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Film adaptation as the interface between creative translation and cultural transformation: The case of Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*

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ABSTRACT

Adaptation is prominent in many facets of the creative industries, such as the performing arts (e.g. theatre, opera) and various forms of media (e.g. film, television, radio, video games). As such, adaptation can be regarded as the *creative* translation of a narrative from one medium or mode to another. This paper focuses on film adaptation and examines its role in cultural production and dissemination within the broader polysystem (Even-Zohar 1978a). Adaptation has been viewed as a process which can shed light on meaningful questions on a social, cultural and ideological level (cf. Casetti 2004; Corrigan 2014; Venuti 2007). Nevertheless, an integrated framework for the systematic analysis of adaptations seems to have remained under-researched. The paper puts forward a model for adaptation analysis which highlights the factors that condition adaptation as a process and as a product. In this way, adaptation is studied as a system monitored by economic, creative and social agendas which nevertheless transforms the communicating vessels of the literary system and the film industry. To illustrate this, the paper discusses how the two systems and various creative and socioeconomic considerations interlace in the latest film adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* (Luhrmann 2013). It concludes on the benefits of a holistic approach to adaptation.

KEYWORDS

Film adaptation, translation, polysystem, paratexts, creative industries, *The Great Gatsby*.

1. Introduction

Adaptations play a crucial part in the contemporary creative industries. Amid the different types of adaptation, film adaptation is a motoring force in modern-day creative industries. For example, novels and comic books often serve as presold properties and proliferate film productions. Film adaptation has been considered as a genre in its own right and, according to some scholars, as the defining genre of American film production (cf. Cartmell 2010; Leitch 2008). The process of transposing a literary work onto the big screen is often discussed in translational terms and research in Adaptation Studies has touched upon the similarities between translation and adaptation as creative processes and as cultural phenomena. More specifically, Cattrysse (2014: 47-49) builds on 1970s polysystem theories in order to highlight the common characteristics between translation and adaptation as processes and products. He observes that both involve the interaction of users with texts in a socio-temporally defined context and argues that both are teleological processes, in that they are influenced by source and target (con)text conditioners, the latter of which play a pivotal role in the overall decision-making.

In Translation Studies, adaptation has been viewed as “a set of translative interventions which result in a text that is not generally accepted as a

translation” but which still represents a source text to some extent (Bastin 2011: 3). Therefore, adaptation is posited as a translation technique which takes place under a set of specific conditions and which ultimately aims at relevance rather than accuracy (Bastin 2011). This definition can be enriched by expanding on the element of creativity involved in any translational process. According to Loffredo and Perteghella (2006: 2), creativity relates to “translational subjectivity” and places emphasis on the translator’s input in the process of producing a translation. This is particularly relevant to the case of film adaptation, especially given that such projects are multi-layered collaborative processes which draw upon the creative input of the agents involved in the adaptation. Adaptation in this sense can be viewed as creative translation in that the message of the source material is filtered through the creative outlook of the adapter(s) and is projected reinterpreted on a different medium and platform. Such definition removes the focus away from equivalence between the two texts (a preoccupation with which has led to the fidelity debate in Adaptation Studies) and onto the subjectivity and creativity at work in the adaptation process. Adopting such an approach to the analysis of adaptation can allow for a more holistic understanding of the adaptation process. Put differently, it can shed light on the broader context which encourages the reinterpretation provided by a given adaptation. As translational process, adaptation is also dependent on the sociocultural context in which it takes place. As Thomas Leitch (2008: 117) puts it, “the institutional contexts within which a given adaptation, and adaptations in general, are made available to [the audience]” encourage new readings of the source material. This in turn links with the cultural transformation instigated by adaptations in that, on the one hand, the sociocultural context influences the adaptation and, on the other hand, the adaptation enriches the meaning of the adapted narrative.

The adaptation discourse resonates with concepts such as rewriting, reinterpretation and recontextualisation (further explored in 2.1). Creativity and context have been underlined as two concepts which go in tandem with analysing and understanding adaptations (cf. Elliott 2004; Hutcheon 2013; Leitch 2008; Stam 2005; Venuti 2007). This paper employs the above-mentioned concepts in order to put forward some principles towards the creation of an analytical model for the interpretation of the changes observed between source novel and adaptation (i.e. *adaptation shifts*). The adaptation shifts are examined as manifestations of creativity and cultural exigency. In this way, the shifts can be viewed as the mirror image of the various considerations that condition the adaptation process. Such analysis allows for a panoramic view of the landscape of the creative industries, showcasing how hermeneutic processes such as adaptation and translation are fuelled by creative impulse and sociocultural needs.

The following section presents an overview of the fundamental concepts that constitute the interpretive approach to adaptation shifts, thus

dissecting the definition of 'adaptation as creative translation'. Such concepts relate to rewriting, reinterpretation and recontextualisation, as previously noted, and mark the sociological turn in Adaptation Studies (Elliott 2014; Murray 2012); the adaptation process is now examined as a creative practice dependent on the socio-political context, which accommodates it, and the film industry, of which it constitutes a motoring force.

Section 3 takes Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* (2013) as a case in point in order to examine how F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic (1925) was reinterpreted for the big screen in the socio-political and cultural context of the 21st century. The analysis uses the texts as such, but also the paratextual material that surrounds the production and reception of the adaptation. Drawing upon insights by Genette (1997) and Gray (2010), paratexts as used in this paper are defined as monomedial or multimedial texts which accompany a given product (audiovisual or otherwise) and which condition the audience's experience of it.

Section 4 crystallises the factors that play a part in the manifestation of adaptation shifts and discusses the inter-relation between (re)adaptation and retranslation. Finally, section 5 summarises the conclusions and makes suggestions for further research towards a better understanding of the workings of the creative industries.

2. Film adaptation in the cultural polysystem

This section discusses the position of adaptations in the intertwined systems of cultural production and elaborates on the interplay that is thus created between the adaptation and its source material(s). This interplay is enhanced through practices that involve rewriting, reinterpretation and recontextualisation. These concepts have influenced the development of adaptation research and underscore the creativity and sociocultural agency underpinning adaptation. Moreover, André Lefevere's (1992) *patronage* is discussed in relation to the film system and as a composite of energies that monitor the adaptation process. This parallelism serves as the starting point towards the hermeneutic approach to adaptation and the interpretation of adaptation shifts. It needs to be noted that this approach relates to a *hermeneutic motion* (Steiner 1975/2012) which is present in processes such as translation and adaptation and which entails a dialectic reciprocity between source and target text that ultimately enriches and enhances the source text. In other words, both translation and adaptation seem to feature an interplay of meaning assignment and negotiation between texts and contexts which feeds into new reinterpretations and rewritings.

2.1 The systemic role of adaptation in the creative industries

According to Dudley Andrew (2000: 37), adaptations play a crucial role in film practice and production as they address an era's cultural needs and pressures. Linda Hutcheon (2013: 85) also notes that the decisions involved in the adaptation process often rely on factors pertinent to genre and/or medium conventions, political engagement and public history. This could also imply that the very selection of material to adapt pertains to the sociocultural needs and demands of a given period, as was the case with Luhrmann's adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* (see section 3). In addition, the particulars of film adaptations may be dictated by stylistic strategies and cinematic conventions of a period. Leitch (2008) highlights the institutional trajectory of adaptations in the film system and points out that adaptations set the pattern for other genres. For example, even films which were not originally produced or marketed as adaptations are frequently re-released and repackaged as such within DVD box sets (Leitch 2008: 116). Therefore, adaptations seem to hold a pivotal position in the film system and, more broadly, in the polysystem of cultural creation.

Lefevere uses the term *refraction* to describe translation. Refraction is defined as "the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work" (Lefevere 1982: 205). This definition can also apply to film adaptation, as it 'refracts' a literary work onto a different medium and encourages a revised reading of the source material. In his discussion of the literary system and the role of translation therein, Lefevere (1992: 10) notes that translation is a rewriting of a source text and that a translation carries a work of literature over from one system into another. This process necessitates a degree of compromise between the two systems; a compromise which represents the dominant constraints in these systems and which depends on the status of the text being translated and the authority of the writer and the translator. Drawing a parallel between the systemic role of translation and that of adaptation, it can be argued that a film adaptation also carries a narrative from the literary system over to the film system. Adaptation inherently entails rewriting in that the source material is repackaged and repurposed for a new audience. In this sense, adaptation as rewriting also depends on the norms and conventions in the systems involved, i.e. literature and cinema.

Mireia Aragay (2005) uses Lefevere's concept of refraction to underline that film adaptations do not merely reflect or reproduce the source novel but reinterpret it in new circumstances. She also finds the analogy of *adaptation as rewriting* apposite for the study of adaptations and she calls for insights from Translation Studies to complement theoretical perspectives in Adaptation Studies. It can be thus argued that, similarly to different translations highlighting different aspects of a text, film adaptations offer different readings of a cultural product. This links with the reinterpretation

that takes place in adaptations of literary texts. In fact, classics, such as *The Great Gatsby* which constitutes this article's case study, are also re-adapted across the years, which suggests that multiple adaptations of a text are rooted in similar reasons as retranslations: as the sociocultural and historical circumstances change, there arises the need for new interpretations (Gambier 1994; Gürçağlar 2009).

Adaptations affirm their value as creative entities through reinterpreting the source material and assigning new messages to it. Such reinterpretation is inextricably linked with the adapters' creative vision and individual intertexts. Adaptation is a context-dependent process which draws its meaning from the readings (and/or viewings) afforded in the given socio-temporal and cultural context. Casetti (2004) posits literature and film as sites where discourses are produced and circulated, and thus signify meanings considered as possible (thinkable) and feasible (legitimate) by the given sociocultural community. Therefore, adaptations do not deal merely with texts but with the complex meanings conveyed by texts in different contexts and to different target audiences. This in turn creates a dialogue between text and context and also enriches the identity of the source text, which harks back to the hermeneutic motion present in adaptation. These narrative flows between systems and eras are monitored by forces similar to those influencing translation movements and which are encapsulated in Lefevere's patronage.

2.2 Patronage, adaptation and the film system

The film industry is an elaborate system the operation of which is collectively regulated by many agents. The agendas involved often appear disparate, each trying to outperform the other with the purpose of serving different interests. This picture seems to mirror the literary system as described by Lefevere's concept of patronage. According to Lefevere (1992: 15), patronage is the influence exerted by the regulatory body in the literary system, influencing the position and circulation of translations in the wider sociocultural context and often determining the books to be translated. Patronage consists of an *ideological*, an *economic* and a *status* component. The ideological component requires that literature generally be in step with the other systems in a given society. The economic component refers to economic processes, including, *inter alia*, ensuring the writer's livelihood. Finally, the status component concerns the writer's recognised position in society and in cultural trade.

The concept of a film polysystem has been discussed in relation to audiovisual translation (Díaz Cintas 2004: 23), in that the film polysystem of a country comprises the national audiovisual products and the translated ones (subtitled and/or dubbed) along with the inter-relations amongst them. This film polysystem can be broadened so as to encompass the adaptation system. Mapping the types of patronage discussed above onto

the film polysystem, and the adaptation system, in particular, it can be argued that the ideological component in this case entails the messages that are to be conveyed by films and, by extension, it may influence the adaptation process accordingly. The economic component is to be assigned to the production aspect of the film industry, which includes the promotion and the casting of the film. Finally, the status component in the film system refers to the reputation of the producer and the director; in the case of adaptations, it can include the reputation of the source novel's author.

Patronage as conceived in this sense can have a decisive impact on film-making and, more specifically, on the adaptation process. In fact, this impact may be indirectly imposed. In regard to the literary system, Lefevere (1982: 206) points out that "patrons rarely influence the literary system directly; critics will do that for them." In a similar vein, in the film system, critics and film aficionados hold a prominent position in the cycle of film production, as they both advertise and interpret the given product, while fostering the habit of movie-going. In both the literary and the film system, reviews and advertisements play an important part in the circulation and reception of the texts involved. Such 'patrons' may also play a key role in the adaptation of certain texts. For example, the unconventional superhero film *Deadpool* (Miller 2016) owes its creation to its strong fan base, as it materialised after 11 years in the making (Acuna 2015), while the lauding reviews it received are one of the reasons leading to a sequel to be released in 2018.

