

*“Traveler there is no path
The path forms itself as you walk it.”*

Antonio Machado

Dedication

This dissertation is earnestly dedicated to:

My beloved mother, Fatma, who taught me to believe in hard work and that so much could be done with so little. Her courage, love and constant will-wishing have done wonders;

My beloved brother, Mehdi, for his support and encouragement;

My uncle, Smail, for his assistance and benevolence;

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Abstract

This article falls within the scope of Influence Studies as it shows the influence of Francis S. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) on Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). To study this case, an appeal has been made to Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) and Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). In the first chapter, I have introduced Mohsin Hamid and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and given a background to both 1920s and post-9/11 America. I have shown that the definition of America and the American dream changes from 'positive' in the 1920s to negative in post-9/11 America. In the second chapter, I have studied the similarities between the two works in terms of both plot and characterization from Northrop Frye's perspective. I have shown that not only does Hamid's novella fit the characteristics of romance, but also that Hamid is influenced by Fitzgerald's plot and protagonist. In the last chapter, I have analyzed Hamid's misreading of Fitzgerald's novel and drawn the differences between the two works in terms of plot and characterization. After analyzing the two works in the light of Bloom's theory, I have concluded that Hamid misreads Fitzgerald's novel to distance himself from it and create his originality, resulting thus in 'an anxiety of influence' embodied in the novella. I have also concluded that Hamid recontextualizes *The Great Gatsby* and gives it a new perspective which alters its former reading and foregrounds his originality.

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General Introduction

This research studies the influence of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) on Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). Influence and literary tradition fall not only into the category of Comparative Studies, but also Cultural Studies. Both the disciplines come to the fore as a way to cross national boundaries and "transcend[] the narrowness, provinciality and parochialism of national [...] literatures."¹ During the Postmodern Age, Harold Bloom witnesses the rise of a new form of literature which threatens the 'purity' of the Western Canon, 'The School of Resentment'² i.e. Multiculturalism. Literary tradition constitutes a matrix of literary products, studies the historical development of literature and probes 'Literary Indebtedness,'³ involving authors who belong to the same literary tradition. American literature stems from British literature⁴ since 'nothing is got for nothing.'⁵ According to Eric Hobsbawm, although an invented tradition is new, it needs the old one to gain legitimacy.⁶ This makes the American and the British literary traditions, although independent, interrelated and 'family romance'⁷ possible between Mohsin Hamid, who is British born Pakistani and Scott Fitzgerald, who is American born Irish. Thus, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) is fit to be conducted a research on around the field of influence.

¹ Bijay Kumar Das cited in Hardev Singh, 'A Comparative Study of Eulogistic Works of Bhatta, Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand.' (PhD thesis, University of Guru Nanak Dev, India, 2010), url: https://archive.org/stream/AComparativeStudyOfEulogisticWorksOfBhatta/AComparativeStudyOfEulogisticWorksOfBhatta_djvu.txt.

² Harold Bloom, Preface to *The Western Canon : The Books and School of the Ages*. Florida (Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 04.

³ J.T Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies," in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. Henry H.H. Remak *et.al.* (Chicago : Southern Illinois University Press, 1961).

⁴ Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism : A history of American Literature* (New York : Penguin Group, 1992)

⁵ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 05.

⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 01.

⁷ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 08.

Review of the literature

Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) has spawned a multitude of conflicting voices and a great bulk of criticism, fleshed out in different theories: thematic, cultural and intertextual, postcolonial and deconstructive.

Ann Marlowe (2007) and Raymond Bonner (2008) respectively read Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) from a thematic perspective. Ann Marlowe raises the issue of hatred, referring to Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as '[a]nti-American Agitprop.'⁸ Marlowe believes Changez and his counterparts to be acolytes of communism and goes further to urge 'people not to buy the book, because they are giving their money to someone who is aggressively anti-American.'⁹ On the one hand, Raymond Bonner praises Hamid's novella, but argues, on the other, that 'it is understandable that Americans will be offended.'¹⁰ The critic believes that the story inspires terror and revulsion and goes further to question why all educated people adopt anti-American sentiments.¹¹ According to him, these hired educated men are 'given all the opportunities of Western society,'¹² but remain ungrateful. However, Bonner and Marlowe's analyses prove to be subjective as both do not consider the fact that globalization is not about generosity, but about power.¹³ Furthermore, both Marlow and Bonner refer to Changez's hatred to America without giving a hint at America's propensity for xenophobia, nativism and the old Puritan values.

⁸ Ann Marlowe cited in Raymond Bonner, 'A Ticking Bomber,' *The National Interest* no. 97 (2008): 77, accessed September 10, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42896190> .

⁹ Ann Marlowe cited in *ibid*, 78.

