Directors Notes for Scene 5

Importance of General Themes for Scene:

The main themes of social criticism, dreams and the blur between illusion and reality all join in this scene. These three aspects should provide you with a framework for the scene’s performance.

It is important for each character to represent a different viewpoint about the theme. Gatsby must characterize the inner struggle caused by his dominant dream. It moves the plot forward by letting the audience understand the dimensions of Gatsby’s dream and the consequences it has on him. Using visual expressions such as frowning, holding his head in his arm or walking back and forth while thinking should indicate his thoughtfulness. Maybe even while talking to Nick about Daisy, Gatsby could be lost in his thoughts to such an extent, that he doesn’t listen to Nick’s questions initially, failing to respond.

Themes Representation by Character:

The audience mainly pays attention to the characters, thus try to incorporate the themes closely into his acting. For Gatsby, his dream is easier dreamt than realized. The audience notices this because he stands more upright when planning the encounter with Daisy representing self-confidence, while he is leaning against a wall and slouching when seeing her, showing his discomfort. The scene should foreshadow that he will not be able to full fill his dream in the end. Gatsby although, does not assume this yet. Integrate this optimism, by passionately planning the encounter with Daisy and by behaving uneasy throughout the preparation. This should be expressed through usage of a loud and bright voice as well as large movements.

Conflicts:

At the beginning of the scene when he tells Nick about his plan, add some confusion by pausing between individual sentences. It seems that his thoughts are coming to him while he is talking, and through the suspension of sentences this will be portrayed clearly.

Gatsby has difficulties controlling his own emotions, as he is confronted with them when he meets Daisy for the first time after five years. Try to show as clearly as possible to the audience how Gatsby is torn apart. If you exaggerate the fake casualness Gatsby is pretending to portray, when he leans against the clock, it will underline that he is only pretending. Specific body gestures could include crossing arms as well as puffing the chest. Stuttering over some of the sentences, speaking too fast and losing a bit of the calmness should emphasize the fact that, in reality, he is extremely nervous.

Later on, while talking to Nick about the encounter, he seems to be worrying continuously about the perfection of the meeting. You should show this clearly by asking Nick the questions very curiously and impatiently, maybe even repeating one question to get a quicker response.

Gatsby is rather overwhelmed by his incapability of dealing with the situation. This is underlined by Nick’s criticism. Gatsby has problems accepting his critique, which you should underline by looking down, almost ashamed of your actions. Also, avoid eye contact with Nick and fidget to show embarrassment.

Individual Objective of Character (unconscious desire):

Gatsby is unconsciously aware that Daisy only exists the way he remembers her, in his dreams and memories. Thus, afraid to lose this image of her, he holds on to the time, refusing to live in reality. This is underlined when he holds on to the clock. Here, use facial expressions to show how difficult it is for him to let go and how shocked he is when the clock is about to break. Instead of moving on, he remains in the past, stopping to develop emotionally as a person. This is underlined when Nick criticizes him of acting ‘immaturely’.

Director’s goal:

The goal is to inform the audience about Gatsby’s motivations behind his dream. Furthermore it is to develop the relationship between him and Daisy – emphasizing the contrast in feelings they share for each other. This difference in feelings should begin to be evident from this scene on, as a foreshadow for her disloyalty at the end of the movie. Gatsby remains passionate towards Daisy. She does as well, but rather as a façade. Otherwise she wouldn’t let him go so easily in the end, merely to save her life standards.

Passing on some personal tips, I greatly encourage you to be creative – on your own, and together with me! Let me know any suggestions that come to mind, and please add facial expressions and body language if you feel like it will add to the authenticity of your character. Leave the audience with the feeling that they are eavesdropping on something real.

I am looking forward to a great production.