The discussion so far indicates that the changes taking place in the adaptation are dependent on factors similar to those monitoring the translation process. These factors appear to relate to the financial and sociocultural make-up of the adaptation system, which can thus be posited as an inter-system between literature and cinema. In fact, the re-interpretive slant implemented in the adaptation hinges upon not merely the texts involved but also the agents taking part at different stages of the adaptation process. What is more, literature in Translation and Adaptation Studies points in the direction of specific reasons accounting for the shifts in the final product (cf. Cattrysse 2014; Elliott 2014; Yau 2016). Film-making is a creative and commercial activity (Hutcheon 2013: 7; Murray 2012: 6) and as such the decision-making occurring in the process is similarly nuanced. Moreover, as already noted in section 1, adaptation is inextricably linked with the sociocultural context in which it is produced and received. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the rationale behind certain shifts in the adaptation product are commercially-motivated, creatively-inspired and socially-oriented. These assumptions have been tested in a small corpus of film adaptations as part of a doctoral project examining film adaptation as a modality of translation (Perdikaki 2016). The analysis of the corpus has given rise to three main *interpretive* categories which can account for the adaptation shifts (i.e. the changes occurring

between a source material and its adaptation). These categories are namely *economic*, *creative* and *social* reasons.

Economic reasons relate to the commercial aspect of the film-making process. This category explains the adaptation shifts from the angle of profit-making and examines the lures deployed to attract as big an audience as possible. For instance, a well-known cast may serve as a preamble of financial success and, depending on the budget of the production, the film may feature numerous promos and trailers at frequent points until the release date. Paratexts such as the film trailer and interviews of the cast and crew may indicate the economic reasons behind certain decisions made in the film. Given the ubiquitous commercial interests vested in film productions, many shifts can be explained with this incentive in mind. However, creativity should not be understated as far as both translation and adaptation are concerned; hence the following category.

The category of creative reasons focuses on the ways in which the source material is re-interpreted on the big screen. This category examines the *translational subjectivity* involved in adaptation and looks into the ways in which the adapter's creative licence is manifested in the manipulation of genre conventions and expectations. Paratexts that may help glean economic reasons can also reveal the adapter's creative motivations. Interviews of the main agents, such as directors, producers, screenwriters and actors, can prove particularly helpful in this respect. Of course, it cannot be denied that these interviews may form part of the broader marketing campaign. Nevertheless, they can serve as platforms whereby creative licence can materialise and frame the main narrative accordingly. Creativity can also be inspired by current affairs and the recontextualisation of adaptations may suggest social overtones. This gives rise to the following category.

Social reasons refer to the interplay between a given sociocultural and spatiotemporal context and the adaptation. By means of this category, adaptation shifts are examined in relation to the treatment of social issues between source material and adaptation. This links back to the adapter's reinterpretation and creativity but further encompasses any social concerns that the adapter may project onto the recontextualised narrative. Apart from the paratexts already mentioned, which can shed light on social motivations as well, reviews by film critics and audiences can prove all the more insightful. Arguably, such paratexts may also add meaning layers not intended by the adapters; nonetheless, this is all the more telling as to the ways in which an adaptation is understood by both producing and receiving parties.

This overview of the interpretive categories suggests that adaptation shifts can be examined and interpreted from multiple angles and some categories of reasons may overlap. There is hardly a one-to-one relationship between

shifts and reasons or between reasons and paratexts. This attests to the intricate interplay of shifts, reasons and paratexts and, in turn, between the adaptation product, the agents involved, and the surrounding context of production and reception. The following section discusses the adaptation of Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* (2013) in respect to the changes between source novel and filmic text and the interpretation thereof.

3. Adapting *The Great Gatsby* for the screen: feeling a sort of tender curiosity or repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life?

The Great Gatsby (Fitzgerald 1925) is the story of Jay Gatsby, a man who throws lavish parties attended by New York's political and artistic elite. Gatsby remains a mystery to his guests, as nobody has seen him or knows anything about him apart from the wild rumours that surround his name. Gatsby's story is narrated by Nick Carraway, who is Gatsby's neighbour and ultimately his only friend.

The 2013 film adaptation rewrites the story in a new context, which, despite keeping to the 1920s, resonates with cultural and socio-political themes for the contemporary era. All in all, the plot is kept rather intact, which arguably relates to the classic status of the source novel in the literary system (Corrigan 2012). However, the adaptation makes a radical change as regards the framing device: Gatsby's story is narrated by the aspiring writer Nick Carraway, who is treated for alcoholism at a sanatorium in 1929 and recounts events that took place during the summer of 1922. The extravaganza described in Fitzgerald's novel is transposed through an exuberant cinematic style in the adaptation, which features a vivid colour palette, dazzling costumes and upbeat hip-hop and RnB music. Interestingly, the adaptation received mixed reviews, with critics arguing that the film is stylish yet empty in substance (Lebens 2013; Morris 2013; Reinstein 2013), and viewers pointing out that the film is rich in narrative essence featuring compelling performances by the entire cast (rottentomatoes 2013).

In what follows, the adaptation shifts between the source novel and the adaptation are interpreted against the economic, creative and social reasons discussed in 2.2. It needs to be noted that *The Great Gatsby* was one of the adaptations of the corpus analysed to develop the interpretive categories mentioned in sub-section 2.2. Although the corpus included both the 1974 adaptation by Jack Clayton and the 2013 one by Baz Luhrmann, this paper focuses on the latter. The analysis in the following sections will focus on the most prominent instances of shifts in order to illustrate the matrix of factors that have had an impact on the end product.

3.1 Strengthening the character dynamics

As already mentioned, Luhrmann's adaptation features a recovering alcoholic Nick whose perspective is the main narrative device of the story. The dramatic extent of the events is measured up against their emotional impact on Nick's mental state. Nick's narration serves a therapeutic role for his insomnia and an interpretive function for the audience, as he disambiguates events, characters and actions. Nick develops a close relationship with Gatsby and becomes the sole witness of Gatsby's crumbling dream as he realises that Daisy is an effigy of his juvenile dream. The film explores Gatsby and Nick's relationship in closer scrutiny compared to, for example, the 1974 adaptation by Jack Clayton. Nick calls Gatsby "Jay" twice, which is not the case either in the 1974 version or the book. Moreover, in the scene following Gatsby's death, Nick is shown mourning over an open casket flooded with voracious reporters and camera flashes. As Luhrmann has admitted in one of his interviews, he tapped into DiCaprio and Maguire's friendship in real life in order to portray a similar bond onscreen between the fictional characters (Luhrmann 2013). In addition, this led to an omission plot-wise as regards the appearance of Gatsby's father at his son's funeral. Luhrmann admits that he had to omit the appearance of Gatsby's father because this would shift attention away from Nick's devotion to Gatsby (Luhrmann 2013). The director explains that he wanted to keep the elements which he deemed relevant to his own interpretation of what the focus of the story was, i.e. Nick's loyalty and Gatsby's misunderstood naiveté. Interestingly, Gatsby and Nick's relationship competes in importance with that between Gatsby and Daisy. In fact, the interaction between Gatsby and Nick allows for a profound insight into Gatsby's inner world and mind-set. This is where Gatsby's psychological makeup and "romantic readiness" (Fitzgerald 1925: 11) are verbalised before the audience and Nick's disillusioned eyes. In this way, Gatsby is exposed as a deeply obsessed caricature of a man who was consumed by his hypertrophic ambition and unattainable dream.

The example above highlights the creativity invested in the reinterpretation of the character portrayals, on the part of both the director and the actors, as they too had the freedom to contribute their own artistic input. As already mentioned, DiCaprio and Maguire transposed many aspects of their real-life friendship onto the relationship between the characters they portrayed. In addition, Carey Mulligan (who plays Daisy in the adaptation) familiarised herself with the life of Ginevra King who was Fitzgerald's own platonic love and source of inspiration for many of his female characters, including Daisy (Smith 2003; Stevens 2003). It is worth noting that such creative liberties can be linked with an economic interest in mind. More specifically, the film features a renowned cast, which is also promoted in the three trailers of the film (Roadshow Films 2012a; Roadshow Films 2012b; ParamountmoviesDigital 2013). Given that the cast has an established career record, in terms of both box-office rating and accolades, it can be

argued that allowing them such creative licence aspired to ensure a similar success for the film adaptation as well.

The adaptation shift analysed here showed the creative and economic reasons as reflected in the amplification of the characters and their interpersonal relations. The following sub-section discusses an adaptation shift which concerns the narrative techniques deployed in the film and, more specifically, the intermediality manifested through various aspects of performance in the adaptation.

3.2 Foregrounding the intersemiotic connectivity

Jazz sounds are quite prominent in the source novel. They signify the affluent times in which the story is set and they function as a synecdoche of the extravaganza observed in Gatsby's parties. As far as the adaptation is concerned, music also plays an important role. In fact, music is part of Luhrmann's distinct directorial style (The World of Movies 2013), and *The Great Gatsby* is no exception to this.

In the adaptation, Fitzgerald's jazz music is translated into hip-hop and RnB tunes, thus modernising the sound of the narrative (Hamilton 2013; *The Guardian* 2013; *The Hollywood Reporter* 2013). As Luhrmann points out in an interview, he wished to translate the modernism invoked in the Roaring Twenties for the audience of the 21st century and this was why he employed RnB and hip-hop music in the adaptation (The World of Movies 2013). What is more, the film was shot in 3D, which was negatively viewed by some film critics (Denby 2013; French 2013). Similarly to his rationale behind the use of RnB sounds, Luhrmann has remarked that he opted for the 3D shooting mode because he found it as revolutionary as Fitzgerald's writing was for his era (Hamilton 2013). More broadly, the adapter wanted to recreate a modern-day Gatsby who would be relevant to the audience which the film appeals to. When interviewed, Luhrmann appears fully aware of the opprobrium possibly ensuing from this experiment but defends his choices on the basis of his creative inclination and his aspiration to adapt the novel for a contemporary audience. The novelty of using sounds familiar to the target audience was the director's way of reconceptualising the impact of the source material (The World of Movies 2013). In this way, the extravaganza of the story is tailored to the contemporary era and, according to some reviews, to 'Luhrmannesque' standards (Denby 2013).

Furthermore, Luhrmann weaves rich social commentary into the soundtrack, which in turn echoes the social considerations at work in adaptations (as discussed in 2.2). Influenced (or inspired) by the financial crisis of the 21st century, Luhrmann underlines the decadence of the era through the songs accompanying certain scenes. For instance, as Gatsby and Wolfsheim (i.e. Gatsby's criminal associate) draw Nick into a speakeasy, where the period's socio-political corrupted authorities

congregate, the soundtrack “100\$ Bill” (2013), which can be heard at the background of the scene, underscores verbally the abundance of alcohol consumption and prostitution. The song includes lyrics such as “Stock markets just crash, now I'm just a bill / History don't repeat itself it rhymes, 1929, still”; and “Dollars fall on the skin, some might call it sin / Politicians all move for money, what the hell are we callin' them?”. This commentary can be taken to apply not only to the time and place of the adapted narrative but can be extended as a remark on the contemporary recession and socio-political status quo. When asked about the music and the poignant lyrics, Luhrmann argued that he used the recurring nature of history in order to appeal to viewers and to highlight the similarities between the Great Depression and the contemporary socioeconomic crisis (*The Guardian* 2013; TributeMovies 2013).

Another instance where the intersemiotic cohesion and intertextual cues between film and novel are quite prominent is a scene featuring a woman singing melancholically. The scene is described in the book as follows:

One of the girls in yellow was playing the piano, and beside her stood a tall, red-haired young lady from a famous chorus, engaged in song. She had drunk a quantity of champagne, and during the course of her song she had decided, ineptly, that everything was very, very sad – she was not only singing, she was weeping too. (Fitzgerald 1925: 54)

In the cinematic transposition of this scene, the woman by the piano has a wistful look on her face, she is holding a bottle of champagne and her make-up is smudged, which suggests that she had been drinking and crying. The intermedial connectivity is further strengthened by means of the lyrics of the song that the woman is singing, which paraphrase the extract above as “I sang by that *piano* / Tore my *yellow* dress and / *Cried* and cried and cried”. It can be argued that the lyrics are a nod to viewers who have also read the book. Such viewers can derive further satisfaction from this artistic intervention as they may recognise the scene from the book and enjoy the heightened intertextuality. Nevertheless, viewers that may be unfamiliar with the source novel can still enjoy the semiotic interplay. The song culminates in a forceful refrain which repeats the phrase “I can see the green light”. The green light is a salient symbol in the story, as it signifies the flickering light at Daisy’s house, which Gatsby often gazes at from across the bay; the green light can also stand for Gatsby’s “extraordinary gift for hope” (Fitzgerald 1925: 2) and his lifelong ambition to always accomplish more.

What is more, the “red-haired lady” in the film is Florence Welch of the band *Florence + the Machine* and the song “Over the Love” (2013) is the main soundtrack of the film. Welch’s cameo in the film enables an organic embodiment of the intersemiotic translation involved in the adaptation, as the director’s note to Welch was that she act out the lyrics (The World of Movies 2013). This can be viewed as an instance of *cinematic metalepsis*.

According to Genette (1980: 234-235), *narrative metalepsis* is “[t]he transition from one narrative level to another”, achieved by the transgressive intrusion of “the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe”. Although Genette examined this phenomenon in literature, in the adaptation in question, the transgression of narrative levels takes place in the cinematic context. In the example above, the real-life singer functions as a metaleptic device for the director: Luhrmann decided to insert Welch into the fictional world of the narrative and present her as if she were reading parts of the source novel (*The World of Movies* 2013). As a result, the boundaries of the diegetic narrative level are broken down by an extradiegetic narrator who is immersed into the diegesis; hence this instance of metalepsis in the film.

It can be argued then that the adapter has exploited the available technology, the narrative capacities of the cinematic medium, and the plethora of the meaning-making resources afforded by it. The adaptation was thus rewritten for the modern-day context and was enfolded in vivid *mise-en-scène*, 3D cinematography and contemporary soundtrack. The analysis of some of the narrative techniques used in the adaptation highlights the creativity at play in the decisions that the adapter makes and these may also extend to the tonality and performativity of the soundtrack. At the same time, the discussion so far has shown that the sociocultural context in which the adaptation is situated can also spur creativity in conveying socially-charged messages and adds further layers of meaning to familiar narratives.

4. Adaptation and translation: an intersection

Film-making is an activity usually instigated and motored by economic interests. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it is a process of creative gravitas and sociocultural trajectory as well. Put differently, though the film-making process aims at high box-office returns, especially when it comes to Hollywood productions, it has the creativity of the agents involved imprinted on it, and it may also encourage a debate on the social issues it touches upon. As the analysis of *The Great Gatsby* has shown, the shifts occurring in the adaptation product are an amalgamation of a multitude of reasons related to profit-making, creativity and social relevance.

Some evidence of such interplay can be found in the paratexts of the adaptation. For example, interviews of the cast and crew shed light on their reinterpretation, thus underlining the creative reasons behind the shifts. This is the case with Luhrmann’s interviews mentioned in 3.1 and 3.2 above. At the same time, such interviews often contribute to the promotion of the film itself while offering an opportunity for the agents involved to advertise their own future projects. Other paratexts serve a clearer promotional purpose, thus aiming at capturing prospective viewers’ interest. As noted above, *The Great Gatsby* deployed three separate trailers (Roadshow Films

2012a; Roadshow Films 2012b; ParamountmoviesDigital 2013), each highlighting a different aspect of the story and intensifying the hype around the film. A common thread running through the trailers is the distinctively modern-day music which lies in contrast to the classic narrative. This can be viewed as the adapter's signature and re-interpretive stance towards the source material. The number of trailers and the marketing of the adaptation indicate the economic interest underlying this adaptation project. It is worth noting that the film was first released in the United States and then it was chosen to open the Cannes Film Festival, after which it was released in the UK (*The Film Programme* 2013). Therefore, it is clear that interest in the film was gradually and masterfully built, whetting the appetite of the audience with several pre-tasting bites.

The social exigency of the adaptation and its subject-matter is reflected on paratexts that relate to the reception of the film. Despite the mixed reviews mentioned in section 3, the adaptation and its contemporary feeling were often commented upon as a parallel to the global economic recession. The topicality of *Gatsby's* miraculous rise and precipitous fall is used as a metaphor for the recurring historical upheaval (Geoghegan 2011). Several articles dated near the release date of the film make a poignant comparison between bank customers withdrawing their savings in the United States in 1929 and the same scene occurring in Cyprus in 2013 (Churchwell 2012; Gray 2013; Theodoropoulos 2013). This also echoes with the long queues outside banks after the recent instalment of capital controls in Greece (Ward 2015).

The above suggests that economic, creative and social reasons commingle. This inter-relation in turn sets and keeps in motion the cinematic and the literary system. The popularity of adapted works can lead to a series of books on the continuation of a story and it may also mean a prolific career for the author of the source material and/or the director of the adaptation. Translation is also part of this cycle of cultural dissemination, in regard to both the source material, which may be translated into numerous languages depending on the popularity of the narrative, and in regard to the film adaptation, which can be subtitled or dubbed and exported to other countries. Shortly before Luhrmann's adaptation was released in Greece, an updated translation of *The Great Gatsby* was published. As mentioned in 2.1, retranslations depend on historical and sociocultural changes. Based on this, it can be assumed that Fitzgerald's novel was deemed as topical enough to be retranslated in a period when Greece was going through socioeconomic turmoil. Nonetheless, the fact that a retranslation of *The Great Gatsby* was commissioned in Greece to coincide with the release of the re-adaptation suggests that retranslations may also be encouraged by the flow of narratives in the adaptation system. This in turn highlights the interconnecting lines between the literary and the film system and the important role that adaptations hold in the cultural polysystem. An adaptation may resonate with the socio-temporal readiness of the receiving

context, which can have a ripple effect on the broader polysystem of cultural production.