¹⁰ Raymond Bonner, 'A Ticking Bomber,' *The National Interest* no. 97 (2008): 78, accessed September 10, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42896190> .

¹¹ *Ibid*, 78.

¹² *Ibid*, 78.

¹³ Manfred Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11.

Besides Ann Marlow and Raymond Bonner's thematic analyses of the novella, Ira Pande (2007) analyzes Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* from a cultural and intertextual perspective. Pande raises the issue of crisis as 'Hamid manages [...] to flesh out not just the sensitive heart that beats beneath a rough financial manager, but prepares us for the crisis when it hits Changez and turns the whole world upside-down.'¹⁴ She describes Hamid's novella as the source of border crossing since it 'traverses the world so freely – from Pakistan, to Greece, to the US to Latin America that it becomes something much more than the story of one man and his life.'¹⁵ Pande further argues that Hamid's novella deals with a generation devoid of responsibility, which crosses national boundaries to serve U.S Capitalism.¹⁶ She believes that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* deals with the issue of disquiet which emanates from Hamid's debut novel *Moth Smoke* (2000).¹⁷ She goes further to add that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* 'may be written in an entirely different voice from *Moth Smoke*, but once again Hamid uses his novel to spin out a macabre allegory.'¹⁸ Admittedly, Ira Pande deals with the issue of disquiet (i.e. anxiety) and draws an intertextual link between *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Moth Smoke* but does not hint at other literary bonds that Mohsin Hamid has with other foreign authors inside the text, such as Scott Fitzgerald, Joseph Conrad and many others.

Martha Green Eads (2010) delves more into analyzing Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) from an intertextual perspective. The critic argues that 'the novel is more allegorical than historical, enough so that some readers may find it heavy-handed.'¹⁹ She believes that the use of symbols makes the readership ponder on misconceptions as the novel

¹⁴ Ira Pande, 'A Life in a Day,' *India International Center Quarterly* 34, no.1 (2007): 154, accessed September 10, 2016, url : <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23006055>.

¹⁵ Ibid, 153.

¹⁶ Ibid, 153

¹⁷ Ibid, 153

¹⁸ Ibid, 153.

¹⁹ Martha Green Eads, 'Imagining America : Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*,' *The Cresset* 24, no.2 (2010), accessed November 30, 2016, url: http://thecresset.org/2010/Advent/Eads_A10.html.

also invites ‘to consider our ideas of America and to get to know to our neighbors from places like Pakistan, both far away and living among us.’²⁰ She views *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a ‘layered account’²¹ full of references which are left to the reader to discover. She also underscores the novella’s potential for confusion and ambiguity, referring thus to the novel as open-ended and inconclusive.²² This means that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is open to interpretation and spills such an ever-increasing flow of meanings that one cannot fathom its intention once and for all. Although Martha Green Eads argues that the novella is full of meanings and references, she does not go further to disentangle the intricate literary web of references and allusions that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* includes, such as, among others, Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Why Are we so Blessed?*, E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* and Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.”

Besides Martha Green Eads who views Hamid’s novella from an intertextual point of view, Sharmila Mukherjee (2011) reads Hamid’s novella from a postcolonial perspective. She claims that the novella ‘addresses some of cultural globalization’s central issues, like the limits of cosmopolitan space and of the possibilities of the enactment of deep violence within it, transversal romance, and transnational Capitalism.’²³ According to Mukherjee, the novella broaches the issue of globalization and calls into question the notion of ‘universalism’ as it shows that racism, intolerance and coercion are still pervasive in the 21st century globalized world.²⁴ Mukherjee focuses on Capitalism as a far-reaching aspect of the traditional imperialism. According to Mukherjee, Hamid’s novella implicitly ‘celebrate[s]

²⁰ Martha Green Eads, ‘Imagining America : Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*,’ *The Cresset* 24, no.2 (2010), accessed November 30, 2016, url: http://thecresset.org/2010/Advent/Eads_A10.html.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Sharmila Mukherjee, ‘The Reluctant Fundamentalist: A Novel Mohsin Hamid,’ *Modern Language studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): 121, accessed October 09, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41445156>.

²⁴ Ibid, 121.

hybridization,²⁵ fulminates against the American Empire's 'perpetual peace'²⁶ and eventually denounces Modern America's potential for domination through Capitalism which 'pushes statist and non-statist forces alike into a state of mutual destruction.'²⁷ She further argues that Hamid's surrogate (i.e. Changez) shifts from an acolyte of Capitalism to an opponent of Capitalism,²⁸ which makes *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* a recalcitrant rejoinder to Western authority. However, Mukherjee does not mention that Hamid's celebration of hybridization is left to the reader to discover, does not give an insight into the nature of romance nor does she explain that politics is an impediment to Erica and Changez's love and friendship.

In addition to Mukherjee who views the novella from a postcolonial perspective, Sarah Illot (2013) delves more into the deconstructive aspects of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. She argues that the narrative 'serves as a corrective'²⁹ to history which creates a new stereotypical West/East binary opposition.³⁰ She argues that the novella 'deconstructs a geographical perpetrator/victim binary'³¹ relationship that springs in the wake of September 11th, 2001 attack, 'requiring work on the part of readers to construct meaning, [p]lacing the reader as impartial judge.'³² It may be deduced that Sarah Illot adopts Roland Barthes's 'the Death of the Author' approach as she reveals the novella's ability to be construed from different perspectives, depending on the reader as the interpreter.³³ She argues that Hamid's novella 'is an example of a contemporary dramatic monologue that encourages a more active way of

²⁵ Sharmila Mukherjee, 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist: A Novel Mohsin Hamid,' *Modern Language studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): 121, accessed October 09, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41445156>.

²⁵ Ibid, 122

²⁶ Ibid, 121.

²⁷ Ibid, 121

²⁸ Ibid, 122.

²⁹ Sarah Illot, "Generic Frameworks and Active Readership in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 5 (2013): 571. Accessed November 20, 2016, url: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2013.852129>.

³⁰ Ibid, 571

³¹ Ibid, 572

³² Ibid, 572.

³³ Ibid, 572.

reading and resists comfortable closure.³⁴ Though Sarah Illot considers the fact that the meaning of the text resides in the text itself and though she mentions that the novella is open to interpretation, she does not go further to mention that it contains not only one meaning, but a lot of meanings and conflicting voices which allow the different interpretations of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

Issue and Working Hypotheses

It follows from the above review of the literature that, although the aforementioned critics have mostly approached *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) from an intertextual perspective, they, to my best knowledge, have not given due weight to the novella's romance plot not have they hinted at a literary 'indebtedness'³⁵ that Hamid owes to Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In the present dissertation, I will try to study this case of influence, invited by Hamid himself when he mentions *The Great Gatsby* in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

In my view, many aspects of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* sustain comparison with *The Great Gatsby*, especially when read in terms of romance plot to which both belong. This similarity in terms of plot can be studied through Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism, "Mythos of Summer: Romance," which allows me to highlight the adventure and the quest embarked upon by the two protagonists, namely Changez and Gatsby. Frye's ideas are also suitable to explore the portrayal of the main characters as lonely heroes who cling to a dream and work hard to fulfill it. This dream is a vision of an inclusive America that suits their personal aspirations. These are envisaged through the broad frame of myth as they embrace

³⁴ Sarah Illot, "Generic Frameworks and Active Readership in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 5 (2013): 572. Accessed November 20, 2016, url: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2013.852129>.

³⁵ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 05.

the ideal of the American utopia evident in the hopes of the successive waves of immigrants who constitute America.

However, the similarities between *The Great Gatsby* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* should not be taken solely as a sign of literary indebtedness in the traditional sense. Hamid revises his borrowings from Fitzgerald to foreground his originality as a writer. This process of revision can be best studied through Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*. For Bloom, when the ephebe (i.e. the new poet) is influenced by the parent poem (i.e. the precursor's text), a struggle (i.e. the agon) takes place in which the former strives to 'clear an imaginative space for'³⁶ himself through misreading (i.e. misinterpretation) which entails an anxiety of influence.³⁷ Bloom's theory focuses on 'family romance'³⁸ as the ephebe (i.e. the son) strives to symbolically kill the precursor (i.e. the father). This struggle is also called 'parricide,'³⁹ a concept borrowed from Sigmund Freud. In the case of Hamid, it shows in the way that he returns to Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* to claim discontinuity from it and recontextualize Gatsby's dream within the increasingly unethical world induced by corporate globalization and the intolerant turn taken by America after the 9/11 event.

Methods

a. Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957)

My first task is to apply Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) not only to prove that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* fits the characteristics of romance, but also that Hamid's plot and protagonist are influenced by Fitzgerald's. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye

³⁶ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 05.

³⁷ Harold Bloom, Preface to *The Western Canon : The Books and School of the Ages* (Florida : Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 08.

³⁸ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 08.

³⁹ Sigmund Freud, « Dostoïvski et le Parricide », *Revue Française de psychosomatique* 39, (1928) :109-125, accessed June 16th, 2017, url : <http://www.cairn.info/revue-française-de-psychosomatique-2011-1-page-109.htm>.

divides his work into four essays: “Historical Criticism,” “Ethical Criticism,” “Archetypal Criticism” and “Rhetorical Criticism.” Referring to “Archetypal Criticism,” Frye claims that an ‘archetype’ is ‘a typical or recurring image... a symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience.’⁴⁰ He further argues that ