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“Mr. Nobody from Nowhere”: Ethnocentric Nationalism, Cultural Cosmopolitanism, and the Reinvention of Personal Identity in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Hana Mohammed Smail

Missouri State University, Hana1@live.missouristate.edu

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IDENTITY IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD’S *THE GREAT GATSBY* AND MOHSIN
HAMID’S *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST***

A Master’s Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, English

By

Hana Mohammed Smail

May 2018

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the quest for the American Dream in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, in light of the politics of ethnicity and national identity and cultural cosmopolitanism. The two novels are analyzed in the context of the city in early twentieth-century America and post-9/11 America, respectively. I interpret the texts’ quest for the American Dream as a quest for an inclusive national identity that is consistent with the cosmopolitan principles of coexistence and individual obligation toward others—beyond the social boundaries of ethnicity and culture and beyond the political boundary of citizenship. I argue that the novels’ protagonists fantasize New York City as the site of an American cosmopolitanism. However, their fantasies are shattered when the protagonists fail to achieve the American Dream and attain national belonging. I conclude that Fitzgerald and Hamid warn against the formation of ethnocentric nationalism and offer a cultural cosmopolitanism as an alternative.

KEYWORDS: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mohsin Hamid, personal identity, cultural cosmopolitanism, ethnocentric nationalism, migration, national belonging, American Dream, ethnic literature, otherness

This abstract is approved as to form and content

Matthew S. Calihman, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Advisory Committee
Missouri State University

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Approved:

Matthew S. Calihman, Ph.D.

Shannon R. Wooden, Ph.D.

James S. Baumlin, Ph.D.

Julie Masterson, Ph.D.: Dean, Graduate College

In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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INTRODUCTION

Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an 'alien' element.

— Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (19)

Migration has always been one of the most powerful and defining forces in shaping the United States since its inception as a nation, and migrant experience and ethnic awareness figure prominently in discourses of personal and national identity in American literature. Some of the prominent ethnic narratives that vividly express migrant experience include Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), Willa Cather's *My Ántonia* (1918), Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents* (1991), Gish Jen's *Typical American* (1991), and Dinaw Mengetsu's *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* (2007). These narratives capture the experience of certain ethnic and migrant populations, including Irish, Jewish, Bohemian, Dominican, Chinese, and Ethiopian immigrants. Even though the experience of each migrant group differs from the experiences of other groups, almost every migrant story encompasses the story of a protagonist who willingly migrates or is forced to leave their ancestral land and culture behind to move to a new geographical setting—and often an unfamiliar culture.

Migration is nothing new to human society. This phenomenon is as old as humanity itself, and it reflects human beings' urge to move and explore beyond their native lands and known cultural environment. In some cases, people have migrated in order to discover and colonize new territories; in other cases, people have left their homelands to survive or to find better social and economic opportunities. Philosopher and

cosmopolitan theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah observes in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*:

In geological terms, it has been a blink of an eye since human beings first left Africa, and there are few spots where we have not found habitation. The urge to migrate is no less “natural” than the urge to settle. At the same time, those who have learned the languages and customs of others haven’t done so out of mere curiosity. A few were looking for food for thought; most were looking for food. (xviii)

Despite the potential for a better life for most migrants in the city, region, or country of arrival, the newcomers often face new challenges due to their cultural background and traditions, which are foreign to the host community. Writers and social scientists examine the nature of the encounter between migrants and the host community as being between strangers (“them”) and natives (“us”), as well as examining how the migrants and locals reconstruct their ethnic and national identity.

The migrant experience in America is, on the one hand, the journey of hope in the land of freedom and opportunities: this ideal is embodied in the egalitarian notion of the American Dream. The Dream is often described as a national ethos that gives an unofficial promise of equal opportunity for success and upward social mobility. According to the American Dream, people’s biggest dreams and personal aspirations can be attained through hard work, audacity, and determination. On the other hand, the migrants’ experience in this “New World” involves the struggle to integrate into mainstream society and culture and to cope with the fear of losing their old roots and identities. In the analysis of the two novels discussed here, I interpret the quest for the American Dream as a search for an inclusive national identity that would give the protagonists a sense of national belonging without depriving them of their original ethnic and cultural identity. A brief introduction to migrant and ethnic fiction clearly shows that

the route to national belonging can be challenging and even disappointing for certain ethnic groups. Even after their assimilation, those groups often face continued stigmatization and prejudice due to stereotypes about their cultural, national, and geographic origin. As a result, many migrant and ethnic groups often feel out of place for generations. The migrant condition and experience can inspire “cosmopolitan yearning.” This yearning reflects the need of the marginalized and disadvantaged cultural groups for a more inclusive social climate that tolerates and embraces their differences. Thomas Nail calls this phenomenon “migrant cosmopolitanism”:

The migrant is the collective name for all the political figures in history who have been territorially, politically, juridically, and economically displaced as a condition of the social expansion of power. As such, migrants have always been active not only in demanding greater inclusion but also in creating cosmopolitan alternatives of their own. (193)

The migrant’s demand for greater inclusion is deeply troubling for the nativists’ national identity project, which thrives on the maintenance of supremacy of the dominant ethnic group and on the exclusion and demonization of others.

Today’s globalized world is rife with ongoing economic and political conflicts, migration crises, and the resurgence of ultranationalist and religious fundamentalism. These issues have paved the way for overt and subtle hostility and racism to re-assert themselves in the main cultural narrative. Now, more than ever, we are in need of a pluralistic cosmopolitanism that is capable of humanizing globalization and that can counteract extreme religious and nativist ideologies. In such a world, literature and art remain strong, genuine voices that enter society’s cultural psyche to address and diminish the fear of “otherness.” Two writers who look beyond their own ethnic, national, and cultural boundaries to explore racial demarcation and social exclusion are F. Scott

Fitzgerald and Pakistani-British novelist and critic Mohsin Hamid. This exploration structures Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007).

These novels vividly envision a cosmopolitanism in which national identity embraces all ethnic and cultural identities within the nation-state and gives individuals a moral responsibility towards humanity as a whole. This cosmopolitan worldview allows individuals to preserve their old identities while acquiring new ones. But such a cosmopolitanism is hampered by ethnocentric nationalism. Throughout this thesis, I focus on the tension between ethnocentric nationalism and cultural cosmopolitanism in shaping the image of the ethnic "other" in the context of urban settings like New York City. I will delineate the impact of this tension on the protagonists' senses of national belonging and personal identity.

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* represents a period in American history in which the country enjoyed a sudden economic boom, which accelerated the trend of internal migration from the heartland of the United States to its large industrialized cities on the East and West Coasts and in the Great Lakes region. The novel also portrays the New Immigration of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, a phase of US immigration history that profoundly changed the nation's demographic and ethnic composition. Citing Niles Carpenter's study "Immigrants and Their Children," Charles Hirschman and Elizabeth Mogford point out that, "in 1900, about three-quarters of the populations of many large cities were composed of immigrants and their children, including New York, Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, San Francisco, Buffalo, Milwaukee, and Detroit" (2). These immigrant populations contributed greatly to the rapid industrial

growth and urbanization that turned many metropolitan cities into emerging cosmopolitan hubs.

The era of the New Immigration was entirely coincident with a new phase in US nativism and racism. *The Great Gatsby* represents these latter developments, which took form in a new Jim Crow social order, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, scientific racism, and new restrictive immigration laws. Radical anti-immigrant movements and racist campaigns were led by prominent public figures such as Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard. Grant, who chaired the Eugenics Committee of the United States Committee on Selective Immigration and advocated legislation that restricted the admission of certain immigrant groups to the US solely based on their ethnicity and geographic origin. In *Whiteness of a Different Color*, the historian Matthew Frye Jacobson notes that the Eugenics Committee called for the use of mental tests to stop the flow of the “undesired” immigrants. Jacobson explains how a report of the committee “poured the very old wine of self-government into the new bottle of eugenics” by arguing that, “had mental tests been in operation, and had the ‘inferior’ and ‘very inferior’ immigrants been refused admission to the United States, over six million aliens now living in this country, free to vote, and to become the fathers and mothers of the future Americans, would never have been admitted” (83). The eugenicists used pseudoscientific claims to validate their belief that racial equality was impossible since the Anglo-Saxon race is biologically superior—to not only to the non-European races but also such “darker skinned” Europeans as the Irish, Jews, and Italians. Fitzgerald abhorred this rising tide of ethnic and racial prejudice, and he criticized the racialization of American identity that aimed to maintain the racial superiority of the dominant Anglo-Saxon group. He also

challenged the myth of racial and cultural purity by fantasizing New York City as a cosmopolitan hub capable of containing all cultural and social narratives.

The cosmopolitan world that Fitzgerald envisioned in the 1920s is recreated, expanded, and then eventfully shattered in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, which is set in the first decade of the twenty-first century. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a contemporary migrant fiction that was written in the aftermath of the tragic September 11 terror attacks. It engages in the debates over the ongoing issues of migration, globalization, terror, racism, and cosmopolitanism. The novel recounts the strong animosity and racial discrimination against Arab Muslim Americans and other Middle Eastern migrants in the US following the attacks. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* reveals how the post-9/11 American cultural atmosphere blurred the ethnic and religious identities of Middle Eastern migrants. Mussarat Khan and Kathryn Ecklund note that, "although Muslim is a religious label and does not pertain to race, the line between racism and religious discrimination is often blurred" (2). Hamid's novel further demonstrates how the horror of September 11 created a negative image of those who shared the religious and ethnic identity of the terrorists who carried out the attacks. Such negative portrayals of this group of migrants made them highly vulnerable to hatred and acts of discrimination.

Hamid's novel has become part of an emerging genre of "9/11 literature." Many critics believe that the literary language with which writers might describe 9/11 has not yet been completely formed. In his book *9/11 and Literature of Terror*, Martin Randall contends that "it is, of course, comparatively early to begin establishing a poetics of 9/11 representation . . . [but] critics are gradually discerning a shift towards less 'respectful'

responses. Thus the attacks will continue to figure in fiction but in more problematic and certainly more politicised ways” (131). Hamid has asserted that this novel is a “half conversation” and that the other half is left for the readers to complete. Randall values *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* for representing the “fundamental instability” of identity that is portrayed in Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, John Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), and William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) (132-34).

Among these authors, Fitzgerald has had the greatest influence on the ideology and style of Hamad’s writing. On various occasions, Hamid has stated that Fitzgerald’s works, especially *The Great Gatsby*, inspired him to write *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In an interview with Lauren Bufferd, Hamid asserted, “I think he [Fitzgerald] was a great writer, especially when he was writing at his best. *Gatsby* has definitely been an influence. It’s a small novel and hits such big themes. Also, I went to Princeton, and Fitzgerald’s literary ghost still lingers there” (“Coming of Age on the Other Side of the World”). The Fitzgeraldian undertone that echoes throughout Hamid’s work cannot be ignored. In fact, any reader who is familiar with Fitzgerald’s novel might see *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as an evocation of *The Great Gatsby*.

Hamid himself is a prominent public intellectual, and his writings have become a platform to voice his concerns about the plight of migrants and refugees, as well as the other humanitarian crises across the globe. *Foreign Policy* magazine named Hamid one of the top 100 thinkers in the world in 2013 “[for] painting a disquieting picture of Asia’s rise.” The magazine described him as “a master critic of the modern global condition, using humanization, wit, parody, and other devices to examine how the fast pace of social and economic change has affected the individual” (“Mohsin Hamid - For Painting a

Disquieting Picture of Asia's Rise”). Much like Fitzgerald’s *Gatsby*, Hamid’s protagonists fantasize about becoming wealthy and belonging to particular social and economic groups, but they are ultimately forced to question their own place, role, and personal identity within their adoptive society and the world at large.

Scholars have already written a large body of literature around several aspects of racial and ethnic identity in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. However, to date, no study has explored their fantasies of a cosmopolitan national identity that can alleviate racial and ethnic tensions and create a more pluralistic and inclusive modern society.

In his study “Ethnicity in *The Great Gatsby*” (1973), Peter Gregg Slater argues that “obsessive concern with ethnic differences has always been a part of American culture, but in some periods, this concern has been more intense and explicit than in others” (53). For Slater, the 1920s were one of the periods in which ethnic prejudice “was most evident on the surface of national life” (53), and he suggests that *The Great Gatsby* exposes the ethnic reality of the decade more than Fitzgerald himself was aware of. Slater does not fully dismiss the significance of examining whether Fitzgerald shared the racist attitudes of some of his characters, especially his narrator, Nick. However, Slater maintains that such a narrow focus on the writer’s intention not only fails—because it cannot be definitely determined whether Fitzgerald shared those views—but also ignores the fact that identifying ethnicity as a central element of the novel reveals that ethnic consciousness was as important as flappers and bootleggers in shaping the American culture of the 1920s (53). Contrary to Slater’s argument, Fitzgerald’s letter to his friend and contemporary writer John O’Hara shows that he was highly conscious of the ethnic

difference of his era. In the letter, Fitzgerald recognizes his own dual ethnic identity: “I am half black-Irish and half old American stock with the usual exaggerated ancestral pretensions. The black Irish half of the family had the money and looked down upon the Maryland side of the family. . . . Being born in that atmosphere of crack, wisecrack, and counter-crack I developed a two-cylinder inferiority complex” (Fitzgerald and Turnbull, *Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald* 503). This autobiographical reflection gives us an insight into not only Fitzgerald’s perception of himself as ethnic other but also his attitude toward the cultural backgrounds of his characters.