5. Concluding remarks

As explained in section 2, adaptation is in many respects similar to translation (and it has been examined as a translation technique). Not only do both processes entail a transfer of meanings between different cultures, but they are also highly context-dependent. Similarly to translation, adaptation is a sub-system in its own right and its position in the broader polysystem is monitored by its correlation with other sub-systems. Film adaptation can be approached as a form of translation which is a conjoined resultant of creativity and sociocultural motivation. By examining the texts themselves (i.e. the adaptation and its source material) as well as their paratexts, it is possible to identify the position that a given adaptation may hold in a culture's polysystem.

The analysis of *The Great Gatsby* as a case in point showed how a classic narrative can be rewritten in a modern-day context in order to comment upon contemporary issues. This reinterpretation depends on the agents taking part in the film-making process and their own vision for the end product. In addition, being at the crossroads of the publishing and the film industry, an adaptation may shift the dynamics of cultural production, by influencing the flow of narratives in the respective systems. As Even-Zohar (1978b: 166) points out, “[p]eriods of great change in the home system are in fact the only ones when a translator [...] is willing to attempt a different treatment of text making”. In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, the socioeconomic crisis which had reached its peak when the film was released may have cued the specific reinterpretation on Luhrmann's part. What is more, according to Robehmed (2015: online), “nearly a quarter of the top 200 worldwide grossing films have been directly adapted from literature, excluding comic book or picture book translations.” This both affirms the commercial viability of adaptations and underscores the role of translation in the constellation of the creative industries. The discussion in section 4 indicates that this role can be reinforced when the socioeconomic conditions are favourable, as happened in the case of the latest retranslation of *The Great Gatsby* in Greece.

The concept of patronage, i.e. factors regulating the flow of narratives, is also germane to adaptation. As paratext analysis showed, the agents involved at different stages of adaptation-making exert their own influences onto the final product. Patronage can have an economic, creative and social dimension, as is the case with patronage monitoring translation as process and as product. The above-mentioned remarks support that adaptation can be approached as a system on its own merit which, similarly to translation, contributes to cultural production and is monitored by economic, creative and social agendas. The holistic approach to adaptation analysis adopted in

this paper can provide an outlook on the interconnections at work at different stages of the adaptation process. More broadly, it can reflect the interlaced relations at play in the creative industries in general. Furthermore, paratexts such as those used in the paper can help gauge the need for certain texts to be adapted/translated, identifying the societal relevance of such products in a specific time and culture.

From a different angle, as a pedagogical tool, this approach could be incorporated in film-making courses, since deconstructing an adaptation by means of its various paratexts can be insightful in regard to the freedom of some adapters in exploiting the amplitude of meaning-making resources. Additionally, adaptations can be used as sources of inspiration in creative writing courses, broadening the horizons of reinterpretation and stimulating students' creativity. Such analysis can be deployed in literature classes as well, with the possibility that adaptations may serve as an indication of alternative interpretations of both classics and contemporary literature. Further research into the collaborative workings between the literary and the film system can elucidate the ways in which materials are selected for adaptation (and/or translation) and the relation between these texts and the set of contextual circumstances within which the selection takes place.

Moreover, given that interlingual translation is also part of the adaptation of cultural products, its role in the process of cultural dissemination should not be overlooked. Examining adaptations and their translations can help map out the migrating routes of adaptations, which could thus yield interesting findings for cultural dissemination across (inter)national boundaries. Another variable which could be taken into account regards audience reception trends in relation to adaptations. Looking into the inter-relations between an adaptation project, its translations and its audience reception could shed light on the reasons why certain cultural products (e.g. books, films and the relevant franchise) are more popular or better received in some countries rather than others. Such an approach to cultural production may disambiguate the ways in which economic, creative and social considerations converge to a holistic notion of success, with all the associated economic profit and sociocultural importance in the creative industries.

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Biography

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