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The Great Gatsbys

Every individual interprets a text differently. For this reason, it is not surprising that for every literary adaptation, there is a varying interpretation of the text which drives the director to create the film version in a unique light. This is certainly true in the case of 'The Great Gatsby', originally a 1925 novel written by F. Scott Fitzgerald and later adapted into numerous filmic versions. Two of these adaptations are the classic 1974 film, directed by Jack Clayton, as well as Baz Luhrmann's more recent 2013 film. Although both films are close readings of Fitzgerald's famous novel, they are extremely juxtaposed in their interpretation of the characters and deeper meaning of the story. Clayton's film is often considered a subtle, beautiful classic, whereas Luhrmann's is over the top and adjusted for the modern viewer. I believe 'The Great Gatsby' to be a complex depiction of the consequences of living the notoriously ostentatious American Dream, exhibited primarily through the downfall of Gatsby and Daisy's relationship. Through the treatment of key characters in the novel, specifically Nick Carraway and Tom Buchanan, we are able to observe the highly differential interpretations of both Clayton and Luhrmann's filmic adaptations.

Nick Carraway is the narrating character of 'The Great Gatsby', and therefore one of the most open to interpretation. While Clayton's adaptation utilizes Nick as a device to highlight the relationship between Daisy and Gatsby, which is the predominant focus of his film, Luhrmann's interpretation depicts significantly. Instead, the central focus is placed on the relationship Nick forged with Gatsby, and his own revelations about the characters surrounding him.

In Luhrmann's film, Nick is noticeably drawn toward Daisy and Gatsby's relationship, and appears to crave Gatsby's attention. Rather than focusing the spotlight on Daisy and Gatsby, his presence is noted in practically every significant scene, depicting that his interactions with Gatsby are of more importance to the storyline than those of Daisy and Gatsby. This differs greatly from Clayton's interpretation, which depicts Nick as a lover that radiates an aura of isolation as he observes the relationship between Daisy and Gatsby from afar.

Throughout Luhrmann's 2013 filmic adaptation, Tobey Maguire's portrayal of Nick spends the majority of his time lingering around Gatsby. During the scene in which Nick invites Gatsby and Daisy for tea, he lingers around and observes their

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