In this scene, Kazan uses an over-the-shoulder shot as we see a medium close-up of Blanche looking at Stanley as she responds, "Such as what?,"

to which Stanley responds, "Don't play so dumb. You know what." The camera cuts to another over-the-shoulder shot now focusing on a medium close-up of Stanley. Both medium close-ups allow us not only to see Blanche's and Stanley's expressions, but also to sense the flirtatiousness of Blanche and the raw energy of Stanley. The director's cut establishes the flirtatious character of Blanche. The fact that Blanche wanted to know what Stanley had in mind shows the degree to which she is willing to press the issue of flirtation and sexuality. In the 1951 version, this dialogue is edited out. We see Blanche spraying herself and Stanley with the atomizer as the scene abruptly cuts back to Blanche as she begins her speech on the loss of Belle Reve. Gone are the strands of Blanche's flirtation and overt sexuality shown so clearly in the playscript. The Blanche in the 1951 version is more "pure," a woman who, according to the Breen office, "would be searching for romance and security, and not gross sex" (Behlmer, *Inside* 323).

One of the most startling changes made in the film occurs in the scene when Stanley screams for his wife to come back after beating her. In the director's cut, after Stanley beats Stella, who is helped upstairs by Eunice and Blanche, he passes out. Stanley's poker friends revive him with a cold shower before he angrily throws them out of his home. When he finds Stella missing, Stanley calls Eunice to have her return and then goes outside to scream for her to come back to him**.** As he continues screaming her name, the scene cuts to a medium shot of Stella sitting on the bed, looking entranced as she hears Stanley's bellowing. She slowly gets up with a half-smile and heads out the door as the non-diegetic sound of a bluesy piano plays. As she leaves the door, we cut to a low angle medium close-up of Stella as her face displays both desire and aversion for her husband. When she reaches Stanley, their reunion is punctuated by their passionate embrace and kiss. Kazan writes in a letter to

the *New York Times* that the "scene was carefully worked out, in an alternation of close and medium shots, to show Stella's conflicting revulsion and attraction to her husband" ("Pressure" X5). Leff states:

> The close-ups on [Stella], red hot in 1951, do show her attraction. Though they now look theatrical, more like a performance of arousal than a spontaneous evocation of it, they nonetheless demonstrate that she too knows how to start those "colored lights going again." . . . Thus the two versions, paired, extend one's awareness of the richly ambiguous characterization; Stella responds in 1951 to her husband's need, and in 1993, she fosters that need. ("Transfer" 33-34)

Stella's character in the edited version plays more like a dutiful wife, while the director's cut shows exactly why Stella and Stanley are attracted to one another—they both feed off each other's desires. Blanche, who clearly is not used to Stanley's brutal violence towards Stella, decides to run down the stairs to get her sister. In the unedited version, the scene cuts to a medium close-up of Blanche half in the dark as she enters the apartment. Kazan keeps the scene silent, as we see Blanche's shocked and embarrassed expression as she slowly looks away. Blanche turns around and slowly leaves the door as Mitch calls for her from the outside. It is evident in this scene that Stella is driven by a carnal desire, so that even when beaten, she cannot resist the allure of Stanley's violent and lustful magnetism in bed.

In the 1951 version, there are no close-ups of Stella either in Eunice's apartment or as she descends the stairs; we only see Stella leaving the apartment. When we cut to the next scene where Stella descends the stairs, all the close-ups are omitted in favor of long shots, so we are unable to make out Stella's expression; moreover, North's soundtrack is replaced with

an upbeat string piece signifying more a joyful reunion of husband and wife. Blanche's scene where she enters the apartment is also cut. In this scene, we see Blanche running through the door only to turn her head away in a medium close-up with visible embarrassment (insinuating that Stanley and Stella are engaged in sex). Consequently, the 1951 version of the film changes the ambiguity of Stella's love/hate relationship with Stanley from a carnal and violent attraction to each other to a reunion out of love and respect for each other.

Stanley and Stella's carnal and violent attraction to each other is clearly spelled out the morning after in the next scene, when Blanche runs in to find Stella emotionally and physically satisfied in bed. In the director's cut, Stella relates to Blanche what happened on her honeymoon:

> STELLA: Stanley's always smashed things. On our wedding night, as soon as we came in here he snatched off one of my slippers and rushed about the place smashing the light bulbs with it.
>
> BLANCHE: He did what?
>
> STELLA: He smashed all the light bulbs with the heel of my slipper.
>
> BLANCHE: And you let him? Didn't run, didn't scream?
>
> STELLA: I was sort of thrilled by it.

In the edited version, all of the above conversation is omitted. During Stella's conversation with Blanche, we see Stella in bed, sprawled out, legs spread with a smug expression. As she relates to Blanche the events on her honeymoon, we see a medium shot of her bare shoulders, with only the blanket covering her breasts. Omitting Stella's narration to Blanche takes away from the potency of Stella's lust for Stanley. Thus, the desire and lust between Stella and

Stanley are reduced to a one-way street with Stanley in charge. Later in the scene we hear Blanche's reaction to Stella's comments about being "thrilled" by Stanley's violent lust:

> BLANCHE: What you're talking about is desire, just brutal desire. The name of that rattletrap streetcar that bangs through the Quarter. Up one old, narrow street and down another.
>
> STELLA: Haven't you ever ridden on that streetcar?
>
> BLANCHE: It brought me here. Where I'm not wanted . . . and where I'm ashamed to be.
>
> STELLA: Don't you think your superior attitude's a bit out of place?

In the 1951 version, the above dialogue is omitted aside from the line, "What you're talking about is desire, just brutal desire," just as the scene cuts to Stanley walking outside overhearing Stella say to Blanche, "I told you, I love him!" Omitting the dialogue, "It brought me here. Where I'm not wanted . . . and where I'm ashamed to be" is clear evidence that the Legion also did not want any ambiguity in how we are to perceive Blanche. Even though Blanche's response could be read literally as the streetcar that dropped her off at Elysian Fields, the Legion's editing omits any vestige of Blanche's troubled past that may suggest lust or overt sensuality, thus painting her as a more one-dimensional character who is simply a victim of Stanley's brutality.

Downplaying Blanche's sensuality makes the next scene seem a bit out of place when she sees a young newspaper collector, who looks in the film to be in his early twenties, and decides to steal a kiss from him. In the director's cut, before the young man arrives, we see Blanche sitting in a chair, leaning back, with her back slightly arched. Blanche hears the bells chime and then begins to moan "Oh, me. Oh, me. Oh, me." Her delivery becomes

more sensual till she begins to reach for her thighs, pulling up her dress, as she moans. Just then, the doorbell with the arrival of the newspaper collector interrupts her. The Legion's cutting of Blanche's moaning changes the overall mood of Blanche's flirtation with the young man. The scene with Blanche moaning shows her pent up desire, making the young man's flirtation an outlet for her desires. Blanche tells him, "I want to kiss you just once…softly…and sweetly on your mouth." After she kisses him, Blanche says, "Run away now, quickly. It'd be nice to keep you but I've got to be good and keep my hands off children." Blanche's interest in younger men is also made evident in this scene. When she later explains the history of her deceased husband, Allan Grey, to Mitch during their date in the next scene, we come to better realize that her physical attraction to younger men is a psychological way to relive the happier times in her past when she was married to Allan.

In the 1951 version, not only do we have the majority of Blanche's scene in the chair cut, but we only see the last second of Blanche's arousal, as she holds her dress tightly, which when edited gives the impression that Blanche has a splitting headache, rather than arousal. When the young collector arrives, most of the dialogue between the two remains intact except for the Legion's deletions of "on your mouth" and "keep my hands off children" from the original lines in the playscript. Again, the Legion wanted to downplay Blanche's sensuality; they left the rest of the scene intact, showing Blanche kissing the young man as she says to herself, "you make my mouth water." Even in the 1951 version, there is still an element of perversity. Apparently, the Legion was trying to show that Blanche wanted "romance and security, and not gross sex" (Behlmer, *Inside* 323). Were the censors insinuating that flirting with a young man reaffirms Blanche's emotional security and

confidence by showing she still has the capacity to flirt with younger men? Perhaps they simply cut as much as they dared without making the scene completely incoherent.

The cuts and edits in this scene from the Legion don't always make sense from their moral standpoint because even though Blanche's sexual tendencies are toned down, the result is still the same—she desires and flirts with a younger man. The only difference in this scene is one of degree. The director's cut clearly paints Blanche as a woman still full of emotional desires, able to manipulate a situation to get what she wants, which in this case is a kiss. So far, in Stanley's world, she hasn't been able to assert her own independence, but this scene gives us a glimpse of Blanche's past before she arrived in New Orleans, which then helps to shed light on her troubled history when we later learn of her relationship with a seventeen-year-old student back in Laurel. However, the 1951 version tones down Blanche's sensuality, as if her kiss with the young man was a kind of comfort from the stultifying harshness of her new environment with Stanley.

The Legion goes on to lessen Blanche's sensuality when she later explains to an angry Mitch the truth about her past. In one of Blanche's most revealing moments after Mitch has accosted her about her promiscuous history, she tells all by saying, "Yes, I have had many meetings with strangers." In the same scene, Blanche decides to reveal to Mitch her troubled past: "Not far from Belle Reve, before we lost Belle Reve was a camp where they trained young soldiers. On Saturday nights, they would go in town to get drunk. And on the way back, they would stagger onto my lawn and call: 'Blanche.' 'Blanche.'" The 1951 version omits this dialogue, painting her instead as someone who has only been in three relationships with men (Kiefaber, Harris, and Shaw) and eventually with a seventeen-year-old boy, though it is never made clear in the text or film that there were any sexual relations

with the seventeen-year-old. On the other hand, the director's cut makes it clear that she has had "*many* meetings with strangers." Furthermore, the insinuation is clear that she was sexually engaged with the drunken soldiers, but the 1951 version leaves very little ambiguity about her character, as it tries hard to establish Blanche as more innocent than lascivious.

In the rape scene, Kazan had already agreed with the Breen office (PCA) that the rape would have to remain as long as it was "done [with] suggestion and delicacy" (Behlmer, *Inside* 327). Moreover, by the time the Legion had gone through the film, Stanley's line, "You know, maybe you wouldn't be bad to interfere with" as well as few seconds of a shot showing a medium close-up of Stanley wide-eyed and smiling with crumbs on his lips as he slowly corners Blanche into the bedroom was also cut. The omission of these frames from the scene makes Stanley's rape more spontaneous, whereas the director's cut could imply the rape was premeditated from the beginning. The playscript clearly evokes this idea when Stanley says, "We've had this date with each other from the beginning!" (Williams 162). Using lines from an early scene also omitted by the Legion, Stanley says, "You know, if I didn't know that you was my wife's sister, I would get ideas about you," showing he isn't afraid to broach the subject of incest. Leff writes, "Stanley's invocation of the incest taboo beckons the sexual urges it pretends to renounce. Blanche's response ['Such as what?'] fuels the fire. A final clash becomes inevitable" ("Transfer" 35). When the lines are omitted, the rape "appears more spontaneous—brutal to be sure, though less the product of prior calculation than alcohol and opportunity" (Leff, "Transfer" 35). Though Leff makes some fine distinctions between "spontaneous" and "brutal" rape, a rape is still a rape.

Examining the censored version of *Streetcar* from 1951 versus the director's cut released in 1993 reveals differences in the characters that consequently affect how we

understand their actions and motives. Kazan responds to the question "What difference does it make?" when it comes to three to four minutes of cut footage:

> As the director of the picture I see the deleted film somewhat differently. It does make a difference. I see it as small but necessary bits that built mood or motivation as I needed them, and whose rough excision leaves small holes or unprepared climaxes that make my work appear cruder than it was. I see it as lost fragments of a subtly told story, whose omission leaves the characters less fully explained than the author intended and than the actors, before, conveyed. ("Pressure" X5)

In the case of the 1951 *Streetcar*, we have a Blanche who becomes a victim of Stanley's brutality, portrayed as a woman who simply needed romance and security in her life. On the other hand, the director's cut makes clear Blanche's overt sexuality. As for Stanley, the 1951 version shows him as a man driven by impulses of the moment, ultimately symbolized in his brutal rape of Blanche. However, the restored version paints Stanley as a more menacing character with premeditated carnal thoughts of Blanche, seizing the opportunity to rape her when he knew Stella would be unable to interfere. Stella's character also changes from a dutiful wife with little sexuality in the 1951 version to a woman driven by her sexual desires and attraction to Stanley's violence in the director's cut, thereby making her less of a victim, especially as she is driven and aroused by Stanley's animal magnetism. Though it is easy to immediately dub the censored version as inferior, it is clear that both versions offer something different to each of the characters.

A Streetcar Faithfully Named Desire

Glenn Jordan's television movie adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1995) came to fruition after the success of director Gregory Mosher's 1992 staging of *Streetcar* on Broadway starring Alec Baldwin as Stanley and Jessica Lange as Blanche. For the television production, Jordan had Baldwin and Lange reprise their roles as Stanley and Blanche. This adaptation of *Streetcar* is particularly worth examining because it uses almost every line from Williams' playscript of *Streetcar*, with only a few words omitted. Having access to an adaptation of *Streetcar* that is faithful to Williams' playscript allows us to see a different interpretation from the iconic 1951 Kazan production; moreover, it allows us to see how different performances can change the way we understand characters like Stanley and Blanche. I believe it is valuable for students to see multiple adaptations so they can come to their own conclusions by making comparisons, judgments, and connections within multiple texts.

Jordan's 1995 television adaptation of *Streetcar's* use of color contrasts visually with Kazan's black and white film from 1951. Kazan's film employs the use of black and white effectively by taking advantage of the theme of light and darkness. In the first shared scene with Blanche and Stella, we see Blanche desperately searching for Stella at the Four Deuces bowling alley. When Stella spots Blanche, Stella quickly runs into Blanche's arms. As they embrace, we see the dark shadows of the fans casting their spinning shadows upon the two. Before Stella can get a word in, Blanche says, "Now, let me look at you. But don't you look at me, Stella. No, no, no! I won't be looked at in this merciless glare," showing early in the film Blanche's aversion to light.

Kazan builds upon the theme of light and darkness by contrasting the two sisters. When we see medium close-ups of Stella, she is usually in the light. In this scene, Stella is trying to point out Stanley to Blanche among the confusion of bowlers who have gotten into a shouting match. As Blanche looks on in apprehension, fingers to her lips, half her body is in shadow. Stella looks excitedly at Stanley as she asks Blanche, "Isn't he wonderful-looking?" Blanche tilts her head to look at her sister in disbelief as most of her face and body continues to be hidden by Stella's shadow. Stella remains in clear view with the light accentuating her smile, as her gaze remains fixed on Stanley. When Blanche tells Stella that she can't meet Stanley now, Stella suggests they get a drink. The scene cuts to the two women as they sit down at their table. We immediately see Blanche push down the lampshade positioned next to the table. As the two have a discussion, we often see cuts between medium shots of Blanche and Stella. Whenever we see a medium shot of Blanche, her face is always half in shadow and when she takes a drink from her scotch, her face disappears into the shadows every time she lifts her head back for a swig. On the other hand, we are able to see Stella's face clearly, as it never dances in and out of shadows the way Blanche's face does. Kazan was able to use the film's blacks and whites to accentuate the theme of light and darkness, which in the scene just mentioned, symbolically shows characteristics between the two sisters. For Blanche, she would rather stay in the dark by hiding secrets about her past, while Stella is open and transparent about her life with Stanley.

Kazan's masterful use of lights and shadows not only helps us to understand characters, but it also highlights the stark contrast between Blanche and the darker harsh realism of New Orleans. For example, the look of New Orleans itself as a location for the film is never inviting. The first frames of the film show a dark station with moving trains

billowing smoke, resembling more a factory than a train station, with taxis frantically skidding by every corner. The first appearance of Blanche has her appearing behind a cloud of smoke with a look of agitation. She eventually finds a sailor whistling a tune and asks for directions to Elysian Fields. When she does get off at her destination, the diegetic soundtrack of New Orleans immediately encroaches upon Blanche. Piano and jazz music blares out of the bars while the violent behavior of its denizens makes Blanche retreat with fear. As she walks onto the streets of Elysian Fields, neon signs of "Girls" flash, while the homeless are sleeping on garbage cans to the cadence of bar fights emanating through the night. Aside from the neon lights, the streets are shrouded in black, symbolizing the harsh reality of Blanche's new environment.

In contrast, the 1995 production opens with a warmer and more inviting environment that seems to welcome Blanche. Once the opening credits are over, we immediately see the streets of Elysian Fields as opposed to the trains and taxis from New Orleans in the 1951 production. The first scene shows a prostitute in a kimono as she lightly tosses a hat like a Frisbee from the balcony back to a thankful customer below. The notes from a trumpet evoke a sensual jazz piece rather than the harsh frenzied excitement of the 1951 production. We see people, visibly hot from the weather, but enjoying the liveliness of New Orleans. There are no dark shadows; instead the scene is imbued with the warm filter of golden hues. The atmosphere is idyllic with painters on the street and children strolling about. Unlike the 1951 production, where we first see a frazzled Blanche, we first see Mitch and Stanley walking back from the Four Deuces as Stanley calls for Stella. The scene is welcoming as we see Stanley tossing a hand-sized packet of meat to Stella. As Stanley leaves to go bowling with Mitch, Stella asks if she can join them. He smiles and says, "come on," as the

light melody of a piano is heard in the nondiegetic soundtrack. When Blanche arrives shortly thereafter, we see her dressed in white as she avoids smoke coming from a manhole as well as the advances of a sailor. Blanche is clearly lost, but unlike Leigh's Blanche, she is not visibly shaken. When she does arrive at Stanley's apartment, the golden hue of the sun is still visible as Eunice lets her into the apartment. Unlike the harsh shadows of the night, punctuated by the glare of neon lights from bars in the 1951 production, the 1995 setting of Elysian Fields is friendly. There are no loud outbursts or fights; rather people are polite and go about their own business. The use of color further shows the warmth of Elysian Fields, transforming the Greek allusion into a positive symbol with golden rays bathing the deep greens from the plants in the quarters, all providing a jarring contrast to the harsh black and white setting of the 1951 production. In the 1995 production, we don't get a sense of New Orleans' harsh realism encroaching upon Blanche; instead we get a sense that it welcomes her. Because of its hospitable setting, we lose a lot of the violence and encroaching claustrophobia that is prevalent in the 1951 production. Thus the 1995 production allows Jessica Lange's Blanche to be less guarded and more confident in her interactions with Stanley.

