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GRAPHIC DESIGN IN FILM: BUILDING CHARACTER IDENTITY AND VISUAL STYLE IN THE GREAT GATSBY (2013)

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GRAPHIC DESIGN IN FILM:

BUILDING CHARACTER IDENTITY AND

VISUAL STYLE IN THE GREAT GATSBY (2013)

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ABSTRACT

Graphic design and cinema have worked together since the early days of filmmaking, driven by the effort to de-velop autonomous visual narratives in silent films, in much through the use of intertitles. It is meaningful to rec-ognize how graphic design elements have invariably been a part of cinema's hybrid language, as a material of expression manifested through the visual channel together with the filmed image. The different technological milestones that shaped cinema's development also directly influenced the use of graphic language in movies, which became more complex with time. These graphic elements are present throughout an entire film narra-tive, from the choice of verbal, pictorial and schematic elements in titles and animations, to the creation (and curation) of printed or handmade graphic props, signage and logos filmed by the camera. Together, they form a movie's graphic identity, which helps to convey meaning to the narrative as well as to bring a more dynamic and authentic storytelling. Through a case study of Hollywood's 2013 movie adaptation of the literary mas-terpiece The Great Gatsby, this paper intends on exemplifying the strategic use of graphic design elements throughout the movie – in the physical and virtual formal natures – aiding in the construction of characters' identities, contextualized into the roaring 1920's aesthetics, as well as defining a clear visual style that is consis-tent with director Baz Luhrmann's unique vision for the movie. In this way, the objective is to bring awareness to the potential of graphic design in building cinematic worlds that are historically accurate, aesthetically rich, and emotionally identifiable.

INTRODUCTION

"The cinema is really built for the big screen and big sound, so that a person can go into another world and have an experience." – David Lynch, filmmaker

Design and cinema, although distinct field areas, are intrinsically connected as visual forms of communication, adopting similar principles to build their languages. When watching a movie, the spectator is exposed to a hybrid art form – its language is composed by a series of other languages, manifested through the visual and auditory channels. Indeed, both fields share a common language in the visual channel – the graphic language. It is true that the term 'design' constitutes a significantly broad and subjective area, which has gained ever-growing definitions throughout the years; nonetheless, the graphic language is key in defining design's essence as a visual form of communication, specified into the graphic design field – which is Helena Tude's professional background and the focus of this investigation, applied into the filmic context. Furthermore, the practice of design is inherently interdisciplinary as it works together with other areas of plastic, formal or visual creation – including not only the fine arts, but also photography, cinema and video – in conveying visual messages through the use of the graphic language.

With this in mind, the present paper aims to examine the fundamental relationship between design and cinema by understanding particularly how and where are graphic design elements inserted in a filmic narrative. An interesting analogy is to consider the film as a brand. Creating a brand's universe calls for a unified visual identity – which, applied to movies, can be demonstrated through a consistent combination of the filmed image with the graphic language present throughout a narrative – from the choice of verbal, pictorial and schematic elements in titles and animations, to the creation (and curation) of printed or handmade graphic props, signage and logos filmed by the camera. The graphic design elements in movies are also referred to as graphic configurations – term coined by Isabella Aragão in her 2006 Master's dissertation, as an extension of the originally identified 'written materials' by Christian Metz in the 1970's, and further appropriated in this research. These graphic configurations are created mainly by hired specialists from the design field, which may come from different backgrounds, such as graphic, motion, digital, user experience, 3D, among others, and are part of a film's art or post-production department, responding ultimately to the production designer. The production designer, in turn, is responsible for conceiving a movie's visual look and feel – which will include its use of the graphic language – always working collectively with the director and director of photography, who together constitute the movie's creative Trinity.

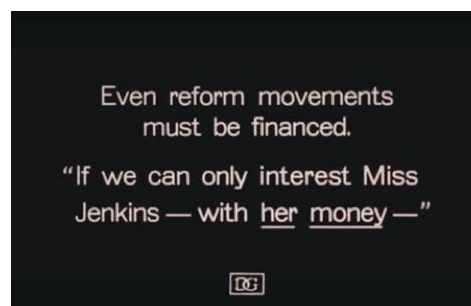On a second and central level, the

Image 1: Silent film intertitle taken from the movie Intolerance (1916). Simple and straightforward intertitle created as a necessary means to represent graphically what the silent image could not address. Usually, excerpts of the dialogue were included to bring more detail to the subsequent scene.

Image 2: Contemporary film intertitle taken from the movie 500 Days of Summer (2009). The intertitles are animated and help situate the viewer in the non-chronological order of the scenes, appearing throughout the entire movie. The number "(1)" present in the intertitle represents in which day the subsequent scene is shown – contextualized into a relationship that lasts 500 days.

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[1] With the popularization of silent movies in the beginning of the twentieth century, intertitles (also known as title cards) were frequently inserted in between scenes of original cinematographic footage – consisting of either filmed static compositions or drawings on the film negative – with the objective of contextualizing the story to the viewer. They included additional information in the form of written words as well as other graphic elements such as ornamented frames, that represented possible dialogues, captions, quotations, and even poetry.

research also aims to identify in which way the graphic language is intentionally portrayed in a movie so as to influence the spectator's interpretation of the narrative, in secondary or decisive approaches. Historically, the initial emphasis of the graphic language in film was on written words, in much taken from literature's dominance in the nineteenth and twentieth century, further applied to silent film's intertitles[1]. However, the different technological milestones which shaped cinema's development directly influenced the emergence and disappearance of graphic configurations, which became more complex with time, affecting the roles designers acquired in the industry. The advent of digital technology and the use of computer graphics in contemporary cinema significantly approximated the cinematic and graphic languages, allowing for graphic configurations to be more easily and consistently manipulated into a film narrative, through computer-generated software. It is in this contemporary scenario that the present research positions itself.

The two frames show an evolution of the graphic composition of these titles, which became more complex with the advent of digital technology and computer software, allowing for animated graphics in the form of intertitles to aid in the storytelling, intentionally chosen to be portrayed in this format.

To exemplify the use of graphic configurations in movies, a concrete case study is presented in the form of a graphic analysis – which includes an overview of the chosen movie's cinematic world, followed by the secondary and decisive graphic approaches. Identifying the movie's cinematic world (and consequently its historical/social context) is important in order to later establish associations between the filmic universe and the graphic language portrayed. In order to identify the best case studies for this investigation, as well as other

examples that are shown throughout the work, countless movies were watched by Helena Tude, from beginning to end, and analyzed in terms of their graphic language, through a systematic observation and collection of frames (screenshots) – identifying which type of graphic configurations were used and how. Therefore, the more movies watched, the better the chance of finding pertinent case studies. The choice of Hollywood's remake The Great Gatsby (2013) is due to its notably high investment in production design and digital technology, which allowed for a consistent and intentional use of the graphic language throughout its narrative, that were crucial for the construction of solid characters' identities and a coherent visual style for the period drama, set in the vibrant New York of the 1920's. According to the methodology defined by the author, the process of conducting a graphic analysis of a movie is divided into two parts: through qualitative and quantitative methods, the first part aims to identify and count the graphic configurations through a systematic observation and collection of frames, that are described and numbered according to their type[2]; the second part aims to analyze the previously identified graphic configurations in relation to the narrative and infer on their significance, dividing the elements into groups of narrative themes that fit into decisive or secondary approaches. Conducting these two steps will allow for final considerations that summarize the main use of the graphic language in that movie – also referred to as the movie's graphic strategy.

It is important to mention that this paper is part of an existing research conducted for the Master's dissertation entitled "Design & Cinema: An analysis of the graphic language as a narrative strategy in Hollywood's contemporary films" (Tude, 2020) which includes other three detailed case studies and extensive historical, theoretical and methodological investigations on the subject. Additionally,

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[2] The types are based on a system of classification of graphic configurations initially identified by Isabella Aragão in her Master's dissertation (2006) and further developed and updated by Helena Tude's Master's dissertation (2020).

[3] Roberto Tietzmann, 2007.

[4] Mauro Baptista (2006, 2008), Ludmila Ayres Machado (2011).

[5] The term "diegetic" comes from Diegesis, a Greek word that means "narrative", but it refers to the fictional dimension of a narrative – the reality proper to the story, apart from the external reality of the reader. "Musical scores, intertitles, commentary by a narrator (…) are called extra-diegetic because they do not belong to the same world as the characters, who normally remain completely unaware of them." (Nichols, 2010, p. 49)

[6] Brad Chisholm (1987), Roberto Tietzmann (2007), Isabella Aragão (2006).

Image 3: Digitally constructed set for New York's 1920's vibrant aesthetics.

other existing work intersecting design's and cinema's fields of study focuses on either punctual functions of the graphic language, such as in creating the opening titles[3], or on the function of the production designer in conceptualizing a movie's visual project[4]. These functions, however, are mainly exterior to the film's narrative, or diegetic world[5], not influencing directly on the interpretation of a movie's plot. Other academic work focuses on a historical approach to the silent movie's intertitles[6], which are pertinent, however limited to the early stages of cinema.

Therefore, in order to contribute on what appears to be a gap in literature, the present work aims to provide an overview to the use of graphic language in contemporary movies, as a decisive or secondary element, strategically contributing in the comprehension and unfolding of a narrative. In this way, the objective is to bring awareness to the potential of graphic design in building cinematic worlds that are historically accurate, aesthetically rich, and emotionally identifiable, as well as give designers more visibility to the possible roles they can acquire inside a movie production. The purpose is to further relate the areas of graphic design and filmmaking which, although connected by a series of principles and elements deriving from similar languages, contain few academic work dealing with their intersections.

Development: Case study

The Great Gatsby (remake)

Year of release: 2013

Distributor: Warner Bros. Pictures

Budget: $105 million

Box office: $353.6 million

Director: Baz Luhrmann

Director of photography: Simon Duggan

Production designer: Catherine Martin

Art directors: Damien Drew and Michael Turner

Graphic designer and artist: Michael Wholley and Craig Mandile

Genre: Period drama, romance

An adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's Long Island-set novel, where Midwesterner Nick Carraway is lured into the lavish world of his neighbor, Jay Gatsby. Soon enough, however, Carraway will see through the cracks of Gatsby's nouveau riche existence, where obsession, madness and tragedy await.

GRAPHIC ANALYSIS: (1) CINEMATIC WORLD

The movie is narrated from the perspective of Nick Carraway's memoirs, while he is at Perkins Sanitarium, years after the events occurred – events which are set in 1920's roaring New York (image 3), characterized by the boom of Wall Street, the "American dream" and the newly rich, lavish high society. The story constantly explores the contrast between the wealthy and the poor, symbolized accordingly by Long Island's fictitious East and West Egg on one end, and New York's Valley of Ashes on the other. In Long Island, the main sets consist of Jay Gatsby's castle with his extravagant parties, Tom and Daisy Buchanan's mansion, as well as Nick Carraway's humble cottage house, positioned right next to Gatsby's. In contrast, in the Valley of Ashes – described as a grotesque place on the way to New York city – Wilson's Garage serves as the main site, and Michaelis' Restaurant

Images 4 and 5: Vibrant neon signage portraying the roaring 1920's in New York City. The Arrow Collars ads were real existing ads produced between 1905 and 1931 in New York and became famous at that time for portraying various male models wearing detachable shirt collars. The presence of the Arrow Collar ad in this scene helps set the time period of the movie. Besides, the neon signs were very popular in America from the 1920's to 1960's, especially the installations in the Times Square.

façade as part of the set composition.

The story revolves around the relationship between Daisy Buchanan and Jay Gatsby, whose love story had to be interrupted when Gatsby was recruited to war and led an impatient Daisy to marry millionaire womanizer Tom Buchanan instead. Nick Carraway is the innocent cousin who is caught up in the middle of all the drama.

(2) SECONDARY APPROACHES NEON SIGNAGE AND ART DECO AESTHETICS TO SET THE TIME PERIOD

As in the majority of movies, graphic language is commonly depicted through set signage and logos, which help to create believable filmic universes. It is no different in The Great Gatsby, especially since it is a period drama, and therefore needs to convey the aesthetics and ambience of the roaring 1920's. The movie received considerable criticism in this matter, as it intended on updating the narrative to contemporary society through a strong presence of 3D and CGI special effects, as well as soundtrack from the twenty-first century (songs from Jay-Z, Beyoncé and Lana Del Rey are part of the film's score). Certainly, these elements distance the movie from its cinematic world of the 1920's, however,

there are graphic configurations in the form of vibrant neon signage and advertisement that help situate the viewer to its historical context – through a very strong production design, which also includes costumes, hair and make-up, props, among other elements. In an interview given by Catherine Martin – production and costume designer of movie – she mentions that one of Baz Luhrmann's main design directives was he did not want a nostalgic, sepia-toned New York of the 1920's; instead, he wanted
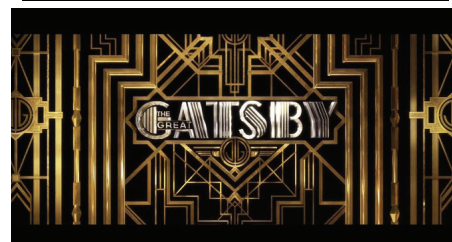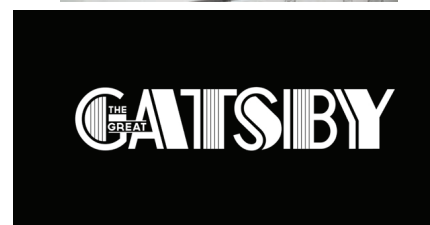
Image 6: Clock in the style of the Art Deco aesthetics, part of the set design in Nick's cottage house.

Image 7-10: Process of creating the main title lettering for The Great Gatsby, by Sydney-based studio Like Minded. The titles were later rendered in 3D by Deva Studio and were expanded into a typeface named Deco Pinstripe, created by Like Minded studio. (Credit: http://www.likemindedstudio.com)

it to feel as vibrant, modern and cutting-edge as it would have felt to Fitzgerald at the time. (Yang, 2013) Another interesting fact is that the movie was entirely filmed in Sydney, Australia, and thus the sets were built from scratch so as to depict New York, allowing for a considerate freedom in their creations, but always respecting historical accuracy.

The Art Deco aesthetic is also strongly portrayed in the movie's set design (image 6), as well as in the graphics of the opening and final credits – characterized by geometric shapes, lavish ornamentation and industrial aspects, which help set the time period. The opening and final titles, which were partly created by Sydney-based studio Like Minded, are referred to as the movie's "branding", in the studio's website. The studio created the main title's lettering, as well as a typeface, based on Art Deco alphabet designs by K. H. Schaefer, called Deco Pinstripe. The final titles and logo were further rendered in 3D by Deva Studio to create the signature Gatsby style.

In these examples, the importance of the graphic language is verified as a means to establish correct time period and setting for the movie. Especially when working with period pieces, the amount of research dedicated into creating the graphic elements is valuable, to avoid misleading aesthetics (this will include any type of visual evidence – typography, printing methods, color palettes, style of illustration, among others). The graphic language needs to accurately transport the viewer to the chosen era; thus, graphic design elements should be almost 'invisible' in the sets, in the sense that the more coherent they are with the chosen aesthetic and time period, the less spectators should notice them. Rather, the focus should be on the story that unfolds as a central plot, as the set design acts as an accessory to help build the diegetic universe of a film – unless it has a meaningful, explicit message to direct to the viewer, which can be the case.

LITERARY EXPOSITORY GRAPHICS

Although portrayed differently than from Scott Fitzgerald's original novel, the 2013 movie is narrated by a hospitalized Nick Carraway, who suffers from alcoholism, insomnia, anger, anxiety and depression. His psychiatrist suggests he writes
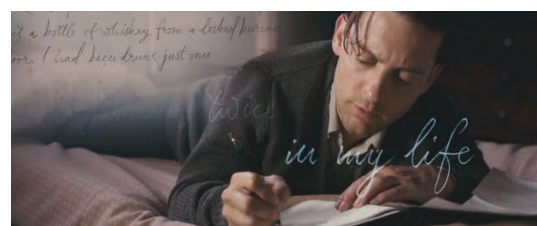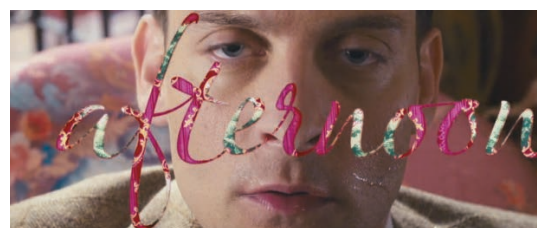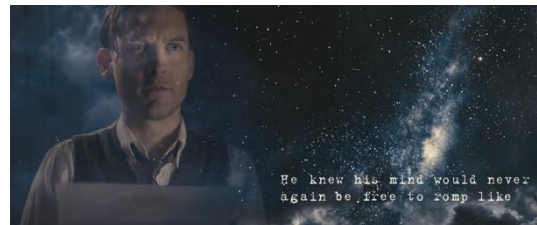
Images 11-14: Verbal, virtual dynamic, intra-diegetic graphics that reinforce the literary aspect of the movie.

about the events which led him to these conditions, as he has always been an aspiring writer. Thus, the narrative unfolds as Nick recounts and writes his memories. He first starts handwriting them in a notebook, and later on shifts to a typewriter. As a secondary approach, the movie portrays configurations in the form of virtual graphics, which frequently appear when Nick is writing or typing his memories, either in the sanatorium and/or through voice-over narration. These extra-diegetic, verbal, virtual dynamic graphics consist of the appearance of the exact same words he is narrating, only in the form of handwriting (calligraphy) or through typed letters (monospaced font, commonly used for typewriters), superimposed over the cinematographic image. They are redundant graphic configurations, as they do not include any new information in relation to the character's speech. Being redundant, it is true that they are not necessary for the understanding of the scene, and even for

the plot as a whole, however, they cannot be considered superfluous, as they do bring more dynamism, stylization, and even lyricism to the scenes, effectively characterizing the movie's visual project. The graphics appear throughout the whole narrative, and their repeated presentation emphasize the literary aspect of the movie, which is considered an extremely faithful adaptation of Fitzgerald's novel – a classic masterpiece
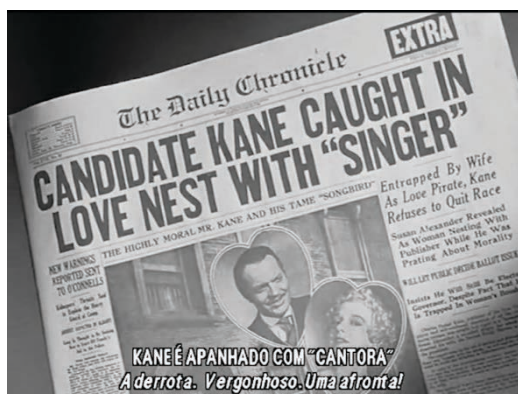

Image 15 and 16: Frames taken from Citizen Kane (1941), showing newspapers that present relevant information to the plot, which is only displayed in the graphic dimension of the movie – meaning it has to be read and perceived by the audience.

of the American literature. As Jon Reiner mentions in his review of the movie:

> The fabled lines fly from his Underwood typewriter's keys as graphics across the movie screen, a consummation between the book and the film. It's a gimmick,
> and this isn't the first movie to use it, but the invention honors the fact that there is a great novel at the heart of this hard-working but uneven film. (Reiner, 2017, para. 9)

THE USE OF THE NEWSPAPER IN THE STYLE OF CITIZEN KANE

The Great Gatsby and Citizen Kane are both classic stories about the economic upheaval and decadence of mysterious magnates, while pursuing the so-called 'American dream'. Jay Gatsby and Charles Foster Kane do have a lot in common, and perhaps that is why the 2013 movie presents a similar storytelling strategy to the 1941 American masterpiece, directed by Orson Welles. The use of a filmed graphic object – specifically the newspaper – as a significant element in evolving the narrative, serving as substitute to potential scenes, is an approach often used by Welles in his movie. In big part, this is due to the fact that Kane owns a newspaper, the New York Inquirer, and builds his millionaire empire from it. The movie was said to be avant-garde to its time, as it explores unconventional narrative structures. The use of the newspaper as significant graphic language, thus, is also part of this

Images 17-20: Frames taken from the movie The Great Gatsby (2013) that show newspapers as digitally constructed, occasionally animated objects, in the style of Citizen Kane's (1941) avant-garde storytelling for its time, with relevant headlines for the plot.
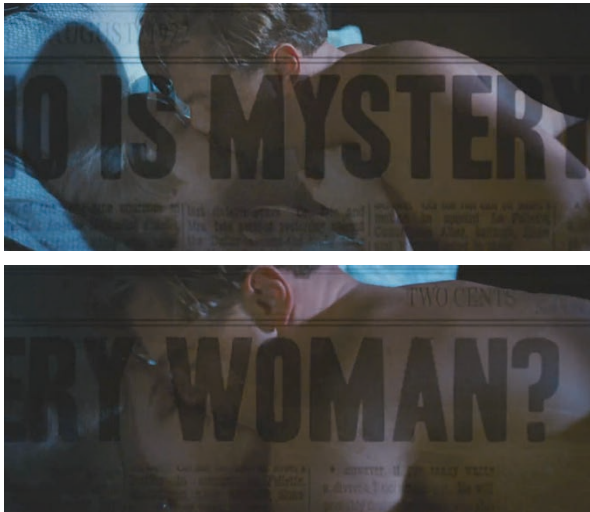
Images 21-24: Frames taken from the movie The Great Gatsby (2013) that show the newspaper headlines as virtual graphics superimposed over the filmed image, bringing a dynamic storytelling to the scenes, with information that comes from both cinematic and graphic dimensions.

dynamic intra-diegetic configurations that are part of the film's universe (images 17-20) – or as extra-diegetic expository graphics, which show exclusively the headlines as animated verbal and schematic elements, superimposed over the cinematographic image (images 21-24).

The extra-diegetic versions do break with the reality of the cinematographic image, however, it is not an issue in this film since many of the moving images consist of virtual 3D compositions and have a more unrealistic feel to them. Besides, there are also other uses of extra-diegetic graphic elements, such as the previously mentioned literary ones, which lay the grounds for the movie's graphic formula. Furthermore, these intra and extra-diegetic newspaper graphics act as complementary configurations, conveying additional information to what is being told by the narrator.

The use of the newspaper as a technique in filmic narratives may have become

unusual storytelling, as it permeates the whole narrative: the movie starts with a fictitious 'newsreel' footage of Kane's life, besides showing, throughout the movie, a series of newspaper headlines – be them physical objects or virtual graphics – that point out major milestones in his life, especially when related to speculative press buzz.

This same strategy has been recreated in The Great Gatsby, as a secondary graphic approach, with the intention of recounting Gatsby's eventful ascension and unfortunate death, highlighted by the press' reaction to major happenings in his life – which are told to the audience, as opposed to literally shown. The newspaper's graphic style and layout is explored in distinct ways, either as virtual

Images 25-28: Frames taken from the movie The Great Gatsby (2013) which show the billboard as an important character of the story. The billboard is a filmed graphic object (in this case, digitally constructed) and, therefore, is considered part of the movie's graphic language.

overused in today's filmmaking business, however, in the case of The Great Gatsby, it serves as a very pertinent and effective allusion to its preceding American cinema masterpiece.

(3) DECISIVE APPROACHES
## DOCTOR T. J. ECKLEBURG EYES BILLBOARD: THE EYES THAT SEE IT ALL

Located in the Valley of Ashes – "New York's dumping ground halfway between West Egg and the city" – lies an old and abandoned billboard displaying an illustration of blue eyes with yellow spectacles, without a face. The viewer can hardly read the billboard's text ("Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, Oculist – Queens"), as it is nearly torn apart and the print is fading away. They are not meant to be read, though, as the pictorial elements speak louder than the words. When the spectator first visualizes the billboard, Nick's words resonate in the background: "This fantastic farm was ever watched by Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, a forgotten oculist whose eyes brooded over it all, like the eyes of God." The personification of the billboard's judgmental eyes into a divine-like character of the movie is very symbolic throughout the narrative, as it is constantly aware of all the drama, lies, cheating, corruption and even tragedy portrayed in the movie. The eyes serve as a displeasing reminder of the lack of morality and ethics present among the empty, superficial high society. Furthermore, Eckleburg's eyes can be compared to Nick Carraway's character himself, as he also watches and guards everyone's secrets, however powerless in their outcome, which is what ends up driving him crazy.

The billboard appears in a considerate amount of scenes, through different camera angles and framing, including the heartbreaking scene of Myrtle's (Tom's mistress) death where, through image manipulation, her corpse appears floating in front of "God's eyes". It is not by chance that the gigantic blue eyes are also part of the movie's official poster, displayed in the background,

as if watching them all. Moreover, in the first time the audience sees the billboard, it functions in a relation of complementarity to Nick's narration. However, in the following scenes, it acts as an independent graphic configuration, as it speaks for itself. Additionally, it is decisive as it is considered a meaningful character in the movie, starring or supporting many scenes.

JAY GATSBY AS A BRAND

Finally, the last and most important decisive approach in the movie refers to the graphic representation of Jay Gatsby's enigmatic main character. He is Nick Carraway's mysterious neighbor who throws the most extravagant parties, where all of New York shows up uninvited. There are rumors and speculations about his past and how he acquired such a fortune, however no one seems to have met him. The only connection Nick has to Gatsby is through an unprecedented invitation he receives to Gatsby's party, which contains his handwriting, together with a graphic symbol – a coat of arms – and the words "J. Gatsby" printed
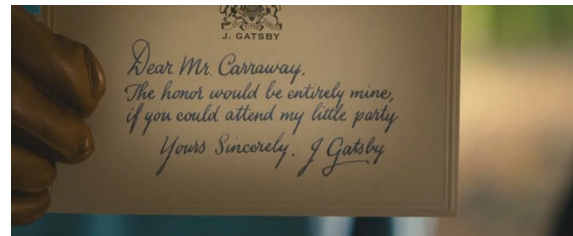
Images 29 and 30: Filmed graphic objects of a letter and a business card, containing Gatsby's handwriting and coat of arms.

underneath. This coat of arms contains Jay Gatsby's monogram[7] logo (although we can only see a small part of it from the frame), which is present throughout the entire filmic narrative, including the opening and final titles, functioning in much as an extension of Jay Gatsby's

[7] A monogram is a motif made by overlapping or combining two or more letters to form one symbol. Monograms are often made by combining the initials of an individual or company, used as recognizable logos.

Images 31-35: Jay Gatsby's monogram logo presented as virtual graphics or filmed graphic objects throughout the entire movie.

Images 36 and 37: Jay Gatsby's logo covered in dust on the floor – a metaphorical representation.

character**.**

We first see JG's logo in the opening titles, which introduces the graphic symbol to the spectator, using the Art Deco aesthetics. Its repeated appearances throughout the movie, as virtual graphics, or as filmed graphic objects, help to

into its outline, through a simple, white stroke. The simplification of the logo into vector lines occurs as an anticipation of the subsequent final credits, which will unroll through simple, two-dimensional white text – in this way, both languages connect. JG's logo is even adapted into other initials, such as CM (for Catherine

reinforce Gatsby's ubiquitous image of power and wealth – which the viewer later finds out was all for Daisy's love.

It is interesting to notice though, that as the story reaches its tragic ending, the attentive spectator can detect JG's logo in the abandoned house and backyard floors, covered by dirt and dust – which pertinently serve as a metaphor to Gatsby's death and the fall of his empire.

As the final titles emerge, JG's logo is once more portrayed, in the exact same style as the opening titles. Shortly after, the three-dimensional metallic logo is reduced

Martin, the production and costume designer), signalizing the beginning of the art department credit section.

Images 38 and 39: Final titles containing Jay Gatsby's simplified vector logo and a further adaptation to Catherine Martin's – production and costume designer – initials.

The creation of Jay Gatsby's monogram logo is part of the movie's diegetic visual identity, and further on, consists of character branding – it characterizes Gatsby in the graphic dimension and follows his life journey up until the end. Gatsby's physical appearance (distinctively played by Leonardo di Caprio) is only shown half an hour into the movie; before that, the only visual image the characters and spectators have of Gatsby is of his 'brand' – personified through his letters and monogram logo. This graphic strategy helps to spark the imagination of the viewer, in much as if he or she was reading the book. Even after Gatsby's person is acknowledged, his graphic representation is already anchored in the audience's minds, building up value and credibility to his character. The logo is also part of the movie's extra-diegetic visual identity, as it is portrayed in the opening and final titles, adapted to the needs of the credits, as well as present in other merchandising artwork. The fact that it is present throughout the entire narrative, fixing its visual meaning to the audience, makes it distinguishable as the main graphic pictorial symbol of the movie – efficiently supporting The Great Gatsby's branding.

CONCLUSION

According to the methodology defined by Helena Tude for counting graphic configurations, there is a total of 46 intentional graphic configurations identified in the movie. The two main decisive approaches – Jay Gatsby's logo and Dr. Eckleburg's billboard – constitute 16 of the 46 configurations, or 35%. Their repeated appearances throughout the narrative reinforce their significance to the critical interpretation of the movie's symbolisms. They are both approaches which explore graphic representations of characters, as an extension of their personalities. In the first case, a human character acquires a graphic dimension, in the second, a graphic object is personified as a divine-like character. These graphic explorations help to anchor the visual metaphors of the movie and to build The Great Gatsby's branding – which should be further applied to other merchandising products, as seen in the official poster. A great example of the movie's branding application is of the clothing store Brooks Brothers, who developed an entire collection inspired by Baz Lurhmann's film, in collaboration with Catherine Martin. In the present application, JG's original logo is adapted into Brook Brothers' initials, which gives a special touch to the project.

Additionally, the period movie efficiently explores the Art Deco style and aesthetics of the 1920's, both in the set composition as in the graphics of the opening and final titles, in order to help set the time period. Together with the popular neon signage and advertisements present in the United States in the 1920's, these secondary graphic approaches assist in creating believable cinematic worlds. Alongside, the allusion to Citizen Kane's newspaper storytelling method is also effectively recreated in the movie, however acquiring a more contemporary look and feel to it, through the use of virtual dynamic intra and extra-diegetic elements.

It is worth mentioning that the movie received strong criticism for its excessive use of special effects in 3D, CGI set compositions. Many film critics judged director Baz Luhrmann for prioritizing 'style over substance', which might have overshadowed the actors'

performances and emotional outcomes. However, Baz Luhrmann is well known for his energetic and vivid visual stylizations, as can be seen in his previous movies Moulin Rouge (2001) and Romeo + Juliet (1996), and is considered by many a visionary director. Even though it might not be of everyone's taste, there is purpose behind his work in The Great Gatsby, as he intended to bring a contemporary view to the novel – almost as if Fitzgerald was writing it today. Besides, the story does deal with the excessive, lavish and empty lifestyle of the newly rich. The movie's extreme visuality, thus, can be interpreted as a metaphor to the extravagant high society of the roaring 1920's – which seem unrealistic and fake.

When deciding a movie's graphic strategy, it is of utter importance to consider the director's style and vision in order to consistently combine both languages. In The Great Gatsby, the many extra-diegetic graphic configurations, as well as the physical and computer-generated intra-diegetic objects assist in building Luhrmann's fantastical and overly stylized cinematic world. The movie had an exceedingly budget of $105 million, typical of Hollywood's commercial and mainstream blockbusters, which probably justifies the exorbitant use of special effects in creating virtual 3D sets and imageries with very rich production design – reinforcing the movie's diegetic universe of the wealthy lifestyle. All of these aspects bring a dream-like flow to the movie, almost as if it were a fairy tale. By defining these attributes as part of the movie's visual project, and further identifying the target audience (they did seek to appeal to younger audiences, hence the twenty-first century Jay-Z music), the graphic strategy needs to incorporate the same characteristics. Therefore, setting aside personal opinions of the movie, the graphic approaches function consistently in conveying the director's identity, as part of a holistic audiovisual project.

Portraying a big screen adaptation of Fitzgerald's profound and eloquent literary novel is definitely a challenge, and many have failed to do so in the past (the four previous remakes flopped, including the 1974 version with Robert Redford and Mia Farrow). Knowing this, Baz Luhrmann tried to bring in an altogether fresh outlook to the movie, by adding a thick layer of exaggerated stylization and a contemporary look and feel to it – which many criticize as being unrealistic. However, his boldness in presenting such a controversial solution has to be recognized – whether one personally likes the movie or not, The Great Gatsby should be seen for its visual project.

On a final note, there is no denying the power of moving images that has been legitimized across the twentieth and twenty-first century. Motion pictures became an intrinsic part of mass culture, connecting distinct viewers and inspiring ambitious artistry and ingenuity. Whether designed to engage us through visceral, action-packed sequences or through more traditional aesthetics, films usually appeal to the masses as they portray imageries that would otherwise not be visible, inciting our senses and emotions. The ability of a viewer to connect or identify with the characters in a filmic narrative leads him or her to relate to their own personal experiences or, in a bigger level, to the surrounding world – prompting reflection and contributing to a sense of belonging. Graphic design will act as solid component to this filmic equation and should receive awareness as to its powerful effect on style and storytelling. The graphic configurations serve as adaptable signs in a movie's discourse, be it interior or exterior to its diegesis, primarily aiding in building cinematic worlds that deliver a sense of verisimilitude. Whether a movie intends on solely recreating reality or presenting a stylized visual interpretation of reality, the graphic language works through flexible approaches with the objective of reinforcing the movie's own concept of reality, conveying meaning and triggering emotions.
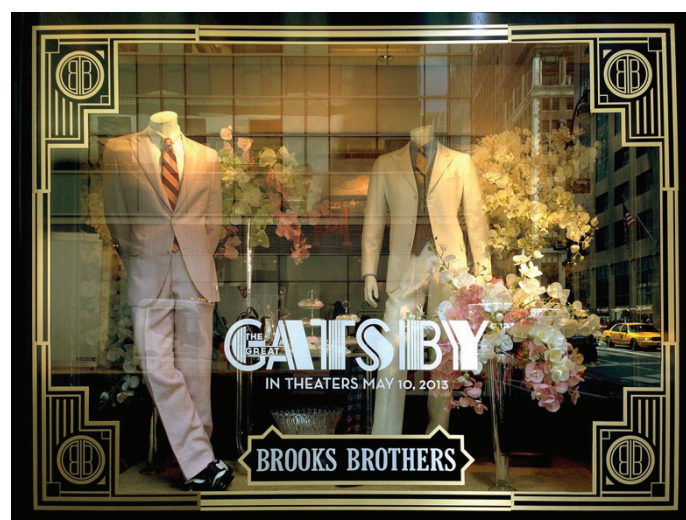

Image 40: Collection developed by Brooks Brothers in collaboration with Catherine Martin, inspired the The Great Gatsby. In the four corners of the window shop, we can notice the BB's initials in the style of Jay Gatsby's monogram logo. (Credit: Like Minded Studio official website)

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