The cultural multiplicity of Fitzgerald’s characters is addressed in Benjamin Schreier’s article “Desire's Second Act: ‘Race’ and ‘The Great Gatsby's’ Cynical Americanism.” Schreier thoroughly examines the complexity of race and its association with American identity in *The Great Gatsby*. He notes that since the turn of the twenty-first century, a new form of criticism has emerged that claims to challenge the racialization of American identity in the interpretation of the novel by focusing on the text’s attention to various racial and ethnic identities. However, he argues that such criticism itself reinforces the racialization of American identity in two different ways. First, it promotes the notion that the novel provides a “straightforward” definition of “American” identity. Secondly, it interprets the racial and ethnic identities of Fitzgerald’s characters based “on the categorical stability of race” (158). Hence, his argument opposes the way the book has been read to proclaim the oneness of American identity. Schreier tries to rescue *The Great Gatsby* by explaining how the novel lacks faith in a singularly racialized American identity: “*The Great Gatsby* offers a means to liberate criticism of American literature from the straitjacket of an increasingly racialized Americanism” (154

-55). The notion of the oneness of American identity, Schreier argues, promotes the nativist perspective that maintains racial hierarchy. Schreier's commentary helps us avoid interpreting *Gatsby* as the symbol of a universal American character and see him as an individual with a unique identity who cannot find a sense of national belonging in a largely ethnocentric early twentieth-century America.

In "Repetition, Race, and Desire in *The Great Gatsby*," Adam Meehan claims that in *The Great Gatsby*, the attainment of a new racial identity is the object of Gatsby's desire, and that his new racial identity is attainable only through reconstructing his "racial makeup" in what Meehan, following Jacques Lacan, calls the pre-symbolic world. But Gatsby fails to obtain a new identity because he no longer has access to that world. Meehan asserts that Daisy, Gatsby's symbol of the American Dream, can "be viewed as an object-manifestation of Gatsby's desire to return to the realm of the pre-symbolic, prior to the figurative castration of the oedipal drama" (78). For Gatsby, Daisy symbolizes the fantasy of a maternal figure who allows him to return to the pre-symbolic world, where he can reinvent his non-Nordic racial identity and reconcile it with "a fantasized Nordic American past" (Meehan 78). I add that Gatsby constantly reconstructs his ethnic origin and migrant identity by performing his desired Nordic American identity.

Similarly, Hamid's protagonist, Changez, goes through the process of identity reconstruction, which is a central theme in almost every migrant work. However, critics disagree on whether and how Changez's identity is reconstructed. Stephen Chan explores the transformation of Hamid's hero in "The Bitterness of the Islamic Hero in Three Recent Western Works of Fiction," by comparing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* to

Miljenko Jergovic's collection of stories *Sarajevo Marlboro* (1994) and Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). He examines the nature of Islamic heroes in these works. According to Chan, Hamid's hero becomes a "superficially Islamic" character because he is transformed into a westernized character and remains inaccessible to non-western readers (829-30). On the contrary, Bruce King's "The Image of the United States in Three Pakistani Novels" describes the identity of Hamid's protagonist as Islamic and calls Hamid "a protesting third-worldist" (684). King accuses Hamid of being anti-American because he protests against America's growing power and calls for "international Islamic revival" (684). For him, Hamid identifies himself with those who seek to distort America's global image. From King's perspective, Changez does not undergo any identity transformation. However, I intend to prove that Changez reconstitutes his identity from a cosmopolitan Pakistani-American to an American, and that he eventually turns into a radical Pakistani nationalist and occidentalist due to political changes and his experience in post-9/11 America and Pakistan.

Changez's identity crisis post-9/11 is discussed in Richard Gray's *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11*. Gray compares Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Deborah Eisenberg's *Twilight of Superheroes* (2006) as two post-9/11 texts that place their discourse about the national and cultural identity in "an interstitial space." For Gray, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a novel in which the protagonist's identity is constantly refashioned by his loyalties, native roots, and hybrid cultures. Importantly, he discusses how Changez's attempt to reconstruct his identity through material success resembles Jay Gatsby's process of self-reinvention in *The Great Gatsby*: "Changez by his own account refashioned himself as completely and successfully as James Gatz did when he

reinvented himself as Jay Gatsby: a process that seems complete when he visits the house of his boss, Jim, located in the Hamptons—‘a magnificent property’” (59).

In this thesis, I will further explore the connection between *The Great Gatsby* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by focusing on the role of ethnic origin, national belonging, and cultural cosmopolitanism in defining the quest for the American Dream and the reshaping personal identity. My analysis deals with the concept of the American Dream as a representation of an inclusive American national identity that is compatible with the cosmopolitan notions of coexistence and human moral obligations toward ethnic and foreign *others*. This particular version of the American identity approximates a cosmopolitan nationalism that embraces multiethnic and local identities but also gives individuals the freedom to choose and develop new identities. Such a cosmopolitanism is a potential in both Fitzgerald’s America and Hamid’s America, but it remains unrealized because of the dominance of such counter-cosmopolitan narratives as racism, ethnocentrism, and ultra-nationalism. I will argue that the protagonists’ disenchantment with the American Dream reflects their inability to identify themselves with an ethnocentric American identity and expresses an unfulfilled cosmopolitan yearning. Both novels portray how the ethnocentric model of national identity not only marginalizes ethnic and racial minorities but also allows the dominant ethnic group to normalize and justify prejudice and discrimination against those minorities. Fitzgerald and Hamid criticize the ethnocentric notion of national identity because it excludes those who are considered ethnically *other*. They raise awareness about how ethnocentric nationalism dismisses the ethnic “*other*” as an enemy *other*.

The Making and Remaking of Ethnic and Racial Identity

Seeing the ethnic *other* as an enemy *other* (or evil) makes them undeserving of moral consideration and humane treatment. Those who are ethnically *othered* are often feared, demeaned, and dehumanized. The image of the ethnic *other* can be understood by analyzing how history and cultural assumptions shape and reshape ethnic and racial identities. Ethnicity is often defined as the collective cultural identity of a group of people from a specific geographical space who are bounded by a common language, tradition, religion, and history. The affiliation of an individual with an ethnic group is often determined by their conformity to the group's cultural values and traditions. Conventionally, ethnicity and race have been defined as two different concepts despite their overlapping features. The former has been ascribed to one's culture, and the latter has been associated with their allegedly distinctive biological features.

However, for decades, scholars from different fields, especially the social sciences, have rejected the biological basis of racial identity. Jacobson, whose works primarily focus on the history of race in the United States, argues that neither race nor ethnicity is a natural (biological) category, but rather a politically unstable term that only exists through *othering* "other" groups. Jacobson also notes that:

We tend to think of race as being indisputable, *real*. It frames our notions of kinship and descent and influences our movements in the social world; we see it plainly on one another's faces. It seems a product not of the social imagination but of biology. Like some mid-century liberals who saw race as a "myth" or a "superstition," however, scholars in several disciplines have recently shaken faith in this biological certainty. The conventions by which "race mixing" is understood, they point out, is one site where the unreality of race comes into view. (1)

While the existing racial categories bear strong social and cultural meanings, they do not change the fact that "race" is a human invention. Many people seem to perceive racial

categories as undisputed facts—elements of nature such as “tree,” “lake,” and “rock”—but in reality, the concept of race in itself is logically unstable, and any categorization of racial identities is a product of “conflicting or overlapping racial designations” (Jacobson 5). Jacobson does not dismiss the fact that even though racial identity is the product of human imagination, the cultural assumptions of race lead many to perceive it as a biological fact. For example, racial labels like “Caucasian,” “Eskimo,” and “Chinese” often appear natural because society has taught us to perceive them as essential identities, which can make racism seem like a natural behavior. Jacobson also contends that “racism, as Alexander Saxton writes, is ‘fundamentally a theory of history.’ It is a theory of who is who, of who belongs and who does not, of who deserves what and who is capable of what” (6). Such a premise explains the creation of the concept of “noble” and “inferior” races: a concept that still causes racial and ethnic tensions.

Jacobson believes that racial hybridity is evidence that the concept of pure and noble race is imaginary. He points out that the powerful racial groups seek to police race-mixing to prevent “passing” from one race to another. He calls such restriction on hybridity “the policing of sexual boundaries” (3). For Jacobson, “the defense against hybridity—is precisely what keeps a racial group a racial group. . . . Thus sexuality is one site at which all the economic advantages, political privileges, and social benefits inhering in a cultural invention like *Caucasian* converge and reside” (3). The nature of racial categorizations proves that racial identity is socially constructed and that Caucasians and other racial groups “are made and not born” (4).

In addition, racial identities can be understood as not only a social construct but also a performative act that is enacted by the individual to associate or dissociate

themselves from a certain racial identity. This new conceptualization of race has been influenced by Judith Butler's theory of performativity. Her essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" helps us understand that race and ethnicity, like gender and other forms of human identity, are social realities that are "constitute[d] . . . through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social signs" (519). And I would add that the cultural meanings of racial and ethnic signals are often biased in favor of the powerful social groups, creating and reinforcing the myth of racial superiority.

Historically, the myth of racial superiority not only negatively changed the attitude of the "superior" (powerful) races toward the "inferior" (powerless) races but also shaped government policies and laws that discriminated against the "subordinate" racial groups. For instance, eugenicists in the United States contributed to the passage of a series of anti-immigration laws, especially the Immigration Act of 1924. But it is worth mentioning that the second New Immigration, which followed the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, invalidated much of the Immigration Act of 1924 and made mass immigration possible from even non-European countries. Prior to the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, the anti-migrant laws measured the immigrants' fitness for citizenship based on their ethnic identity rather than their personal skills and potential. Jacobson observes that in the United States, immigration after 1877 "generated and sustained a division between those North and Western Europeans who represented good material for citizenship from the South and East Europeans and Asians whose republican credentials were suspect" (141). Unlike Black, Mexican, and Asian immigrants—and even Eastern and Southern Europeans—prejudice in favor of Western Europeans presented those immigrants as more civilized and capable of self-government.

It is also important to point out that late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century US racism and nativism influenced the Nazi policymakers and masterminds of the Holocaust genocide. Fascist dictator Adolf Hitler commended Grant for writing *The Passing of the Great Race: Or the Racial Basis of European History* (1916), and he called the book “my bible.” The book divides human races into the superior Anglo-Saxon (white) race, inferior Mongoloid (yellow) race, and “very inferior” Negroid (black) race. The Nazis used the eugenic propaganda of racial superiority of the Aryan race to justify the annihilation of millions of Jews in the death camps.

There is also a strong relationship between the worldview of privileged ethnic groups and their politics vis-à-vis other social groups. In America, the association of “whiteness” with the Anglo-Saxon settlers was enforced through their privilege of controlling important government institutions and the legal system, both during British colonial rule and after independence. Thus, Anglo-Saxon Americans were the ones who defined the concept of whiteness, which sometimes is used interchangeably with Americanness. For the same reason, the new immigrants who spoke a different language and came from other ethnic backgrounds were often *othered*, and some faced forced assimilation. Seeing the non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants as a threat to their privileges, the Anglo-Saxon race had to redefine the categorization of the white race to hamper the flow of new immigrants from entering the country. Jacobson notes that “By 1920 the ‘white’ foreign-born population was more than 13.5 million, most of whom would not have qualified for Benjamin Franklin’s appellation ‘Saxon’” (43). However, because most of them came from European countries that had faced political instability and economic hardship at that time, and because some of them were non-Protestant groups like Jews

and Catholics, they were regarded less white and, therefore, less American than the descendants of early white Protestant settlers.

Religious identity as an ethnic marker plays an important role in determining who belongs and who does not belong to a particular society. Over the course of human history, religious conformity has led to persecution and violence against religious minorities. One of the incidents that is relevant to this study is the military slavery of Christian boys, known as the Janissaries, in the Sunni Muslim majority Ottoman Empire. Being non-Muslim and non-Turkish foreigners from the Balkan regions of Europe, the Janissaries were brought up as Turkish Muslims and trained to fight against the “enemies” of the empire. The tyrannical practice of erasing the cultural identity of Janissaries was rooted in the ethnoreligious Ottoman “national” identity. In *Torn Country: Turkey between Secularism and Islamism*, Zeyno Baran argues that, like the Turko-Persian Seljuk Empire, the Ottoman Empire implemented “policies [that] aimed to merge political and ethnic differences into a single ‘national’ identity based on Sunni Islam” (14). The discriminatory policies of the Ottoman empire justified the mistreatment of non-Muslim religious minorities such as Christians, Jews, and Yazidis, as well as some minority Muslim sects (including Alevis and Druze, among others). Even though under the empire’s “millet system,” some ethnoreligious minorities—including the Christians and the Jews—had some basic religious freedom, they were still considered second-class citizens and faced several religious persecution campaigns, such as the persecution of the Alevis and Yazidis and the genocide of the Armenian Christians.

Similarly, even in the United States, where the freedom of worship was protected under the Constitution, religious identity affected the status of certain religious groups as

citizens. Jacobson notes that in the mid-nineteenth-century United States, Catholic migrants were considered incapable of being active participants in America's democracy because they were "Papists" who had given up their freedom to the authority of the church and were thus no longer "independent freemen." It was claimed that the Catholics "obey their priests as demigods" (70). Sometimes, the combination of religious and ethnic stereotypes has made the experience of the *othered* groups, especially migrants, more miserable. For that reason, Jacobson remarks that "religion [is] . . . sometimes seen as a function of race" (70). It was not an uncommon assumption that Irish immigrants were unfit to become natural American citizens because "the persistence of Irish Catholicism was inseparable from their Celtic racial identity," and their Catholic faith made them resist the fusion of their blood with that of their Protestant hosts (70).

There is also a strong relationship between one's sense of belonging and one's notion of the geographical boundaries they live in, even when those geographical boundaries are imaginative. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that we create our imaginative geography and divide the world into two halves. In particular, he explains how the concepts of the Orient (East) and the Occident (West) have been formed. The maps of these two worlds have constantly been overlapping each other and have no clear boundaries. The maps and the borders and the identity of their people have constantly changed based on who defined them. Said argues that our concepts of the East and the West are based on our perceived notion of "our" and "their" world:

I have begun with the assumption that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just there either. We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities—to say nothing of historical entities—such locales, regions, geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made. (4-5)

This imaginative geography of the East and the West has gone hand-in-hand with the myth of the superior and inferior cultures that originated from colonialism and territorial expansionism. For a colonial power to justify its rule, it has to divorce the colonized people from their natural ability of self-governance and independence and to portray them as *others*.

To show how geography is used to essentialize ethnic and cultural identity, Said quotes from influential British thinker and parliament member Arthur James Balfour, who gave a lecture to the British House of Commons about the problems that the British government had to deal with in its Egyptian colony: “First of all, look at the facts of the case. Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government . . . having merits of their own. . . . You may look through the whole history of the Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self-government” (32-33). Said believes that Egyptians and other Easterners were considered “subject races” by European colonizers like Balfour. The colonizers justified their control as the “superior race” by claiming that the colonized, by nature, could not govern themselves because they did not know themselves as well as their British colonizers knew them. For them, the civilization and the greatness of the subject race were now over, and the survival of the subject race was not possible without the support and domination of the superior race. Now the only way for the subject race to contribute to human civilization was by being subordinate to other powerful and more “civilized” nations. Thus, the myth of “lack of self-governance” was a pretext to maintain the colonial power.

Said views the notion of cultural superiority as a key element of racism, discrimination, and imperialism that have been enforced by the dominant cultures. He also redefines the terms “superior race” and “subject race” to refer to nature of the relationship between the colonizing and colonized nations. For Said, race is an ideological control mechanism. And since the discourse of culture assumes that there is a position of power that requires *others* to be subject to the rules of the dominant culture, in a colonial setting the colonizers seek to define the colonized subject in their own terms. Resistance to the colonizer’s power requires the rejection of the imposed definition of cultural identity.

One way to reject the imposed cultural identity is through dismantling the negative and inaccurate stereotypes about those who are culturally *othered*. Dismantling cultural stereotypes requires forging new ways of seeing *others* and understanding how those stereotypes have been formed. For instance, Said goes beyond the traditional study of orientalism to deconstruct the stereotypical representations of Eastern societies and their cultures. For him, orientalism is a politically charged discourse that demonizes the East and its people. His study explains how European colonizers used cultural otherness as a means not only to justify control over their colonies but also to convince their own citizens that imperialism was not to invade but to educate the uncivilized, backward, and dependent “subject races” who could not govern themselves. Similarly, Jacobson observes that US nativists during the first New Immigration used self-governance as a justification to push for the restriction of Eastern European, Southern European, as well Irish immigration. They claimed that those immigrants were members of inherently

inferior races, that they were incapable of self-governance, and that they were therefore unfit to become American citizens.

Nearly three decades after the publication of Said's *Orientalism*, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit wrote *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*. Buruma and Margalit wanted to address the misrepresentations of Western culture and the dehumanizing stereotypes of Western people in the imaginations of non-Westerners. They argue that the capitalist and liberal West is often depicted as a machine that is devoid of humanity: "for an occidental, the mind of the West is capable of great economic success, to be sure, and developing and promoting advanced technology, but cannot grasp the higher things in life, for it lacks spirituality and understanding of human suffering" (5). However, Buruma and Margalit assert that Occidentalism and hostility toward Western modernism, cosmopolitanism, and rationalism originated from the West itself and was generated by German Romanticism. Occidentalism, a powerful ideological myth, was later spread to the non-Western world and now has long been used in forms of extreme nationalism and fundamentalism by both authoritarian states and radical groups to oppress their own people, wipe out indigenous cultures, and oppose the Western values of democracy, freedom, and individualism (9-10). In that regard, both orientalism and occidentalism are major obstacles to cultural openness and the formation of civic national identity in many nation-states across the world.

The Politics of National Identity

National identity is a multi-dimensional term that is no less complicated than ethnic identity. The modern concept of nationalism is relatively new and dates back to the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While nationalism can positively contribute to the struggle of stateless peoples to achieve the rights of self-determination and independence, it is also used to justify territorial expansion in the name of national interests. Thus, nationalism can be both empowering and destructive. The most common definition of nationalism, however, is concerned with the notion of *nation* as a sovereign political entity. In *A Dictionary of Geography*, Susan Mayew defines nationalism as follows:

[Nationalism] refers to the territorial expression of identity: a sense of belonging to a group or community associated with a particular territory. Often national identities do not correspond with the territory of the nation-state; many French-Canadians, for example, view Quebec as a distinct nation and believe it should become its own nation-state.... Most states in the world are multinational states, meaning that they contain a variety of nationalities. (“nationalism”)

Nationalism can be seen as a positive ideology when it fulfills human need and desire for both autonomy and belonging. However, since the formation of a nation-state requires the existence of an ethnic entity and a geopolitical one, national identity is often an exclusive identity. Those who do not fit within the hegemonic “self” of national identity are *othered* and may be regarded as enemies of the nation.

In *Myths of the Nation: National Identity and Literary Representation*, Rumina Sethi argues that the ideology of nationalism is developed by urban intellectuals and elites who use the conception of “an idyllic authentic culture of the past” (179) and the traditions of rural areas to justify and create nationalist sentiments among rural people, who neither need nor benefit from nationalism. Sethi adds that “nationalism relies paradoxically on ‘little’ traditions of the countryside for its definitions of authenticity and purity although it is a movement initiated in the cities. The sentiment of nationalism thus builds a sense of solidarity with the peasantry, who appear to have scarcely any role in social change or processes of modernization” (179). Creating and inventing an

“authentic” and “unique” culture and heritage, along with a specific geopolitical entity, are vital in the creation of nationalist sentiments. Thus, nationalism is developed through creating differences rather than building commonality with others.

After the decolonization of many parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the traditions of Third World literature formed as a response to the new experience in the postcolonial era. At first, this literature had a positive response to the nationalism and socialist internationalism it reflected, but it soon turned into a sharp criticism as the dreams and promises of liberation movements were left unfulfilled in post-independence. In *Theory after Theory* (2010), Nicholas Birns describes the change that occurred not long after the Bandung Conference in 1955, held by the newly independent Afro-Asian countries:

Nationalism itself underwent a downturn after so many newly independent African and Asian states ended up being one-party dictatorships or democracies dominated by corruption and family dynasties. The analysis of Third World literature that hailed this literature as the product of a new post-independence mentality inevitably lost morale because of these political developments, even though, for instance, African novelists had been sharp internal critics of their countries’ governances from early on. (228)

That is why the aim of postcolonial studies is mainly to criticize the “hegemonic dominance” of the colonial powers and to demonstrate the devastating legacy of colonialism that left the indigenous people and their cultures with unhealed wounds.

Literary writers have reacted disparately to nationalist movements. In general, there have been three types of responses. Some writers see nationalism as a positive ideology that gives voices to the voiceless and liberates oppressed nations. For example, the Irish writer William B. Yeats is one of the most noted nationalist poets who supported Irish independence. Yeats also wrote extensively about the experience and struggle of the

Irish people under British rule. An opposing discourse of literary nationalism is expressed in the writings of the nationalist writers of the colonizing powers. Those writers fear the revival of the culture, art, language of the colonized people and regard decolonization as a threat to their own national identity and culture. We can associate such a nationalist literary discourse with what Stephen D. Arata calls the “narrative of reverse colonialism” (623). Arata argues that, in some British writings such as Rudyard Kipling’s *The Light that Failed* and H. G. Wells’s *The Time Machine*, “a terrifying reversal has occurred: the colonizer finds himself in the position of the colonized, the exploiter becomes exploited, the victimizer victimized” (623). These representations reveal the colonizers’ anxiety about the resistance of the colonized people against colonial rule. However, there is also another group of writers who strongly oppose nationalism of all sorts. That is because the nationalist movements in many countries turned into fascism or one party or family created a dictatorship that not only valued their group identity over an inclusive national identity but also stripped away the fundamental human rights from their own people. One of the most vocal literary voices against nationalism is the author and critic Salman Rushdie, who sees it as a threat to all humanity. Rushdie’s worldview aligns with some versions of cosmopolitanism that fully reject nationalism.

Cultural Cosmopolitan Values in the Age of Globalization and Terror

The modern concept of cosmopolitanism emerged as a humanist ideology that was “born out of the rubble of nationalism” (Petriglieri). The cosmopolitan ideology revolves around the notion that all human beings are and should be the “citizens” (cosmopolitans) of a single world community and that various ethnic, racial, national, and

political differences should not affect their status within this community. There are different cosmopolitan outlooks, and each of them has different goals in creating a cosmopolitan world. Those outlooks are not always reconcilable. The political cosmopolitans argue that the main promise of cosmopolitanism is to inspire everyone to become a world citizen with equal rights and obligations. However, that promise is impossible to fulfill without the existence of a world government. Such a government would be needed to safeguard the cosmopolitan values and rights through a universal and democratic system. The majority of cosmopolitans agree that the creation of a cosmopolitan ethos does not necessarily require a world government or a central political institution. They see cosmopolitanism as a moral and humanistic project that requires everyone to help their fellow human beings and promote universal human principles such as liberty, equality, justice, civil rights, and tolerance. Economic cosmopolitanism is a more controversial version of cosmopolitanism, and its main proponents are those economists who see the global free market as a driving force behind the creation of equal economic opportunities for everyone across the world to succeed financially, regardless of their ethnic and social backgrounds. It has to be pointed out, however, that most cosmopolitan philosophers are not in favor of economic cosmopolitanism because they see the global free market as an extension of the multinational corporations and neo-imperialism that only widen the existing economic disparity between the rich and developing nations.

Ideologically, cosmopolitanism is often considered incompatible with nationalism. Montserrat Guibernau argues that many “cosmopolitans” strongly oppose nationalism and see it a serious impediment to the cultivation of cosmopolitan ideology

for two main reasons. First, nationalism, in general, is an emotionally charged ideology that requires citizens to pledge their absolute allegiance and loyalty to their own country and its political culture, rather than to the human race at large. Secondly, nationalism has long been associated with repressive and undemocratic regimes and with the atrocities committed in the name of national interest and national identity. She asserts that “the Holocaust, the Soviet domination of the Baltic peoples, genocide in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia and the repression endured by the Catalan people during Franco’s dictatorship represent only a small sample of cases which illustrate the so-called dark side of nationalism” (14). However, Guibernau contends that nationalism can be compatible with cosmopolitanism when it forms a positive force to protect the right of existence for oppressed groups and leads to the creation of a democratic nation-state for the “whole people” within a country (26-27). Thus, certain forms of nationalism that reject ethnocentric and excessive nationalistic views can transcend national borders and help to form democratic governments and other political institutions.

Certainly, the cosmopolitan communities and the cultures associated with them exist both because of, and despite, globalization. The advent of globalization has led to an unprecedented degree of cultural interactions within roughly the last half-century. Even though cosmopolitanism grows through increasing the cultural contacts that have been brought forth by globalization, paradoxically globalization is often an obstacle to the cosmopolitan ideology. In a globalized world, the values and worldview of the powerful cultures are almost always regarded as universal, standard, normal, and correct. Thus, the political, economic, and cultural dominance of powerful nations leads to the forced assimilation of the non-dominant cultures. However, cosmopolitanism is able to defy

hegemony by countering the forced assimilation of the particular identities into a single universal identity. The cosmopolitan notion of shared moral values of tolerance and respect for cultural difference can humanize globalization and foster a healthy national and local identity. Appiah identifies two major strands that form cosmopolitan values:

One is the idea that we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance. People are different, the cosmopolitan knows, and there is much to learn from our differences. (XV)

By fulfilling their moral obligation toward others and creating a socially inclusive environment, cosmopolitans promote the coexistence of different identities and beliefs within their societies. In that sense, cosmopolitanism is a morally universalistic ideology, but it does not aspire to a single universal identity. Someone can have a strong sense of local and national identity and still consider themselves as a cosmopolitan. In fact, all versions of cosmopolitanism agree that the shared cosmopolitan beliefs are not to restrict the individual needs and freedoms but rather to maintain and expand them. Many cosmopolitan thinkers share the view that every culture has something to teach other cultures and something to learn from others through cultural conversations.