In the 1995 adaptation, the same look of hospitality and openness is physically shown in Stanley's apartment. The apartment is spacious and it too is bathed in warm reds and oranges with cream-colored walls and oak-colored furnishings. There is an openness to Stanley's apartment with its large windows letting in natural light as pedestrians are shown walking to and fro, making the apartment seem more like an extension of the streets of Elysian Fields rather than an enclosed unit. In the 1951 adaptation, Stanley's apartment is not only walled in, but it is also densely packed with items. There is a strong feeling of

claustrophobia in the apartment with rubbish and knick-knacks everywhere; moreover, everything from the table to the drawers is in close proximity to each other. The black and white cinematography further accentuates the coldness of the apartment with its lack of warm colors, which Kazan puts to excellent use as the sense of claustrophobia encloses much of the action to the apartment. When Blanche says, "When I think of how divine it is going to be to have such a thing as privacy once more—I could weep with joy!" (Williams 156), we can physically see how the claustrophobic nature of the apartment as well as Stanley's dominating presence has Blanche feeling as if she is "caught in a trap." However, as Blanche is well aware, there is nowhere for her to go. The physical surroundings of the 1995 adaptation physically allow Blanche more freedom to move about and to be herself, which is ultimately evidenced in Lange's portrayal of Blanche.

Jessica Lange wisely approaches the role of Blanche DuBois differently from Vivien Leigh. Leigh's performance is often seen as a standard, earning her an Oscar for best actress. Leigh's performance of Blanche shows a woman unsure of how her genteel background fits in as she is thrust into a new environment. Linda Cahir writes:

> [Leigh's] Blanche hasn't had time to gauge her audience. She hasn't seen Stella in several years and has never met Stanley. Elysian Fields, literally and symbolically, is alien terrain for her, and Blanche simply doesn't know how to act, what role to perform, what face to assume, so she flits in and out of several, in a nervous longing to find the fitting form, to be accepted. Blanche has survived all these years by being an impersonator extraordinaire. What makes Leigh's performance so powerful in these opening scenes is that we see Blanche, drawn and tired from the years of laborious performance, make a last

> ditch effort to find the role of a lifetime, the role which will let her rest. (73-74)

Leigh's performance as Blanche radiates a constant degree of nervousness, always trying to be one step ahead of anyone who might discover the multiple roles she plays, but as Blanche tells Stella, "I don't know how much longer I can turn the trick" (Williams 92). This line also serves as a sly reminder that turning a "trick" is a common phrase in a prostitute's vocabulary. In consequence, Leigh's performance of Blanche is complex and thrilling to watch—playing the role of Blanche who in turn plays multiple roles with different characters in the play.

Lange's Blanche is more straightforward than Leigh's, bringing to the 1995 production a stronger and more resilient Blanche.[48] From the moment we first see Lange's Blanche, we see a woman who in her high heels is almost as tall as Stanley. Her physique has none of Leigh's petite fragilities; rather Lange has a fuller physique. When Lange's Blanche first arrives at Elysian Fields, she is quick to assert her superiority to Eunice. When Eunice lets Blanche in the apartment she says, "It's kind of messed up right now but when it's clean it's real sweet," to which, Blanche curtly replies, "Is it?" Sensing she is not wanted, Eunice leaves and says, "I'll drop by the bowling alley and hustle [Stella] up." Blanche immediately makes herself at home, finds liquor in the cabinet and helps herself to a shot as she says to herself, "I've got to keep a hold of myself," but her personal aside seems to surface more out of shock at seeing Stella's living quarters than her own nerves. When Stanley (Alec Baldwin) arrives home and sees Blanche for the first time, she is not afraid or nervous to meet him. In fact, she faces Stanley and stares right at him smiling flirtatiously as

[48] Jessica Lange won a Golden Globe for best performance by an Actress in a Mini-Series or Motion Picture made for TV. Alec Baldwin was also nominated for the Best Actor in the same category (*Streetcar* 1995, IMDb).

the accompanying nondiegetic soundtrack of sultry jazz plays. When Stanley asks where she comes from, Blanche looks at him with her hand to her breast and moves slowly towards Stanley as she mouths, "I live in Laurel." Blanche's forwardness seems to make Stanley uneasy as he backs away and says, "In Laurel, huh? Oh yeah. Yeah, in Laurel, that's right. Not in my territory." Lange's Blanche is clearly not afraid to face Stanley. When Stanley finds out about the loss of Belle Reve and wants to question Blanche about it, she teases him with the atomizer by spraying some on his neck. Jordan shows us a medium close-up of Blanche facing Stanley as both are staring at each other. When Stanley says, "If I didn't know that you was my wife's sister, I'd get ideas about you!" Blanche's face leans towards Stanley's as she says, "Such as what?" almost forcing him to bring the issue of sex to the forefront, until he responds, "Don't play dumb. You know what." Leigh's interpretation of Blanche in this same scene is more feeble as we see an over-the-shoulder shot from Stanley looking into Blanche's face as she sheepishly looks up at Stanley, not sure what to expect. Lange's Blanche is more forceful, seemingly challenging Stanley like a femme fatale.

A perfect example of Lange's sexual aggressiveness and confidence in Blanche's character is shown during the poker night scene. When Blanche and Stella return from their night out, Stanley and his friends are still playing poker. Blanche and Stella retreat to the bedroom as they close the curtain and talk to each other. Mitch (John Goodman) suddenly comes out of the bathroom and is introduced to Blanche by Stella. Blanche clearly is interested in Mitch as she eyes him while he talks to Stella. As Mitch leaves the room to join the poker players, Blanche undresses to her teddy as she peers out at the poker players. Lange's Blanche feels no embarrassment, as she stands exposed through the curtains, as we see a shot of Mitch and Stanley staring through the open curtain. When Stella tells her that

she is standing in the light, she laughs and says, "Oh, am I! Gracious!" Later when Stella goes to the bathroom, Blanche decides to turn on the radio, much to the displeasure of a now drunken Stanley, who promptly comes in to turn it off. In this scene, Stanley opens the curtains to see Blanche defiantly leaning in a chair, stretched out, with only her teddy on. She has a fan in her hand and doesn't flinch at Stanley's entrance. When Stanley goes to turn off the radio, we see a medium shot of Stanley as he looks at Blanche sitting in the chair. The scene then cuts to a medium shot of Blanche's face as she looks right back at Stanley with eyes that read, "what are you going to do about it?" rather than one of fear or shame. In the 1951 version, the moment Stanley opens the curtains, Blanche immediately scurries into a chair as she tries to cover the front of her nightgown. She stays huddled in the chair with her back facing Stanley until he leaves and closes the curtain. The look on Leigh's face is troubled and frightened. The 1995 production brings to light a much stronger Blanche who is willing to counter Stanley punch for punch. *New York Times* critic John O'Connor writes, "This production does not, against considerable odds, get trapped in the memorable Kazan interpretations of the play. Ms. Lange's Blanche is not nearly so fragile. Behind her looming nervous breakdown is a steely bitchiness" (par. 5).

The climactic scenes in the play when Stanley rapes Blanche is of particular interest given how both productions show different sides to Blanche. In the 1995 production, Lange's Blanche is shown dancing in her gown as she talks to herself, as she tries to forget what happened with Mitch. Jordan sets us up for this scene by keeping the lights off from the previous scene of Mitch's visit to Blanche. Suddenly, the golden hues that seemed to bathe the apartment are encroached upon by shadows, as the window blinds are now partially shut and the pedestrians nonexistent. The blinds create shadows across the wall and on

Blanche's face, hiding her eyes, giving us a sense that she is in a cell, bringing to the forefront Blanche's impending spiral into madness as well as the physical claustrophobia often present in the 1951adaptation. By the time Stanley arrives, no longer does the room have the cheerful aspect it once did. Instead, everything is bathed in shadows that both Stanley and Stella move in and out of. When Blanche smashes the bottle to defend herself against Stanley, he quickly subdues her as she drops the broken bottle. Blanche then drops limply into his arms as he spins her violently around. Blanche moans and says "no" several times, but her body language shows very little resistance to Stanley, who drops her on the bed, gets on top, tears off his pajamas and says, "We've had this date with each other from the beginning" as the nondiegetic sound of violin strings gets harsher and harsher. In the 1951 version, Leigh's Blanche puts up a fight until she is violently overpowered by Brando's Stanley. Here, Lange's Blanche is almost submissive, opening ambiguities in Blanche's character given how she welcomed Stanley's advances, especially during the poker night when she sat in her teddy, stretched out in a chair, seemingly daring Stanley to look at her body.

Alec Baldwin's portrayal of Stanley Kowalski is also very different from Marlon Brando's iconic performance of Stanley. I believe any actor, whether on screen or on stage, who decides to take on the role of Stanley Kowalski will have to deal with the immense imprint that Brando left on the character. According to *New York Times* critic Mel Gussow:

> Mr. Brando, as Stanley, came to represent the epitome of the newly emergent naturalistic school of American acting. The Brando image, preserved on film (for those who missed it on stage), is a mountainous obstacle for anyone trying to make his own impression on the role. With the possible exception of

> Jason Robards as Hickey in "The Iceman Cometh," it is difficult to name any other actor whose signature is as firmly fixed on a contemporary character. (par. 6)

Good actors need to bring something new to the role of Stanley Kowalski or fall victim to being a Brando imitation. I believe Alec Baldwin does an excellent job of bringing a new sympathetic Stanley to the performance. From the first scene when Stanley is introduced, he is with his friend Mitch and very playful with Stella when he tosses a small package of meat to her and smiles as he walks away to go bowling. When Stella asks if she can watch, Stanley says, "come on" as she gleefully goes back in to get ready. This initial scene immediately gives the impression that Stanley is friendly, playful, and a friend who is willing to include his wife in his activities. In contrast, our first glimpse of Brando in the 1951 production shows Stanley screaming at fellow bowlers as he argues and fights with them. When Blanche asks Stella "Which one is he?" She responds, "The one that's making all the rhubarb," while a shocked Blanche looks on. Meanwhile Stella looks visibly pleased and aroused by the ruckus caused by her husband. Stanley's hot temper and mean disposition don't make themselves evident in the 1995 production. In fact, Baldwin's Stanley is friendly and cordial until provoked by Blanche's "don't hang back with the brutes" speech to Stella.

In the 1951 production when we get our first full shot of Stanley, he is seen coming back from the bowling alley as he meets Blanche in his apartment. His greeting is cursory, "Oh, hiya," as he immediately walks past Blanche to take off his jacket and inquires about Stella's whereabouts. When Stanley asks Blanche where she's from, he never makes eye contact; instead he walks about the room looking for a drink and responds with his back facing Blanche. After asking about Blanche's occupation, he immediately crosses his arms,

gets serious, and asks, “How long you here for?” When she responds that she doesn’t know, Stanley looks at the bed and says, “You gonna shack up here?” When Blanche responds, “I thought I would, if it’s not inconvenient for you all,” Stanley says “Good,” approving of the way Blanche asks him for permission. Stanley continues to face an uncomfortable Blanche, with arms crossed before she breaks the silence by saying, “Traveling wears me out.” Immediately after, the sound of cats frightens Blanche and she briefly touches Stanley’s arms as he says, “Oh, those cats” and mimics a loud cat scream at Blanche. The effect is jarring because we see Stanley’s ruggedly handsome features coupled with his wry humor, which makes him attractive, yet at the same time he is quick to make Blanche, someone he just met, uncomfortable. Blanche’s simultaneous repulsion and attraction to Stanley are testimonies to the allure of Brando’s performance.

Alec Baldwin’s Stanley has a completely different manner from Brando’s. In the same scene when Stanley first meets Blanche, he looks at her respectfully and says, “Hello.” Stanley then makes small talk by saying, “I didn’t know you was coming to town.” When Blanche says she’s from Laurel, he smiles and says, “that’s right, not my territory” as he gets some alcohol to drink and offers some to Blanche. Stanley then politely asks if he can change his clothes. When he asks about her profession as a teacher, he smiles at her as he says, “I never was a very good English student.” Baldwin’s tone is kind and sincere, unlike Brando’s aggressiveness. When Baldwin’s Stanley asks, “Are you going to shack up here?” he says it with a gentle look, simply leaning against a bookcase, rather than crossing his arms like Brando. When Blanche says she would like to stay, he smiles and says, “Good. Take it easy” as he nods and has another drink. The demeanor Baldwin’s Stanley imprints on his character is a sincere willingness for Blanche to stay and a genuine interest in getting to

know her. As mentioned before, Lange's Blanche is rather flirtatious in these opening scenes as she is the one who advances towards Stanley when he asks her questions. After Stanley's display of drunkenness at the poker party, Blanche goes to give her "don't hang back with the brutes!" speech where she calls Stanley an ape, teasing him about how he moves and eats as if he were "sub-human."

In this 1995 production, we see Stanley entering his home unbeknownst to Blanche and Stella, given the loud rattle of the streetcar outside. As Blanche gives her speech, we see Baldwin's Stanley in shock at what he is hearing. When he does make his presence known and shows himself to Stella, you can see the look of hurt on Stanley's face as he tries to mask it with a smile. In the 1951 version, Brando's Stanley is clearly seen outside the house overhearing Blanche's speech and he is visibly irritated and angry. His lips purse and his teeth clench as he can hardly acknowledge a friend who greets him on the street—Stanley is clearly overcome with rage. When Stanley enters the apartment, his demeanor is confident that he will win Stella over. Sure enough, once Stella jumps into his arms, he celebrates his victory over Blanche by staring at her with a sheepish grin. In the 1995 production, Stanley is uncertain as to how Stella will respond to him. When she jumps into his arms, there is genuine relief in his expression as he shuts his eyes and embraces her. Stanley then looks at Blanche with an accusation of betrayal given how hospitable he has been with her. For the 1995 production, it seems clear Stanley is more than willing to give Blanche a chance to live with them until he hears her bad-mouthing him behind his back. From then on, Stanley gets progressively detached from Blanche by being very direct in his criticisms of her.