However, significant cultural exchanges do not occur without positive cultural encounters. Said believed that cultural contacts are normal and that the transformation of cultures is not only inevitable but also necessary as long as the changes benefit the culture that is to undergo the transformation:

One ought . . . to remember that all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge. The problem is not that conversion takes place. It is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore, cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these

other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be. (67)

He argues that such transformations do not benefit the receiver if there exists a “superior” and “inferior” culture because they then become a tool to erase the culture of the less powerful group. The problem with the Western and Eastern cultural contacts, Said writes, was that “the Oriental was always like some aspect of the West” (67). Said holds that, by denying the recognition of the Oriental world as an independent culture from the Western culture, the Western world always legitimized its dominance over the Orient.

The idea of the cosmopolitan society is therefore about not only the coexistence of different cultural and ethnic groups but also the willingness of these groups to share parts of their culture with each other and to create an environment that allows less dominant cultures to thrive and maintain their uniqueness in their identity. In *Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Authenticity in the Middle East*, Roel Meijer asserts that “cosmopolitanism can only manifest itself in a multi-ethnic society in which the various groups are not forced to choose between ghettoisation and assimilation. Although a multi-ethnic society is not a cosmopolitan society, it constitutes a necessary condition for the emergence of such a society” (36). For him, preserving cultural uniqueness means neither segregating racial and cultural groups nor forcing the assimilation of the minority group into a dominant culture. Thus, multiethnicity is a precondition for the existence of a cosmopolitan society, but it does not guarantee it on its own.

In *Occidentalism*, Buruma and Margalit argue that counter-enlightenment and anti-cosmopolitan movements distorted and disparaged the image of cosmopolitan life as sinful, rootless, and godless, suggesting that cosmopolitanism corrupts the human soul with materialism and prevents people from sacrificing their lives for nobler causes than

simple and normal daily life. They argue that this grudge against cosmopolitan life and values originated from counter-reformation movements and German Romanticism and now is reflected in the anti-Western or anti-modernist discourse. For the authors, cosmopolitan cities and their culture have developed because of Enlightenment values, which put humans in the center of the universe and places their dignity and interest above everything else. Buruma and Margalit maintain that this primary focus on human beings promotes cultural diversity and the tolerance of differences through liberalism and capitalism (32). They see capitalism and globalization as mainly positive factors rather than threats to cosmopolitanism.

The anxiety over the existence of cosmopolitan cities as symbols of human progress and power also has a religious background. Buruma and Margalit assert that some religious texts, or at least their interpretations, have portrayed the cosmopolitan city as the sinful city of Man that defies God's power and domination. Religious extremists often use religious texts to justify their violence and disruption of cosmopolitan life. Such extremists believe that human progress and technology become human transgressions if they do not serve *their* God and should therefore be stopped. Thus, for them, when the cosmopolitan high-rise buildings soar into the sky for purposes other than worshipping God, God punishes their inhabitants by utterly destroying not only their cities but also the people themselves. They compare the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York to the story of the destruction of Babylon, which is mentioned in influential religious texts, including the Christian Bible and the Islamic Quran. Babylon's destruction is often interpreted as God's warning and punishment for those nations who disobey him. Buruma and Margalit also claim that New York City, as one of the contemporary hubs of human civilization,

became the target of religious extremists who saw themselves as God's representatives on earth. For that reason, the attack needs to be interpreted not only as an assault on America's inherited culture of Enlightenment, but also as a reminder of the ancient myth of the sinful city of Babylon, which is known as the cradle of human civilization (21-23).

Religious extremism is not the only obstacle to the development of cosmopolitanism. Totalitarianism in general, and fascism in particular, are probably the most dangerous anti-cosmopolitan forces. Fascist dictators often intertwine government with their countries' most common religion to exploit and suppress their people. Fascist governments also often build prosperous cities to display their absolute power, but they divorce those cities from all humane features common to cosmopolitan cities: civil liberties, cultural diversity, equality, and justice. Thus, those who demolish the cosmopolitan cities and those who build the cities of power are two of the biggest enemies of the cosmopolitanism. Buruma and Margalit assert that "there are other many other ways of attacking our modern Babylons. . . . Such attacks can take the form, for example, of building new cities...cities that celebrate power instead of freedom, the power of tyrants, or gods. The city under attack, after all, is not just an urban cluster of buildings, but an idea of the city as a cosmopolitan metropolis" (45-46). The expansion of Berlin by Nazi Germany and the rebuilding of Pyongyang in North Korea are just two examples of grand cities created to project the symbol of totalitarian power. For Buruma and Margalit, the clash between fascism and cosmopolitanism is a battle between radical idealism and liberal democracy.

Founded on the core ideals of Enlightenment, especially liberal democracy and personal freedom, America is the home of many cities that aspire to cosmopolitanism.

Moreover, the internationalization of American culture can be seen in its global images. Two conflicting global images of the United States have been created in the imagination of many non-Western societies. First, America has often been projected as the land of unlimited possibilities, attracting thousands of people across the globe to seek freedom and a better life regardless of their ethnic and national backgrounds. Pankaj Marsha, however, argues that such visions of plenty “proved a deception for the billions of people living outside the west” (4). The second portrayal of America is the image of a neo-colonizer, which is often associated with American foreign policies in supporting certain autocratic regimes and its involvement in global conflicts like the Cold War and wars in the Middle East. These contradictions have created a dichotomy between America, the first cosmopolitan and democratic global nation, and America, an imperialist superpower.

While American culture has been one of the most dominant cultures in the last century due to its economic and political power, the culture itself underwent internationalization more than any other culture. Birns maintains that in the pre-9/11 era, globalization was seen as a new form of imperialism and the relative American monopoly of the world economy, culture, and politics. Following the attacks, globalization has taken a different form and has meant different things. Globalization is now also associated with “either Islamic terrorism or the aggressive US response to that terrorism” (256). Gray explains that “in the global marketplace, it may well be America that is now the biggest item on sale; in the postcolonial world, it equally well may be that the United States has now colonized the imagination. But the United States itself has become what Ishmael Reed has called ‘the first universal nation’” (21).

This study shows that Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* envision America as a "universal nation" by fantasizing New York City as a US cosmopolitan city that promotes openness and cultural exchange, celebrates the multiplicity of identity, and humanizes the differences among its citizens. In such a world, the egalitarian notions of cosmopolitanism and the American Dream would become synonymous with each other in that both share the ideals of individual liberation, equal opportunity, and social transformation regardless of the *dreamers'* ethnic origin and social background. However, the protagonists' journeys toward the American Dream and self-discovery end tragically when their cosmopolitan fantasies are shattered.

**FEELING OUT OF PLACE IN A SHATTERED COSMOPOLITAN WORLD:
MIGRANTS IN SEARCH OF PERSONAL AND NATIONAL BELONGING IN
THE GREAT GATSBY AND *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST***

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* feature migrant protagonists, Gatsby and Changez, whose fruitless quests for the American Dream symbolize their inability to obtain a stable sense of personal identity and national belonging after their fantasy of New York City as a cosmopolitan city is shattered. As noted previously, I refer to the American Dream as a vision of a pluralistic American national identity that is consistent with the ideals of cultural cosmopolitanism. I will explain that the fantasy of New York City as a cosmopolitan world soon turns into a shattered dream in *The Great Gatsby*. The dream is shattered due to the prevailing racism and ethnocentric nationalism that turn the city into a site of ethnic resentment and racial violence. Similarly, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, New York's cosmopolitanism becomes a reality, but it is short-lived and marred by the rise of ultra-nationalism and ethnic prejudice in a post-9/11 world. Being treated as ethnic and migrant *others*, Gatsby and Changez are disillusioned with their quests for national belonging. As a result, they feel out of place and become ambivalent about their identities.

In *The Great Gatsby*, the mystery around the "real" ethnic and geographical origin of Fitzgerald's hero, Jay Gatsby, presents him as a migrant or ethnic *other*. Fitzgerald introduces Gatsby as an extremely wealthy and famous, and yet highly enigmatic, character whose success in maintaining his social status to win the love of the Anglo-Saxon upper-class heroine, Daisy, the symbol of his American Dream, depends on

his ability to reconstruct his personal history and identity within metropolitan New York City.

Initially, our knowledge about Gatsby's identity and his background comes from rumors and Nick's own judgment, rather than Gatsby's true history. From the narration, we can also observe that neither the first-person narrator, Nick, who has become an intimate of Gatsby, nor the countless other people who attend Gatsby's luxurious parties know with certainty where Gatsby is from, what he does, and how he has made his fortune. What is known about his wealth, past, and connections are merely some unsubstantiated and contradictory rumors that make him an even more mysterious figure. Nonetheless, whether Gatsby was a German spy, an American soldier who fought in Germany during WWI, or a man who "sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York" (*GG* 54), the one thing that can be inferred from these conflicting rumors is that he is a newly arrived outsider whose success story can pose a threat to the privilege of the of the mainly Anglo-Saxon moneyed class.

Gatsby's threat to the upper-class Anglo-Saxons comes from being not merely a member of the "nouveau riche" but also, as many conclude, a descendant of a type of "undesired" European immigrant. His presence in New York disturbs the nativists who have inherited first-class American citizenship status due to their socially constructed racial superiority. Jacobson notes that "as [Madison] Grant saw it, in cities like New York 'old stock' Americans were being 'literally driven off the streets' by 'swarms' of immigrants — Polish and Jews" (81). Therefore, to characterize themselves as the original settlers of America, nativists like Tom and Nick need to *other* Gatsby even though they themselves are also migrants: "I see now that this has been a story of the

West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life” (*GG* 151). For Tom, Nick, and like-minded people who consider themselves, in Sinclair Lewis’s words, the “Standardized American Citizens” or “Real Folks” of America, cannot stand the fact that Gatsby, who they see as a foreigner, pursues his dream and identity in their promised land. Nick is ambivalent about Gatsby and his dream. He is alternately thrilled by Gatsby’s audacity and horrified by it. The moment Nick encounters Gatsby, who helplessly tries to reach West Egg Village, Nick establishes his identity as an American pioneer: “And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler” (*GG* 21). While Nick describes himself as an heroic American pioneer, he sees Gatsby as a foreigner.

The portrayal of Gatsby as an alien dreamer is reflected in Nick’s description of him when he sees him for the first time in front his mansion in New York: “something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens” (*GG* 33). The phrase “our local heavens” clearly *others* Gatsby and suggests that Gatsby might be just another new immigrant who has recently arrived in Nick’s America. Even though Nick does not include Gatsby as an owner of America’s “local heavens,” Gatsby see himself as such.

On the last page of the novel, Nick sums up Gatsby’s initial feelings of security and optimism about America and compares them to seventeenth-century Dutch sailors’ vision of America as the land of unlimited freedom and endless opportunities: “as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became

aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams” (*GG* 154). Gatsby's idealist version of America reflects his fantasy of New York City and its environs as a new egalitarian cosmopolitan world, where the fulfillment of one's highest dreams and aspirations is possible regardless of one's ethnic and cultural background. If Gatsby's fantasy were to become a reality, he would be able to achieve his dream of belonging.

Like Nick, Daisy romanticizes Gatsby's migrant experience. The representation of Gatsby as a new migrant can be discerned from Daisy's description of a bird that is singing in her lawn, which she believes is a nightingale that has migrated on an ocean liner to the US. She tells Tom: “I looked outdoors for a minute and it is very romantic outdoors. There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come over on the Cunard or White Star Line. He's singing away It's romantic, isn't it, Tom?” (*GG* 29). The nightingale is a symbol of beauty, freedom, and yearning in literature, as it is in John Keats's iconic poem “Ode to a Nightingale.” The bird's song perhaps reminds Daisy of Gatsby and her romantic relationship with him. Interestingly, the nightingale is also a type of bird that is native to Europe, Africa, and Southwestern Asia but not the Americas. The appearance of this migratory bird might suggest that Gatsby, like the nightingale, is a migrant. Gatsby's “romantic fairy tale” is the idealistic version of the American Dream that embodies spiritual achievements such as personal and national belonging through attaining material success. The Cunard and White Star lines were two giant British transatlantic shipping companies. The companies transported millions of immigrants

from Europe to America, especially during the European mass migration (D. Butler 254). The bird may also refer to those immigrants who were called “birds of passage” because they came to America with the dream of financial success to support their families and with the intention of returning to their old countries.

These migrants’ relative degrees of integration in America often depended on their racial and ethnic backgrounds. Jacobson points out that races are “invented categories” designed to include and exclude groups of people based on their “presumed differences,” to grant or deny them social resources (4). Gatsby understands that he must hide his “undesired” racial and ethnic identity in order to qualify for social mobility and the attainment of the American Dream. He knows that, unless he passes into the “superior” Anglo-Saxon race or at least portrays himself as an Anglo-Saxon, he will not be recognized as an American citizen in full standing. Schreier maintains that social mobility cannot give Gatsby the racial identity that the nativists require from him. Quoting from Walter Benn Michaels’ *Our America: Nativism, Modernism and Pluralism*, Schreier observes that in Gatsby’s situation, “the desire for a different future is the desire to belong to a different classThe desire for a different past that replaces [one’s racial background] should be understood as the desire to belong to a different race” (157). Thus, Gatsby needs to reinvent his past to acquire a new identity that will enable him to become an Anglo-Saxon American in the future. His first step toward achieving this desire in such an ethnocentric cultural environment is to reject the family name that he inherited from his parents, who are apparently poor farmers living in North Dakota:

I suppose he’d had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of

God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father’s business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent. (*GG* 91-92)

While on the surface Gatsby’s self-made “platonian” identity indicates the wishful thinking that makes him overly optimistic about the world in which he lives, he might have believed that identity is a social construct, not a biological one.

Given his parents’ social immobility and their agrarian social environment, Gatsby’s self-concept would be different if he believed in identity as a biological construction. According to Meehan, regardless of whether or not Gatsby’s parents were shiftless farmers from North Dakota, something is interesting and suggestive about the concept of farming in the novel. He argues that either Gatsby has come from a line of early white American settlers, in which case he is a “typical” American, or his parents are ‘itinerant immigrant farmers,’ in which case he may not be quite white (79). Meehan concludes that “ultimately, we do not come to understand his history with any more certainty” (79). While we cannot dismiss the possibility that Gatsby might have descended from migrants, there is no indication in the text that can trace back Gatsby’s ancestry to the early English Protestant settlers or the later Anglo-Saxon immigrants. However, based on the textual evidence and the historical context of the novel, I argue that Gatsby’s parents are representative of the non-Anglo-Saxon European immigrants who came to America in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Nick twice describes Gatsby’s skin color as brown and not purely white. First, Gatsby’s skin color is brown when he is a teenager doing laborious jobs as clam-digger and salmon-fisher to earn his living at the Lake Superior shores: “his brown, hardening body lived naturally through the half-fierce, half-lazy work of the bracing days” (*GG* 92). Once

more Gatsby's complexion is pictured as "tanned" while he is standing alone, looking at his guests from the marble steps of his mansion: "his tanned skin was drawn attractively tight on his face" (*GG* 55). Whether Gatsby's skin color is actually brown or it has turned brown due to the exposure to the sun, his brownness suggests that he is not an Anglo-Saxon since, as Jacobson's study makes clear, "pure" whiteness was then associated with Anglo-Saxon race.

Moreover, Gatsby's real full name, James Gatz, might suggest that he is of German descent, and German heritage had been highly stigmatized in American society since the beginning of World War I. Having a German-sounding name, he realizes that changing his name to an Anglo-American name, Jay Gatsby, could help him pass into the "pure" white race. There are also two accounts of Gatsby's religious background as being Lutheran, which can be evidence that he descended from German or Scandinavian immigrants rather than Anglo-Saxon settlers. First, we are informed that Gatsby briefly studied at "the small Lutheran College of St. Olaf" (*GG* 92) that was founded by Norwegian immigrants in Minnesota. The founders of the college were religious leaders and farmers who wanted their children to receive a religious education based on the Lutheran faith and traditions. Secondly, a "Lutheran minister" is called to officiate at Gatsby's funeral. Furthermore, the lack of solid evidence about whether Gatsby's parents (and even Gatsby himself) are native-born adds ambiguity to Gatsby's family history and allows Tom Buchanan to call Gatsby's identity into question. Michaels observes that, for Tom, "Gatsby... isn't quite white, and Tom's identification of him as in some sense black suggests the power of the expanded notion of the alien" (25). Since Gatsby does not have the pure (white) blood that nativism wants from him, he is considered less American or

even non-American.

Fearing that his ethnic origin and past prevent him from being regarded as a “true” American, Gatsby hides his family background, reconstructs his identity, and performs his new identity through language, gesture, and other signs. At first, by associating himself with Dan Cody, a white American millionaire, and mimicking some of his behaviors, Gatsby performs a new ethnic-racial persona. The moment Dan Cody asks Gatsby about his name, he renounces his old name, James Gatz, and replaces it with a new one, Jay Gatsby: “At any rate Cody asked him a few questions (one of them elicited the brand new name)” (*GG* 93). Gatsby’s new name is compatible with Dan Cody’s ethnic identity and what it represents socially. Gatsby also repeatedly uses his blueblood catchphrase “Old Sport” when he talks to Nick and even Tom to show that he is both socially and ethnically equal to them. However, Tom does not want Gatsby to call him “Old Sport” and eventually explodes: ““That’s a great expression of yours, isn’t it?” said Tom sharply. . . . ‘All this ‘old sport’ business. Where’d you pick that up?’” (*GG* 113). Tom’s aggressive remark implies that he has never accepted Gatsby as a member of his White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) society.

Knowing that his wealth and mannerisms alone do not qualify him for membership in WASP society, he feels that he owes Nick and Jordan Baker an explanation to prove he is an American and that his story is as “American” as theirs:

‘I’ll tell you God’s truth. . . . I am the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West—all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford, because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition.’ He looked at me sideways—and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying. He hurried the phrase “educated at Oxford,” or swallowed it, or choked on it, as though it had bothered him before. (*GG* 66)

Apparently, Jordan does not believe Gatsby's story, and she refuses to validate his reconstructed identity. However, even though Nick frequently questions the truthfulness of Gatsby's story, part of him still wants to believe the story and to validate Gatsby's persona: "For a moment I suspected that [Gatsby] was pulling my leg, but a glance at him convinced me otherwise" (*GG* 66). Here major characters' educational backgrounds can help us decode the connection between social elitism and ethnicity in the social and cultural context of 1920s America. We learn that both Nick and Tom graduated from Yale and that Gatsby is a self-proclaimed Oxford graduate. Both Yale and Oxford have long been among the most prestigious educational institutions in the English-speaking world, and they represent a strong pillar of the Western civilization and product of enlightenment. However, Fitzgerald uncovers corruption even in the early twentieth-century higher education system, which not only excluded ethnic minorities and women but also became a brand name and a site of social elitism rather than strictly a center for knowledge and innovation. Nick is not convinced that Gatsby is an Oxford graduate, so he inquires further into Gatsby's background by asking about what Middle Western city he is from. Gatsby replies, "San Francisco" (*GG* 66). Like his vague geographic origin, Gatsby's lavish mansion symbolizing the material aspect of Gatsby's American Dream is covered with fog: "If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay," Nick says to Gatsby (*GG* 86).

While Fitzgerald presents Gatsby as a mysterious figure with an unclear and puzzling ethnic identity, from the very beginning of the novel he offers detailed information about Nick's identity, including his lineage, geographical origin, and education. Nick starts narrating the novel by introducing himself and his family. We learn

that Nick's "family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this Middle Western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan, and we have a tradition that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch" (*GG* 20). Nick is an Anglo-Saxon American whose family has lived in the Middle West for three generations. His lineage indicates that he is also a descendant of immigrants. However, being of a Scottish-English descent, his race was considered "good material" for American citizenship in post-WWI America. From a eugenic standpoint that was held by nativists like Madison Grant, the Anglo-Saxon racial identity of Nick, Tom, Daisy, and Jordan Baker is standard, and the identity of any other racial groups, including Gatsby's, is a deviant from this standard and disqualifies them from becoming "real" Americans.

Fitzgerald underlines the uneasiness of white supremacists and nativists about changes in America's ethnic-racial makeup following the abolition of slavery and the beginning of the first New Immigration. In chapter one, Tom Buchanan warns his fellow "Nordics" of the possible submergence of the white race due to the rapid increase of the nonwhite population. For Tom, civilization is the supremacy of his race over the other less powerful racial groups; all other races except his Anglo-Saxon race are uncivilized and barbaric. He does not trust other races to maintain and develop human civilization if the white dominance ends: "'Civilization's going to pieces,' broke out Tom violently. 'I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. . . . The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved. . . . [The white race has] produced all the things that go to make civilization—oh, science and art, and all that. Do you see?'" (*GG* 27). Tom bases his pseudoscientific claim on a book entitled *The Rise of Colored Empires*, a fictional stand-in for Lothrop Stoddard's

book *The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy* (1920), for which Madison Grant wrote the introduction. This racist work sees the “‘color question’ as perhaps the gravest problem of the future” (v) and warns the white race against losing control over other races. Being “a national [sports] figure in a way” (*GG* 22), Tom himself seems to have a substantial impact on the public opinion about race issues, and his explicit racist speeches can incite hatred and discrimination against marginalized ethnic groups.

According to Slater, Tom’s division of society into superior and inferior ethnic groups not only gives him an identity that his athletic body and reputation alone do not give him but also helps him use it as a tool to attack his rival, Jay Gatsby, whose identity remains questionable (54). Through his conversation with Nick about Gatsby, we can observe Tom’s sense of superiority. Tom asserts an identity for Gatsby even though Tom does not have any factual knowledge to support his description of Gatsby’s personality:

“Who is this Gatsby anyhow?” demanded Tom suddenly. “Some big bootlegger?”
“Where’d you hear that?” I inquired.
“I didn’t hear it. I imagined it. A lot of these newly rich people are just big bootleggers, you know.” (*GG* 99)

Tom’s argument that he can determine Gatsby’s identity just by imagining it indicates that identity is anything but biological. Later, during Tom and Gatsby’s confrontation over who should be with Daisy—a confrontation that marks the climax of the novel—Tom takes advantage of the uncertainty concerning Gatsby’s ethnic and geographical origin. By calling Gatsby “Mr. Nobody from Nowhere” (*GG* 115), Tom seeks to demean Gatsby in Daisy’s eyes and to present himself as superior and in control of the verbal fight. From a cosmopolitan perspective, Tom’s rhetoric is both ethnocentric and nationalist in the way he characterizes Gatsby as a nameless and rootless stranger and an

ethnic other who should be feared and expelled. Gatsby realizes that he has everything it takes to win Daisy's love except a desirable racial and ethnic identity. By referring to people like Gatsby as "they," Tom further *others* Gatsby and marks him as a threat to the family institution in America: "next thing they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white" (*GG* 115). Tom's anxiety about intermarriage reflects both the "Nordic" upper class's fear of so-called miscegenation and race-mixing, and the emerging cosmopolitan nature of New York that facilitates makes cultural exchange inevitable.

Ethnocentric Tom, however, is not the only one who seeks to maintain his ethnic superiority. Jordan and Nick's attitudes toward the non-"Nordic" groups prove that they, too, live by ethnic prejudices and racism. Jordan's response to Tom's remark about the intermarriage between the black and white race ("we are all white here" [*GG* 115]) only reaffirms that she feels a similar sentiment toward other races. Even though Nick describes Tom's speech about intermarriage and family institution as "impassioned gibberish," we cannot ignore the ethnocentric remarks in his narration and his interactions with those characters who do not share his racial and ethnic identity. Whenever he encounters non-Anglo-Saxon Americans, his reaction exposes his racial prejudice.

There are two main reasons behind Nick's sensitivity toward ethnic *others*. First, his social status, upper-middle class, separates him from people from other ethnic backgrounds who are mainly poor and lower class. For instance, he derisively belittles the poor Finnish woman who does his housework for him and calls her "the demoniac Finn" (*GG* 83). He also expresses a negative attitude toward Southern European migrants

who live in harsh conditions, including Michaelis, the Greek owner of a coffee shop, and “a gray, scrawny Italian child” (*GG* 37) in the Valley of Ashes. The social and economic disparity is not the only thing that raises Nick’s awareness about ethnicity. Secondly, he holds negative stereotypes about other ethnic groups, and his view is reflected in the way he describes their physical characteristics. While accompanying Gatsby to New York for lunch, Nick observes that a group of strangers is looking at them “with the tragic eyes and short upper lips of south-eastern Europe” (*GG* 68). Nick’s racializing description and hostile attitude toward other ethnic groups uncover his ethnocentric sentiments.

George Wilson, who runs a garage in the middle of the Valley of Ashes, functions as a refutation of Tom’s white supremacy and Nick’s ethnocentrism. Although he is white with blond hair and blue eyes and so marked as a native-born Anglo-Saxon, he is doomed by his social class and unsuccessful business, which make him a “spiritless . . . anemic man” (*GG* 36). Wilson’s condition proves that white supremacy is a hoax invented by the economically privileged segment of the dominant races to control the poor and powerless masses. Tom constantly exploits the labor of his fellow white American, Wilson, and destroys his personal life by having an affair with his wife, Myrtle. Nick and Tom indirectly associate Wilson with other undesired racial groups. Thus, Tom’s racist preaching about unifying the white people to dominate other races is not only malicious but also hypocritical.