Seeing the two different versions of Stanley sheds light on how malleable Williams' play is. There is enough room for actors to inject a "brute" like Stanley with humanity and

ultimately make him sympathetic and even likable to the audience. Performances like Brando's and Baldwin's allow us to see the complexity of Stanley's character as well as how different he can be, given an actor's interpretation. Baldwin's stage performance of *Streetcar* gained strong reviews.[49] One reviewer wrote, "Baldwin is so secure in the role made famous by Marlon Brando that he doesn't even wear an undershirt" (Nelson par. 5). When asked about his role as Stanley in an interview, Baldwin responded: "Everybody who's done the role since 1947 has ripped him off, but doing that doesn't interest me. Brando always said he never saw the humor of the character, but I think he's a real wise guy. I had to make it funny for myself, so I could do it every night of the week for three hours" (qtd. in Witchel 2). Though Baldwin's reason may sound practical, what he has done through his performance is show that despite Brando's unforgettable performance of Stanley, there is room still in Williams' play to discover something new in the character. In the case of Baldwin's Stanley, we see a gentler, more sympathetic man, who has more than just a physical relationship with his wife. In consequence, the Stella at the end of the 1995 television version is hurt by the loss of Blanche, but she does not find it hard to return to Stanley, which is a complete contrast to the Stella at the end of the 1951 version, where we see Kim Hunter's Stella choose to distance herself from Stanley by running upstairs to Eunice's with her baby as Stanley screams for her.

In the 1995 adaptation, Blanche's character is also more complex, as she not only displays fortitude, but also layers of jealousy and sorrow when she opens up about her past, making for a much more sympathetic Blanche than the one played by Vivien Leigh. In the case of the 1951 Kazan production, when cuts were made, they were usually Blanche's lines relating to her past. These omissions are important, not only thematically to *Streetcar*, but

[49] Alec Baldwin was nominated for a Best Actor Tony Award in 1992 for his role as Stanley.

also in understanding Blanche's motivations and desires. The luxury of having access to Jordan's production of *Streetcar* is the inclusion of almost every line from the playscript (especially Blanche's), which allows us to see how remaining faithful to the entirety of Williams' play allows us to understand Blanche's past as a young woman left to care for her elders, which in turn allows us to understand Jessica Lange's choices to portray Blanche as a stronger woman victimized by tragedies in her past, namely the numerous deaths at Belle Reve.

A prime example of Blanche's tragic past is shown in her explanation to Stella of how Belle Reve was lost. In the 1995 adaptation, as in Williams' playscript, we are given all the details of Blanche's relations, especially the numerous deaths of her family members (I have underlined the lines that were used in the 1951 production):

> "I, I, *I* took the blows in my face and my body! All of those deaths! The long parade to the graveyard! Father, mother! Margaret, that dreadful way! So big with it, it couldn't be put in a coffin! But had to be burned like rubbish! You just came home in time for the funerals, Stella. And funerals are pretty compared to deaths. Funerals are quiet, but deaths—not always. Sometimes their breathing is hoarse, and sometimes it rattles, and sometimes they even cry out to you, 'Don't let me go!' Even the old, sometimes, say, 'Don't let me go.' As if you were able to stop them! But funerals are quiet, with pretty flowers. And, oh, what gorgeous boxes they pack them away in! Unless you were there at the bed when they cried out, 'Hold me!' you'd never suspect there was the struggle for breath and bleeding. You didn't dream, but I saw! *Saw*! *Saw*! And now you sit there telling me with your eyes that I let the

> place go? How in hell do you think all that sickness and dying was paid for? Death is expensive, Miss Stella! And old Cousin Jessie's right after Margaret's, hers! Why the Grim Reaper had put up his tent on our doorstep! . . . Stella. Belle Reve was his headquarters! Honey—that's how it slipped through my fingers! Which of them left us a fortune? Which of them left a cent of insurance even? Only poor Jessie—one hundred to pay for her coffin. That was all, Stella! And I with my pitiful salary at the school. Yes, accuse me! Sit there and stare at me, thinking I let the place go! *I* let the place go? Where were *you*! In bed with your—Polack! (Williams 21-22)

Showing the quotation in its entirety makes us aware that more than half of the speech was omitted in the 1951 production. When you see the entire dialogue performed by Lange, you get a much fuller picture of the suffering and tragedy that Blanche had to endure during her life at Belle Reve. The gruesome detail of Margaret being burned rather than put in a coffin hints of a tragic death, possibly suicide. Even worse for Blanche was having to be the anchor for the dying, as evidenced by how she repeats to Stella the words of the dying as they cry out at their bedside, "Don't let me go" and "Hold me." Blanche's description of how her relations struggled for breath is a horrific detail that still graphically haunts her. Moreover, we see how Blanche was solely responsible for taking care of everything. When Blanche tells Stella, "*I* stayed at *Belle Reve* and tried to hold it together! I'm not meaning this in any reproachful way, but *all* the burden descended on *my* shoulders" (Williams 20), it is easy to understand why Blanche feels abandoned, especially by a younger sister. In the 1951 production, without the vivid and personal details of Blanche's interaction with Margaret and Jessie, her dialogue comes across as simply being accusatory and jealous of Stella, which

Leigh uses for optimal effect, portraying Blanche as fragile, but also manipulative in her lies to her sister, often hoping to gain the upper hand. Watching the 1995 production, with Lange's Blanche crying and angry at Stella, makes us aware of how difficult the trials of Belle Reve were for Blanche at such a young age, especially with nothing left to show for it. Robert Bray writes, "Blanche badgers her sister relentlessly, hoping that she will accept some responsibility for the family misfortune in general and Blanche's own physical and mental deterioration in particular. Belle Reve, the beautiful dream that Blanche maintains, is precisely what Stella abandons to get on with her life" (193). We are more sympathetic towards Blanche when she accuses Stella of simply running away to be with her "Polack." When Blanche tells Stella all the burden descended upon herself, Stella simply responds, "The best I could do was make my own living, Blanche" (Williams 20), but the fact that Stella knows nothing about the loss of Belle Reve shows how detached she is from its world, returning primarily for the funerals and more than willing as Bray notes, "to get on with her life." Including the complete speech takes away from the possibility that Blanche is simply a jealous malcontent. Understanding the tragic baggage that Blanche brings with her to Elysian Fields makes Lange's performance of Blanche even more understandable: this is a woman who has been through hard and tragic times. Hearing Leigh's Blanche say only the underlined lines from the above dialogue changes the tone of her dialogue with Stella, as all details of the death are omitted and overall she comes across as someone looking for sympathy, desperate to get Belle Reve off her conscience.

The other important lines spoken by Blanche and omitted in the 1951 production occur late in the play when Blanche comes clean about her past and explains to Mitch the difficulty of having to live at Belle Reve (underlined lines used in 1951 production):

> "I lived in a house where dying old women remembered their dead men. Crumble and fade and—regrets—recriminations…'If you'd done this, it wouldn't've cost me that!' Legacies! Huh. . . . And other things such as bloodstained pillow-slips—'Her linen needs changing'—'Yes Mother. But couldn't we get a colored girl to do it?' No, we couldn't of course. Everything gone but the—Death—I used to sit here and she used to sit over there and death was as close as you are. . . . We didn't dare even admit we had ever heard of it! The opposite is desire. So do you wonder? How could you possibly wonder! Not far from Belle Reve, before we had lost Belle Reve, was a camp where they trained young soldiers. On Saturday nights they would go in town and get drunk—and on their way back they would swagger onto my lawn and call—'Blanche! Blanche!'—The deaf old lady remaining suspected nothing. But sometimes I slipped outside to answer their calls. . . . Later the paddy-wagon would gather them up like daisies . . . the long way home . . . (Williams 148-149)

Though the 1951 production does mention the "bloodstained pillow-slips" adding to the graphic detail of the dying at Belle Reve, it leaves out the humanity in the rest of the quotation where we see Blanche's strict obedience to do work that even her mother might have avoided, such as cleaning the linen for dying family members. When Blanche asks, "But couldn't we get a colored girl to do it?" we get a glimpse into the sensibility of a woman who was born in a traditional privileged family, as evidenced in her dresses and jewelry from her younger years, but has everything taken away. Blanche explains to Stanley early in the play what happened to Belle Reve: "piece by piece, our improvident grandfathers

and father and uncles and brothers exchanged the land for their epic fornications[50]—to put it plainly! The four-letter word deprived us of our plantation, till finally all that was left—and Stella can verify that!—was the house itself and about twenty acres of ground, including a graveyard, to which now all but Stella and I have retreated" (Williams 44). Therefore when Blanche asks her mother for help from a "colored girl," she was probably in her early twenties as Belle Reve was being squandered away.[51] When Blanche later describes how she left the house to meet soldiers in the middle of the night, we can see her as promiscuous, but her earlier account of the family deaths at Belle Reve as well as the lack of support from others, including her sister Stella, gives us insight into why a twenty-year-old yearned for support and love, especially after the guilt over her husband's death. When Blanche mentions to Mitch the "paddy-wagon" taking the soldiers back home, she is being very candid about her promiscuity; however, her full speech above provides perspective into Blanche's psychology, thereby making her more sympathetic given the burdens she had to endure at such a young age.

Comparing the multiple texts of *A Streetcar Named Desire* can be valuable not only for students, but for anyone who wants to have a better understanding of the complexities of a work, which in the case of *Streetcar* comes with a controversial history of censorship resulting in two different versions of the play, with major to subtle differences in the characters depending on which version you watch. With the playscript as an anchor, we are able to see the changes made and how they affect characterization when adapted. Though

[50] The 1951 production of *Streetcar* substitutes the word "fornications" for "debauches." It also omits the phrase, "The four-letter word deprived us of our plantation."

[51] Blanche is described as being about five years older than Stella, who is roughly 25 years old, which puts Blanche in her early thirties. If she married Allan at the age of sixteen, as mentioned in the play, and he died a few years later, she would be either in her late teens or early twenties when she returned to Belle Reve to help her mother. At that point, Stella had probably left Belle Reve, given that Blanche had never met Stanley until her arrival at Elysian Fields.

changes are inevitable and even encouraged for adaptations, in the case of the 1995 production of *Streetcar*, we are able to witness how being faithful to a playscript allows new ways of seeing seemingly age-old characters like Stanley and Blanche.

Conclusion

When we label a film as an adaptation, intertextual dialogs between the adaptation and its original texts already exist. These dialogs may address (as I have shown in previous chapters) ideological similarities or differences, adaptive modes such as censorship, changing point of view, and the female gaze. The discussion of these adaptive modes should lead to a search for *meaning* rather than a checklist of how faithful an adaptation is to its original source.

The field of adaptation studies does not have to focus on source-hunting and comparative arguments. Doing so seems to cause adaptation studies to remain stagnant. That lack of forward movement is the reason why the study of intertextuality is a more fruitful approach to adaptation studies, and why, as Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan state, "a multiplicity of sources [should not be] bemoaned but celebrated" (28). As mentioned before, Robert Stam emphasizes an "automatic difference" built into film, compared to novels and dramas designed for the theatre. These differences, I argue, should be celebrated and explored. My hope is that this project contributes to the study of intertextuality in adaptation studies through its use of the source text with various adaptive modes.

Another goal of this project is to bring films into the high school English classroom so students can better understand and make connections with the literature they read. As a result, in most academic institutions, the source text is usually seen as superior while the film adaptation as secondary. While my goal is not to urge high school teachers to value an adaptation over the original, what I do hope to accomplish is to persuade high school teachers

to accept film adaptations as legitimate texts that should be read and analyzed in the same way as their printed counterparts.

Yet, one of the consequences of studying film adaptations is its inherent connection to its source text. When students begin questioning choices made in films they invariably return to the printed text to examine the differences, and this comparison inevitably trains them to be better close readers. The key for high school teachers is to stress the importance of using the literary text as a resource, not a *standard* on which to judge those texts' adaptations. The impulse for many high school teachers and students to conclude that "the book is better" will be at first difficult to overcome. If we are serious about introducing films into English classrooms, then it is imperative for teachers to teach them as texts unto themselves as well as potential points of reference or comparison to the assigned literary texts.

The choice of canonical texts in my chapters was intentional. These are texts that are commonly taught in English high school classes. I also wanted to make sure that the film adaptations were obtainable so teachers could easily begin adding film adaptations to their discussions. A good pedagogical method is to choose a short clip from a film and compare it with the scene from the literary work, such as the last scene of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Showing the same scene from Kazan's film would be an excellent way to open discussion on why the film adaptation has Stella running away from Stanley instead of submitting to him as Williams' playscript suggests. One such pedagogical question could be, "how does the adaptation's ending change our perception of Stella and Stanley?" The chapters on *Pride and Prejudice*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *A Streetcar Named*

Desire, will, I hope provide examples as well as ideas for teachers to understand ways in which literary texts engage with their adaptations.

In, *Reel Conversations,* Alan B. Teasley and Ann Wilder discuss several compelling reasons for the inclusion of film in an English or Language Arts Curriculum. One of the reasons is that students already have prior experience with film (4). That is, all students have seen a film or a film adaptation at one time or another in high school, but they often don't know how to respond critically to the film in relation to the source text. The discussion, if there is one, often ends with the conclusion of how "the book was better," but it usually fails to explore the reasons for the different choices made by the director. In a way, the inexperience of high school students with analyzing film could be seen positively because it "can serve as a great equalizer in a heterogeneous class, an opportunity for both the academically gifted and those who are accustomed to failure to learn something new altogether" (Teasley and Wilder 4). This shared inexperience can be an exciting journey leading to many "aha!" moments when a class compares a film adaptation and the original work. For high school students, the source text can always be a resource to formulate questions that go beyond a simple checklist of differences between a work and its adaptation. The hope is for students to explore the differences and intentions of the adaptation by coming up with questions that ask "why" rather than only "what."

One of the reasons for using films as texts is to provide students with a better understanding of the films. I remember discussing cinematic aspects in a short film to some of my high school juniors. I asked them to discuss the sound, lighting, and editing from Robert Enrico's short film, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (1962). We looked at the director's choices and compared it to the original work by Ambrose Bierce. The discussion

led to many insightful moments with students making connections between the uses of black and white, certain camera angles, and the repeated looping of frames near the end of the film. Students were able to go back to the text and find evidence of what the director was trying to do. The back and forth between the film and the text made them not only better readers of the text, but also better at reading film. Ironically, we train students to assiduously annotate and take notes the moment they begin reading a work of literature in class, but why don't we have the same expectations when we show them a film?

Using film adaptations brings variety to the close reading of a text. Close reading is an integral part of teaching literature, and I spend a lot of class time during the first few months with my students going through examples and giving them assignments, training them to read closely so they can make connections with other texts. However, with film adaptations, students can use what they have learned from their close readings of literary texts and compare them to film adaptations. One example I use is a film and character analysis where students list the behavior, appearance, dialogue, feelings, and writer's craft from a novel or short story. I have them go through the same list with a film's character, focusing instead on the director's craft at the end. The comparisons and contrasts between the film and the novel allow them to begin processing ideas about the characters. I then have the students write a thesis statement for each of the characters, one for the novel and one for the film, leading to a final thesis statement that compares the two treatments of the characters. This exercise helps students to think critically and develop interesting arguments for papers as they appreciate choices made in an adaptation.

There are two excellent books with extensive ideas for high school teachers in teaching film in their classrooms. Each book includes a list of film terminology along with

examples as well as strategies and techniques in teaching film to high school students. One of the books I have already mentioned, *Reel Conversations: Reading Films with Young Adults* by Alan B. Teasley and Ann Wider, provides a basic glossary of film terminology for students as well as a three-part framework for viewing films: "Literary Aspects of a Film," "Dramatic Aspects of a Film," and "Cinematic Aspects of a Film" (14-21). In addition, there are discussions of multiple genres and themes that are complemented with case studies of films to provide examples for teachers. The other book I found helpful was John Golden's *Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom*. Golden provides many examples for film terminology and cinematic effects. What I find most valuable are his templates of activity charts in the appendix; these assist both teachers and students in the process of questioning and responding to films.

To provide more information about the use of films in English classes, I recently conducted an online survey of my colleagues on the use of film adaptations.[52] Of the fourteen who responded, thirteen felt that film adaptations are useful in their classes. However, only six teachers gave assignments that included writing about the film along with the literature read in class. Five teachers merely showed films as a reward after the completion of the assigned work in class. These results suggest that many high school teachers simply do not take advantage of what film adaptations can offer to class discussions of literary texts. I cannot fault my colleagues because many of them, like me, were taught in traditional classrooms where the source text was analyzed through close reading, while films were merely seen as add-ons, giving the source text a visual component.

Working on this project has convinced me that films have an important place alongside literary texts in the high school English classroom. Given the positive experience

[52] Created a survey using Surveymonkey.com called "Literature and Film Adaptations in English."

students already have with watching films, it would be a missed opportunity for teachers not to take advantage of exploring what film adaptations have to offer. The key lies in teaching students to question the texts, both printed and visual. When students start asking questions, rather than simply answering questions from an authority figure, they begin to take ownership of the text and in essence become an authority on the subject. My hope is for all high school teachers to seriously consider using film as text, much like the novels, short stories, and poetry they teach.

The study of films in class offers a seamless bridge into the visual world of texts, reinforcing the multiple ways that students already have of interacting with texts. Recently, ‘Iolani School began its “iPad Initiative” where the junior class was given iPads. By the beginning of Fall 2013, all upper school students will be given an iPad. The goal of the iPad Initiative is to work with the Educational Technology Plan which calls for “the creation of a student-driven learning environment, preparing students to engage in the affairs of the world, and developing skilled learners who use technology effectively for learning and exploring” (“Student-driven iPad Initiative”). As I currently teach a class of juniors who come to class with an iPad on their desk, I am already very much engaged in an English classroom that is moving away from sole reliance upon printed media and teacher-led discussions. Teachers are encouraged to find e-text versions of the literature and to encourage the use of visual media in class exercises and student presentations.

Technology, when used critically, enables students to learn. As teachers, our rewards often come when we see students experiencing moments of insight. Given the frequency with which films are shown in high school English classes, teachers need to use that valuable time wisely by treating the film as a text and encouraging students to be active participants

by taking notes and asking questions. Teachers can accomplish these goals by holding students accountable for the discussions between film and the literature in a classroom through quizzes and essays. In fact, it would be a disservice to students if there were no follow up discussion after the viewing of a film adaptation. The interaction between the original source, the adaptation, and the students as they begin to question the multiple texts will not only lead to engaging class discussions and interesting topics for papers, but also a lot more teaching and learning moments for both students and teachers.

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