Nick is astonished by the fact that there are black people who are wealthy and fashionable. Shocked by the sight of “three modish Negroes” on the Queensboro Bridge in a limousine with their white chauffeur, Nick says that “Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge” (*GG* 69). He is also surprised that one of the witnesses at the

site Myrtle's death is "a pale, well-dressed Negro" (*GG* 123) Slater asserts that the word "pale" signifies the lightness of color, as though blacks turn white once they become affluent (55). For Nick, the blacks in the limousine are simultaneously a miracle because they embody the possibilities of self-reinvention and social mobility in the US, and a scandal for presuming to rise above their assigned social status. Fitzgerald's redistribution of power and prestige in the novel, at least temporally, poses a challenge to the prevailing racial order and nativist view of racial and ethnic hierarchy.

The close friendship and business partnership between Gatsby and Meyer Wolfsheim, a Jewish immigrant, gives us an insight into anti-Semitism in 1920s America. When Nick asks Wolfsheim if he helped Gatsby start his business as a penniless young man after his participation in WWI, he replies, "'Start him! I made him. . . . I raised him up out of nothing'" (*GG* 147). Gatsby, who is likely of German descent, helps build the business of Jewish immigrant Meyer Wolfsheim. This alliance between Gatsby and Wolfsheim, as members of presumably two different minority ethnic groups, enrages nativists like Tom, whose authority and social status is dependent on the prevention of the minority groups from having access to wealth and power. Slater points out that Gatsby's first mentor was Dan Cody, whose physical appearance and personal background embodied the idea of an American culture hero, a man expected to rebuild America and invest in the young generation. However, the one who actually makes Gatsby "great" is Wolfsheim, whom Nick characterizes as a "ruthless" exotic Jew (*GG* 55-56). The influence of Yiddish language on Wolfsheim's accent (he renders "Oxford" as "Oggsford" and "connection" as "gonnegtion") indicates that he is also not US-born. This symbolic shift of power from a white American mentor to a Jewish immigrant who

was considered non-white and “inferior” shows that, in New York City, social mobility is possible for racial *others*, but it still comes at the cost of conformity to Anglo-Saxon identity.

Fitzgerald hints at how scientific racism reinforces some long-established anti-Semitic stereotypes, which vilified and stigmatized Jewish people not only in the US but also across the world. Wolfsheim’s character reminds the reader of Shylock in William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (1600) and Fagin in Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* (1838), two canonical works that tend to vilify the Jewish persona. Wolfsheim plays the role of a greedy and self-serving businessman who is involved in bootlegging, fixing the World Series, and signing up WWI veterans like Gatsby in the American Legion for his personal enrichment. Nick’s ethnocentrism and overt racism toward Jews are revealed through his description of Wolfsheim’s physical features and mannerism: “A small, flat-nosed Jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril. After a moment, I discovered his tiny eyes in the half-darkness” (*GG* 69). Ironically, Nick can easily observe Wolfsheim’s nasal hair but has difficulty locating his eyes. Picturing Wolfsheim as physically grotesque, Nick *others* and dehumanizes Gatsby’s mentor, first as a Jew and second as an immigrant. One can see from our historical vantage point that such a degrading description is similar to typical Nazi propaganda, which caricatured and deformed the image of a Jew to support claims that Jews are inherently inferior and abnormal human beings and that they are unworthy of living among the “noble” Aryan race. For Nick, both Wolfsheim and his Jewish secretary, who “scrutinize[s] [him] with black hostile eyes” (*GG* 146), are aggressive, unfriendly, and devious. Nick is a racial physiognomist who shares the same views as

early twentieth-century nativists and the Nazis whose anti-Semitism led to the extermination of millions of Jews during World War II.

Some may argue that Fitzgerald's portrayal of the Jewish characters is evidence that he was anti-Semitic. Other critics are less sure about his attitude towards the Jews. For instance, Slater observes that "as for Jews, Fitzgerald admired and befriended some, but could, nevertheless, view them in terms of stereotypes" (60). However, I maintain that while it is hard to determine whether Fitzgerald himself had any unexpressed bias against the Jews when he wrote *The Great Gatsby*, the text itself merely explores the anti-Semitic sentiments of the 1920s social imagination, which have roots in both Western and Near-Eastern history. Arthur Krystal notes that Fitzgerald "was stung by anti-Semitic accusations," but it does not mean that he did not have any anti-Semitic feelings against the Jews. However, Krystal also asks if *The Great Gatsby* and *Echoes in the Jazz Age's* "obvious stereotyping [of the Jewish characters] constituted true animus. The caricatures of Jews propagated by the Dreyfus Affair around the turn of the century and by the German press in the nineteen-thirties were driven by pure hatred; Fitzgerald was simply reiterating a familiar physiognomic code" ("Fitzgerald and Jews"). From Krystal's statement, one can see that *The Great Gatsby* exposes Nick's anti-Semitism in the same way it uncovers Tom's white supremacy and blatant racism. Even though New York is presented as a multiethnic city and a site of social mobility and cultural contact, Gatsby's and other ethnic characters' cosmopolitan yearnings for a more inclusive society remain unfilled due to prevailing anti-cosmopolitan narratives, including white supremacy and anti-Semitism.

The linkage of anti-Semitism and anti-cosmopolitanism has a long history, but it

culminated in 1940s and 1950s Soviet Russia, where the word “cosmopolitanism” was paired with “Jewishness.” Appiah notes that, like Hitler, Stalin targeted the ethnic Jewish intellectuals and called them “rootless cosmopolitans.” Appiah argues that “while, for both [Hitler and Stalin], anti-cosmopolitanism was often just a euphemism for anti-Semitism, they were right to see cosmopolitanism as their enemy. For they both required a kind of loyalty to one portion of humanity—a nation, a class—that ruled out loyalty to all of humanity” (xvi). Stalin’s “anti-cosmopolitan campaigns” were based on the accusations that the Soviet Jews were unpatriotic and lacked sufficient national pride and loyalty to the Soviet Union. Thus, Stalin justified the purge of Jewish intelligentsia and promoted ethnocentric Russian nationalism by othering the Jews and describing them as rootless cosmopolitans. For him, the Jews did not have a “pure” ethnic identity, and therefore adopted the values of “foreign” cultures. Now the derogatory expression of “rootless cosmopolitan” has multiple meanings and is used by nativists and ultra-nationalists to denigrate and disparage those who have multiple cultural and ethnic identities. This assumption about “pure” ethnic and cultural identity suggests that, from a nativist and ultra-nationalist perspective, not only the Jewish immigrant Wolfsheim but also Fitzgerald himself and his hero Jay Gatsby were considered “rootless cosmopolitans.”

The image of Fitzgerald and Gatsby as rootless cosmopolitans can be inferred from their similar experiences and their ethnic backgrounds. Fitzgerald was a lieutenant in the army and went to a prestigious college (Princeton), and that he fell in love with Zelda Sayre. Similarly, Gatsby claims to have been an army officer during the Great War, allegedly went to an equally prestigious university (Oxford University), and falls in love

with Daisy. Fitzgerald's parents were from markedly different racial backgrounds. His father, Edward Fitzgerald, was a descendant of Irish and English immigrants. His mother, Mary (Mollie) McQuillan Fitzgerald, also was the daughter of an Irish immigrant. While Fitzgerald's parents were obviously more successful than Gatsby's grandparents, the author's "father's financial reversals and the family's many moves created in Scott a sense of being an outsider, of being from lower social and economic class than the children with whom he associated" (Rielly 2). Fitzgerald's autobiographical accounts provide us with a deeper insight into Gatsby and explain Fitzgerald's empathic relation to minorities. As mentioned previously, Fitzgerald described his ethnic background as "half black-Irish and half old stock American," and he became highly self-conscious about his dual ethnic background—to the extent that he experienced an "inferiority complex" (Fitzgerald and Turnbull, *Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald* 503). Since Irish migrants, even into the early twentieth century, were racially *othered* and not considered fully American, Fitzgerald might have considered himself as an ethnic and migrant other. Fitzgerald's ethnic otherness can be discerned in the image of his protagonist Gatsby. Gatsby's cosmopolitan attitude toward other characters echoes Fitzgerald's own cosmopolitan yearning and the desire for a sense of national belonging.

Fitzgerald's cosmopolitan tendencies can be observed in several parts of his novel. Gatsby's attitude toward others suggests that he somehow embodies a cosmopolitan mentality: He is the only major character who does not engage in any forms of racism or sexism, and he "doesn't want any trouble with anybody" (*GG* 48). He welcomes everyone, regardless of their social, ethnic, or cultural background. He is mentored by both an unquestionably white American tycoon and a Jewish businessman.

Such a character is a threat to Tom's, and even Nick's, ethnocentric worldview. Even though Nick is highly critical of Gatsby's ideals and aspirations and putatively "disapprove[s] of [Gatsby] from the beginning to end" (*GG* 134), he is still thrilled by Gatsby's hospitality and positive attitude toward everyone. Nick notices that Gatsby's parties bring multitudes of people together:

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that, they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission. (*GG* 48)

Most of Gatsby's guests are not officially invited, and some of them have never met Gatsby. Nonetheless, they are all welcomed and introduced at the party. It's a world in which people are not segregated by their racial, social, and gender identities, but are governed by some unwritten rules of conduct that contradict those of conservative and upper-class society. Obviously, Nick, who finds himself as a lonely and purposeless spectator at Gatsby's party, is somewhat alarmed by the sight of heterogeneous groups of guests and the rules of the party. These people come to Gatsby's parties not only from East Egg and West Egg but also from outside New York. There are also compelling similarities between the names of some of the guests and real famous people from different ethnic, national, and cultural backgrounds. Johannes van Rossen connects the names of a number of Gatsby's guests with real people. He asserts that Fitzgerald might have taken Shrader's name from August Shraeder, a German immigrant who migrated to America in the 1800s and ran a rubber products store. Rossen also states that the name of Stonewall Jackson Abrams of Georgia might be taken from Stonewall Jackson, who was

a general in the Confederate Army during the American Civil War. The State Senator Gulick can be a reference to Senator Gulick, who was born in Osaka, Japan. Cheadles was a common English name in eighteenth-century America. Mr. Albrucksburger's name resembles the name of the eighteenth-century Austrian composer Johann Georg Albrechtsberger. Willie Voltaire's name seems to be taken from the name of the French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire (1-13). Gatsby's parties thus threaten efforts to preserve social homogeneity and the long-established norms of racial superiority that people like Tom, and Nick to a lesser extent, hold dear.

In light of Meehan's psychoanalytic study of racial identity in *The Great Gatsby*, one can argue that early in the course of the novel, New York appears to emerge a cosmopolitan city where not only a presumably "darker-skinned" European American like Gatsby, but even a group of African Americans, can reconstruct their personal stories and dismantle their imposed identity. If such a cosmopolitanism is achieved, individuals will no longer be obliged to conform to a specific ethnic or racial identity in order to belong. However, New York's cosmopolitan possibility is constantly confronted and threatened by Tom's racist and Nick's ethnocentric narratives. Such narratives create a symbolic world where identities are already constructed, and the rules of the dominant group will punish any attempt to redefine them. Tom's narrative, in particular, is so powerful that it shatters the world of Gatsby and other members of the ethnic minority groups. Tom uses his power and social status to control Gatsby's and other minority groups members' narratives and to keep Gatsby in his past. For Tom, policing racial and ethnic categories is a control mechanism that allows him to maintain his supremacy.

Schreier argues that Gatsby's behavior erodes white supremacy since his parties have become a site of social and cultural gatherings that attract people from different social and ethnic backgrounds. For that reason, Gatsby is a threat to the nativist fantasy of racialized American identity. The cosmopolitan world is often described as the world of strangers, and Gatsby admits that he lives in such a world: "I didn't want you to think I was just some nobody. You see, I usually find myself among strangers because I drift here and there trying to forget the sad thing that happened to me" (*GG* 67). Like Fitzgerald, his hero feels that he is an outsider and has a problematic past. Biographer Andrew Hook notes that Fitzgerald's early years were "fraught and problematic" and he felt inferior due to his social background (6). Gatsby's ultimate desire is to find a strong sense of belonging and be accepted by others.

Nick's skeptical view about Gatsby's motivation and the truthfulness of his stories suggest their different worldviews and identities. Nick soon evolves an anti-cosmopolitan attitude. He neither fully adapts to living in New York City nor appreciates its emerging cosmopolitan nature that is the object of Gatsby's earnest desire. Buruma and Margalit suggest cosmopolitan centers like New York City "stand for something particularly hateful in the eyes of those who [seek] to eradicate the impurities of urban civilization with dreams of spiritual or racial purity" (23). Nick does not believe that the beauty and purity of the American Dream can be achieved in cosmopolitan New York since the city is no longer a "fresh, green breast of the new world" (*GG* 217-18) but rather a corrupt and rootless place that lacks spirituality:

I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others—poor young clerks who

loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner—young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life. (*GG* 60)

For Nick, the fulfillment of the American Dream as an exclusive American identity is still possible if it is pursued in his native Midwest or in other less ethnically diverse regions of the country—but not in New York, a city whose spirit is corrupted with the arrival of “strange” migrants. Nick’s version of the American Dream is parochial, and it is built around the ethnocentric American national identity. Nick has a sense of nostalgia for the Middle West that is absent in *Gatsby*. For Nick, the Middle West represents the “uncorrupted” part of the United States that has not lost its authenticity yet. After the death of Gatsby, he finds the East haunting and “distorted beyond [his] eyes' power of correction” (*GG* 151), and therefore he decides to return to his native Middle West: “I see now that this has been the story of the West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and we perhaps possessed some deficiencies in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life” (*GG* 151). Nick returns to the Midwest in something of a defeat since his return coincides with the surrender of his idealism.

Feeling defeated and being disgusted by New York’s openness and emerging cosmopolitanism, Nick pushes for the revival of ethnocentric nationalism in the Midwest by combining an idealist picture of the industrialized Midwest with its “authentic” traditions. Nick’s description of the Midwest reveals his yearning for its railroads, cities, and “unique” traditions: “That's my Middle West—not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns, but the thrilling returning trains of my youth.... I am part of that . . . a

little complacent from growing up in the Carraway house in a city where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name" (*GG* 150-51).

At the beginning of the novel, Nick describes the Midwest as "the ragged edge of the universe" (*GG* 21), but now he sees it as an idealistic place to promote his own version of American national identity. For him, the Middle West represents cultural purity and traditionalism. Nick prefers his own provincialism over the emerging cosmopolitanism of New York. It is important to note that cosmopolitanism is not "an unpleasant posture of superiority toward the putative provincial" (Appiah xiii) but rather a pluralistic ideology that promotes coexistence of multiple identities and loyalties and also counters ethnocentrism. However, Nick's version of American national identity is ethnocentric, and it is not compatible with cosmopolitanism since it is based on racial and cultural purity. Hence, even though he enjoys the industrial and technological developments of the metropolitan city, he is troubled by its hybrid culture. At the end of his narration, Nick strongly express his dissatisfaction with the East: "Even when the east excited me most, even when I was keenly aware of its superiority to the broad, sprawling, swollen towns beyond Ohio, with their interminable inquisitions which only spared children and the very old—even then it had always for me a quality of distortion" (*GG* 152). Unsatisfied in New York City, Tom and Daisy likewise move back to the Midwest. However, Gatsby never leaves the city and prefers to stay there until his death.

After changing his family name, denying his ancestry, and earning massive wealth, Gatsby believes that he can secure the ideal white social status that is necessary to win Daisy. Daisy becomes the object that manifests his desire to obtain the self-identity that was long ago created in the world of his dreams, a desire he had started to pursue as

soon as he left his parents as an adolescent. In the beginning, Gatsby thinks that since his money bought him a luxurious lifestyle, it can also help him “repeat [his] past” with Daisy: “‘Can’t repeat the past?’ he cried incredulously. ‘Why, of course, you can!’” (*GG* 100). However, now Gatsby is denied access to this past that stands for his temporary passing into the Anglo-Saxon race, due to Daisy’s marriage with Tom and the partial revelation of Gatsby’s buried secrets about his background. Daisy has now become a part of Tom’s identity through a social contract, marriage, and has even taken his family name, Buchanan. Since identity needs to be performed through speech and act, Gatsby concludes that he can win Daisy only if Daisy verbally tells Tom that she never loved him: “[Gatsby] wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: ‘I never loved you’” (*GG* 100). However, Daisy feels overburdened by this request: “‘Oh, you want too much!’ she cried to Gatsby” (*GG* 117). Gatsby is now torn between his old and new selves because he has already renounced his original identity. Symbolically, Gatsby is dead from the moment he realizes that Daisy has no intention to leave Tom for him and he can never obtain the desired identity that was embodied in Daisy’s love. For that reason, one can argue that *The Great Gatsby* underlines an ethnocentric nationalism that is hidden behind the curtain of the “romantic sentimentalism” that tends to fit individuals into (a racialized) national identity. Hence, *The Great Gatsby* is about both a cosmopolitan possibility and a reality that remains constrained by racism and nationalism.

Published nearly a century after the publication of *The Great Gatsby*, Hamid ‘s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* echoes the importance of constructing an inclusive national identity that guarantees national belonging to all individuals within a country.

Hamid's novel is the story of a Pakistani-born and Gatsby-like protagonist named Changez, who pursues America's immigrant dream as a gifted and ambitious Princeton graduate. His intelligence and strong work ethic enable him to work as a financial consultant for a prestigious "valuation" company named Underwood Samson in New York City. His job guarantees him professional success and a luxurious lifestyle. He also falls in love with Erica, a wealthy fellow student and a Manhattan native. However, the unexpected 9/11 terrorist attacks capsize his position, and he starts to feel out of place in America, a country with which he once fully identified. His uneasiness about working in a now alien environment forces him to quit his career at the American company. Simultaneously, his relationship with Erica deteriorates as Erica is haunted by the memories of her deceased ex-boyfriend Chris, and her grief is deepened by the trauma of the 9/11 attacks. As a result, Changez permanently leaves the United States and returns to Pakistan in order to mentor college students and becomes a radical nationalist amid the country's political violence and unrest.

Changez, the novel's narrator, recalls the history of his failed immigrant dream and expresses his ambivalent feelings toward America and its capitalist system to an unnamed American stranger, who he meets at a café in Old Anarkali, Lahore, Pakistan. The identity of the American stranger remains unclear throughout the novel, but his uneasy reaction to the story might suggest that he is on either a business or intelligence mission. Changez remains an unreliable first-person narrator, since his voice controls the entire narration and we never directly hear a single word from the American character, whom Changez addresses as "you." However, Hamid's narrative technique is highly effective because it positions readers in place of the American interlocutor and challenges

them to respond to Changez's shifting loyalty and radical views, and to complete the second half of conversation with their own answers.

Even though Changez's ethnic background is not as mysterious as Gatsby's, his identity and migrant experience is no less complicated. Hamid's choice of his protagonist's name and the title of the novel are both symbolic and puzzling.

Unsurprisingly, Changez's non-Western name, his upbringing in the majority-Muslim Pakistan, and his generally unfavorable view of America (coupled with the word "fundamentalist" in the title) might make one label him as an "Islamic" fundamentalist. However, the novel uses the word "fundamentals" to refer to the rules of Underwood Samson that its employees have to follow: "*Focus on the fundamental*. This was Underwood Samson's guiding principle" (RF 98). After finding himself as an outsider following September 11, Changez associates the "fundamentals" with the principles of American corporate capitalism and the transnational corporations that harm small local businesses all over the world, but he still reluctantly commits his "professionalism" and "soft skills" to the system.

Moreover, Changez's name does not have any apparent Islamic connotation, but suggests the fluidity of his identity and the series of changes that he undergoes. Randall asserts that Changez's name "suggests 'change': the narrator's sense of self shifts and alters throughout the novel" (160). Randall also notes that "Changez is the Urdu version of 'Ghengiz.'" Genghis Khan was a mighty Mongolian emperor who founded the Mongol Empire and followed an ancient Turkic religion called Tengrism. Although Genghis Khan was known for his religious tolerance, he and his successors conquered and destroyed many civilizations in both Asia and Europe, including medieval Islamic

civilization. Therefore, it seems unusual to have Changez as a symbolic name for a religious fundamentalist.

The shift in Changez's identity and his concept of the American Dream can be understood through his reaction to 9/11 and its aftermath and his sense of belonging to both American society and Pakistani society. In pre-9/11 America, Changez lives comfortably with his dual identity and even seems to see himself more as American than Pakistani. Being rewarded with his dream job at a young age for his hard work and dedication, Changez has the impression that he is one of the most successful and fortunate immigrants of his time: "I felt bathed in a warm sense of accomplishment. . . . Nothing troubled me; I was a young New Yorker with the city at my feet" (*RF* 45). The power of his new identity comes from his new social position and embrace of American culture, values, and civilization:

Certainly, much of my early excitement about New York was wrapped up in my excitement about Underwood Samson. I remember my sense of wonder on the day I reported for duty. Their offices were perched on the forty-first and forty-second floors of a building in midtown. . . . [And] while I had previously flown in airplanes and visited the Himalayas, nothing had prepared me for the drama, the *power* of the view from their lobby. This, I realized, was another world from Pakistan; supporting my feet were the achievements of the most technologically advanced civilization our species had ever known. (*RF* 33-34)

Hamid italicizes certain words to emphasize their importance in the text. Here, the word "power" stresses the strong sense of identity and belonging that Changez enjoys. Like Gatsby's early days in New York, Changez's first few months in the city are very promising. He becomes a Gatsby-like character who lives in his "Platonic" concept of himself. Changez even pictures himself as the real representation of famous fictional Western icon, James Bond: "I was, in my own eyes, a veritable James Bond—only

younger, darker, and possibly better paid” (*RF* 63-64). This line implies that identity is performed, and Hamid’s hero (like everyone else) invents one for himself and enacts it.

Changez gradually and smoothly adapts to the American culture, mainly because of the cosmopolitan nature of New York. New York’s cultural cosmopolitanism, which permits Changez to refashion his identity, exists in part as a legacy of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. That act abolished the discriminatory Immigration Act of 1924 and allowed new waves of migrants from both European and non-European countries to move to the United States. Hamid portrays pre-9/11 New York as an urban center that is primarily governed by the unwritten rules of cosmopolitan ethics and cultural tolerance, where not only a brown-skinned Pakistani, but also a gay man, appears to feel protected and secure: “It was testament to the open-mindedness and—that overused word—cosmopolitan nature of New York in those days that I felt completely comfortable on the subway in this attire. Indeed, no one seemed to take much notice of me at all, save for a gay gentleman who politely offered me an invitational smile” (*RF* 48). However, from time to time, Changez becomes conscious of his “transitory existence,” moving from one city to another. Now, after leading such a transitory life for many years, Changez finally feels at home again with Erica in the heart of New York City. His attachment to the city reveals a strong sense of belonging and identity.

Changez finds New York welcoming and inclusive. He harmoniously integrates into the life of the city, and he sees himself as a local: “in a subway car, my skin would typically fall in the middle of the color spectrum. On street corners, tourists would ask me for directions” (*RF* 33). New York’s pluralistic culture makes Changez proud of his Pakistani identity as well as his newly acquired cosmopolitan identity. He identifies

himself as both a New Yorker and a Pakistani, since New York's cosmopolitanism is compatible with his ethnic and national identity. He calls New York his home and associates himself with the Pakistani and other South Asian ethnic groups: "for me moving to New York felt—so unexpectedly—like coming home. But there were other reasons as well: the fact that Urdu was spoken by taxicab drivers; the presence, only two blocks from my East Village apartment, of a samosa- and channa- serving establishment called the Pak-Punjab Deli" (*RF* 32-33). However, his business trips abroad change his sense of identity. He observes that in the globalized world, the values and identity of the powerful nations are accepted as standard. Thus, he tries to conform to the American identity. He starts to become estranged from his Pakistani identity, and when his Pakistani identity is visible, he tries to mask it. For instance, when he joins his American colleagues in Manila for a business mission to evaluate a music company, he attempts to blend with them: "I was the only non-American in our group, but I suspected my Pakistaniness was invisible, cloaked by my suit, by my expense account, and—most of all—by my companions" (*RF* 71). Changez needs to disguise himself, and he performs his new identity in the same way actors play the roles of different characters in movies. Now he seems to be prouder of his American company than he is of his original Pakistani national identity: "On that day, I did not think of myself as a Pakistani, but as an Underwood Samson trainee, and my firm's impressive offices made me proud" (*RF* 36).

Later on, Changez is troubled by witnessing what he calls the "myth of American superiority" during all his overseas trips. For instance, in Greece, he observes how his fellow American companions, including Erica, "conduct themselves in the world as though they were its ruling class" (*RF* 21). Hamid might suggest that globalization has

renewed some aspects of colonial culture that has given superiority to the economically advanced nations over the less powerful ones. The powerless nations have also reinforced such a system of cultural hierarchy by being economically dependent on the aid of international organizations and superpowers. For Hamid, globalization resembles nineteenth-century imperialism in that both reinforce the concept of “backward” and “advanced” nations and cultures. In *Orientalism*, Said argues that “the whole question of imperialism, as it was debated in the late nineteenth century by pro-imperialists and anti-imperialists alike, carried forward the binary typology of advanced and backward (or subject) races, cultures and societies” (206). Said observes that such classifications were based on an unequal relationship between powerful and weak nations and that it gave birth to the myth of the “superior” and “inferior” cultures. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez is trapped in this set of binaries and needs to conceal the sense of inferiority created by the negative portrayal of his native country. In his trip to Southeast Asia, he realizes that he speaks, behaves, and even thinks “more like an American” (RF 65) so that the locals respect him as much as they respect his American colleagues: “The Filipinos we worked with seemed to look up to my American colleagues, accepting them almost instinctively as members of the officer class of global business...and I wanted my share of that respect as well” (RF 65). Changez demonstrates his superiority by applying his pragmatic skills and professionalism in deciding the future of the local factories and their business. He soon begins to have conflicting feelings about his job, and he claims to show solidarity with the downtrodden lower class of Manila. Changez also quickly detects and understands a Filipino driver’s resentful feeling toward him and his fellow American team while they are driving through streets of Manila in

their luxury car. Changez describes the driver's "Third World Sensibility" (*RF* 67) as rage against what he sees as the Western dominance in Asia.

The climax of the novel occurs during Changez's last day in Manila, when he watches the 9/11 terrorist attacks on TV, and his first reaction makes not only the American character but also readers lose sympathy with him. Even though he says that he is worried about Erica and the victims and that the event makes him "unable to sleep" (*RF* 73) that night, his first response to the live video of the attack is morally repulsive: "Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased. . . . So when I tell you I was pleased with the slaughter of thousands of innocents, I do so with a profound sense of perplexity. . . . I was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees" (*RF* 72-73). Such an unexpected reaction to the tragic attack from an American-educated person who is employed by an American company and is in a romantic relationship with an American woman startles the reader. When he returns to New York and sees the city mourning for the victims of the attack, Changez is filled with feelings of guilt and shame for having his initial inhuman response to the attacks: "As I walked by: photos, bouquets, words of condolence—nestled into street corners and between shops and along railings of public squares. They reminded me of my own uncharitable—indeed, inhumane—response to the tragedy, and I felt from them a constant murmur of reproach" (*RF* 79). Additionally, he also participates in fundraising with Erica to support those who have been affected by the attacks: "I accompanied her to fundraisers for victims of the World Trade Center. . . . I became, in effect, her official escort at the events of New York society" (*RF* 85).

After September 11, he grows his beard and stays committed to his work at Underwood Sampson, attempting to satisfy his desire to have a dual identity as both American and Pakistani. However, he gradually feels disconnected from “his” American identity. He observes how the New Yorkers, including Erica’s father and a number of his coworkers, not only treat him as a foreigner but also see him as a threat. When he arrives at the airport in New York a few days after the 9/11 attacks, his colleagues queue in the “American citizens” line while he has to join “the one for foreigners.” Police also interrogate him as though he is a terrorist suspect: “being of a suspect race I was quarantined and subjected to additional inspection” (*RF* 157). Here “suspect race” is an anti-Muslim and anti-Arab “racial” category that is ascribed to Changez and those who share his physical ethnic characteristics. He starts to feel humiliated, and his devotion to and faith in the America Dream further decline. After that, he is harassed by some unnamed characters who call him “fucking Arab” and “terrorist.” Since he looks like an Arab, they think that he must be a terrorist. Changez sympathizes with other Pakistanis and Middle Easterners who are stigmatized and discriminated against after the attacks. He fears that he, too, may face persecution at his company: “I have heard tales of the discrimination Muslims were beginning to experience in the business world—stories of rescinded job offers and groundless dismissals—and I did not wish to have my position at Underwood Samson compromised” (*RF* 20).

The increasing hostility against him and other Muslim migrants, the possible emergence of an India-Pakistan war, as well as the failure of his unpromising relationship with Erica destroy Changez’s dream. His world is altered utterly, and he is no longer able to focus on pursuing his American Dream. Instead, he sees himself as a traitor who has

left his family and home country behind in a difficult time for a job that he starts to resent and a woman who pushes him away. He is also frustrated that the American government sides with “powerful” India in its conflict with his home country, even though Pakistan has already pledged allegiance to America in the fight against terror and now is facing threats of retaliation from Taliban.

Changez’s disillusionment with his dream and his growing nationalist sentiments make him feel that he is collaborating economically and politically with a system that harms his native Pakistan. His last business trip, this one to Chile, completely changes his perspective about Underwood Samson and America. During the trip, Juan Batista, the manager of a small publishing company, shatters Changez’s identity by narrating the story of the janissaries. Juan Batista explains that the janissaries “were Christian boys...captured by Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army, at that time the greatest army in the world. They were furious and utterly loyal: they had fought to erase their own civilization, so they had nothing else to turn to” (*RF* 151). The Janissaries were forcibly enslaved and systematically assimilated into the Ottoman society. Having lost their old ethnic and cultural roots, they unquestionably defended the Ottoman Empire and its ethnoreligious “national” identity. Unlike the Janissaries, Changez does not face forced assimilation into American society, and he voluntarily associates himself with America and its corporate economy. However, now Changez sees himself as “a modern-day janissary” and a “servant of the American Empire,” a country that, instead of standing with his home country against the aggression of India, invades a neighboring country, Afghanistan, which has “kinship” to his native Pakistan. Changez is also afraid that the Afghanistan war might spill over into his country. Being forced to choose

between an American identity and a Pakistani identity after his cosmopolitan identity is shattered, he chooses the latter.

The trip to Latin America furthermore calls into question Changez's American identity and makes him convinced that he and his senior colleagues at Underwood Samson "make [their] living by disrupting the lives of" (RF 151) people like Juan Bautista. He changes from a man who calls himself an American and a young New Yorker to a radical nationalist. Being disillusioned with his American Dream and his place in America, he blames America for every conflict in his mother continent: "in each of the major conflicts and standoffs that ringed my mother continent of Asia, America played a central role" (RF156). He tries to distance himself from America to enable him to replace his American identity with a collective Asian identity. Some critics, including Bruce King, have portrayed Changez as an Islamic fundamentalist because of his ethnic and cultural background and "anti-American" sentiments. However, Chan and other critics argue that Changez's manners are more those of a Westerner than those of a Pakistani Muslim and that he embraces a superficially Islamic identity after 9/11 attacks because he is forced to give up his American identity. However, my analysis shows that Changez changes from a cosmopolitan migrant to a radical nationalist and occidentalist. Finally, he disassociates himself with all his old identities and claims that he has become a rootless stranger who cannot belong to any place.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist presents an excellent example of a cultural and social outcast who is embodied in Changez's reverse culture shock in his home country after an absence of four and a half years. Changez begins to resent America and its capitalist system not only because of his alienation in the US following the 9/11 attacks

but also because of his new nationalist sentiments. His nationalist feeling arises after the shattering of the cosmopolitan New York that had enabled him to belong to both American and Pakistani culture. Early in his narrative, he recalls that “I have never, to the best of my knowledge, had any fear of solitude” (*RF* 19). But, in the aftermath of 9/11, he starts to feel lonely and isolated, and these feelings are reflected in many aspects of his life as the novel develops. Changez’s detailed references to his family wealth and aristocratic status underline the same kind of nostalgia that he experiences when his “Pakistani side” is challenged:

I am not poor; far from it: my great-grandfather, for example, was a barrister with the means to endow a school for the Muslims of Punjab. Like him, my grandfather and father both attended university in England. Our family home sits on an acre of land in the middle of Gulberg, one of the most expensive districts of this city. We employ several servants, including a driver and a gardener—which would, in America, imply that we were a family of great wealth. (*RF* 9-10)

However, his description of Lahore and the nameless people who pass by the tea shop during his conversation with the unnamed American highlights his struggle to readapt to the Pakistani society and its way of life. At the same time, he is not completely detached from the US, especially New York, where he has spent a big part of his life. During his time at Underwood Samson, he feels assimilated and connected to a new culture. Even after New York loses its cosmopolitan broad-mindedness following the 9/11 attacks and he decides to leave it, the city and Erica continue to occupy his mind, and he fondly looks back at those moments when he was not considered an alien but a New Yorker: “I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker.... I tend to become sentimental when I think of that city. It still occupies a place of great fondness in my heart” (*RF* 33). For Changez, being a New Yorker was the highest degree of American identity since, for him, New York City is America’s cosmopolitan ideal.

Enraged by the unbridgeable difference in technological advancement between America and Pakistan and blinded by his growing ethnocentric nationalism, Changez develops an “occidental sentiment” against the Western civilization; in his mind forms “the dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies” (Buruma and Margalit 5). Changez, who introduces himself as a “lover of America” (*RF* 1) on the first page of the novel, now *others* and dehumanizes the West to make the history of his country more superior to American and Western civilization. He reduces the ancient Europeans to barbarians and reminds the American stranger of the glory of the ancient Indus Valley civilization, which was located in today’s Pakistan: “Often, during my stay in your country, such comparisons troubled me . . . they made me resentful. Four thousand years ago, we, the people of the Indus River basin, had cities that were laid out on grids and boasted underground sewers, while the ancestors of those who would invade and colonize America were illiterate barbarians” (*RF* 34). Avirup Ghosh claims that even if Pakistanis are not the actual descendants of the Indus Valley civilization founders, Changez has to regard them as his ancestors because he needs another civilization and a glorious past to attach himself to—and also to distance himself from the Western civilization that has molded his identity. Ghosh adds that Changez’s fluid and unstable personal identity is marked by his association with a number of different groups and identities throughout the novel: “he is, at different times in the novel, a Third Worlder, a Muslim, a Pakistani, a member of the Indus River Basin Civilization, a New Yorker, and a Princetonian” (59). Eventually, Changez abandons his nationalist and Occidental ideologies and bitterly admits that he has become rootless and cannot belong to any particular identity or place: “I lacked a subtle core. I was not certain where I belonged—in New York, in Lahore, in

both, in neither” (*RF* 148). Thus, Changez’s ambivalence toward America and his native Pakistan reveals his own torn and disintegrating personal identity. His sense of ambivalence signifies that Changez fails in his quest to obtain a stable sense of identity in the ethnocentric and nationalist cultural environment of post-9/11 America and Pakistan.

As Gatsby’s failure in winning Daisy’s love embodies his troubled identity in *The Great Gatsby*, Changez’s inability to achieve national belonging is reflected in his painful relationship with Erica. Initially, Changez finds the meaning of his American Dream and belonging in his symbolic romantic relationship Erica. Erica finds solace in Changez, a non-American who lives the American Dream, because Changez fills the emotional void she experiences after the death of her American ex-boyfriend, Chris. At the early stage of their relationship, both Changez and Erica express their love to each other through their generosity, courtesy, and affection. However, Erica’s nostalgia about her lost love with Chris, combined with her deteriorating health, tragically ends her relationship with Changez. This tragic ending manifests Changez’s troubling relationship with America and the shifts in his identity after New York’s cosmopolitan world crumbles. Changez attempts to efface his Pakistani identity to restore the relationship, but he does not succeed. When Changez and Erica decide to make love, Changez plays the role of Chris, Erica’s dead ex-boyfriend, to arouse her. Changez tells Erica, “pretend I am him” (*RF* 105), and later he is perplexed by his decision: “I do not know why I said that” (*RF* 105). Gray describes how Hamid uses the “act of naming” as a strong symbol of identity. He observes that “the verbal slippages, such as Erica/(Am)Erica, Changez/change and Chris/Christopher Columbus are a vital part of this, inviting us into a verbal world where even the primary act of naming turns out to be partial and provisional, constantly open to

later acts of renaming” (62). Changez needs to reject his own identity and take the persona of Chris(topher) Columbus in order to become a part of (Am)Erica’s world.

According to Randall, Erica embodies both Changez’s subsequent delusions in America and America’s cultural and political identity in the post-9-11 era. Changez sadly declares that Erica was “a religion that would not accept [him] as a convert” (114). He becomes convinced that Erica’s attraction to him came merely from what Avirup Ghosh describes as “his charming demeanor and his exotic otherness” (52), and now she no longer accepts his *otherness*. After Erica’s disappearance, Changez is obliged to leave America physically because his America Dream becomes as unreachable as Erica herself, who “had chosen not to be a part of [his] story . . . [She was] passing through places [he] could not reach” (*RF* 167). Thus, neither Changez and Erica’s romantic relationship nor the characters themselves can survive in the post-911 New York City. Disenchanted, Changez blames the American sense of superiority for his disillusionment with the American Dream. Finally, Hamid leaves Erica’s and Changez’s deaths as unclear as their true identities. The only evidence for Erica’s possible death is that her clothes that are seen on the bank of the Hudson River after her disappearance due to mental illness. It is also impossible for us to know with any certainty whether the American stranger, holding a metal object in his hand, kills Changez at the end of the novel. Changez and Erica’s between-life-and-death existence mirrors their shattered identity and sense of belonging in the post-911 world.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined how Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* portray the tragic quest of the migrant protagonist who searches for national belonging but continues to suffer, torn between multiple identities. The complexity of Gatsby's and Changez's motives and actions make readers simultaneously resent and sympathize with them. The characters are perplexed by their own confused sense of selfhood and the uncertain world around them, which collapses the moment they become disillusioned with their own dream. I have read the American Dream in these novels as an inclusive national identity and associated Gatsby's and Changez's disillusionment with the Dream as their inability to achieve national belonging. Fitzgerald's and Hamid's representations of migrant experience unveil how ethnocentrism, ultra-nationalism, and other forms of counter-cosmopolitanism are systematically woven into the linguistic and cultural fabric of modern society and how they impose the characteristics of *other* on those who are deemed strangers through the politics of exclusion.

The study has analyzed the notions of ethnic and national identity, and of the cultural cosmopolitanism within the context of Matthew Jacobson's history of whiteness, Edward Said's concepts of "superior race" and "subject race," Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit's *Occidentalism*, as well as Kwame Anthony Appiah's theory of cosmopolitanism. I have explained that New York is depicted as a cosmopolitan possibility in *The Great Gatsby* and as a lost cosmopolitan city in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Both novels envision the cosmopolitan city as the site of cultural

meeting, where the interaction between the familiar and the strange challenges and dismantles the essentiality of identity and cultural stereotypes.

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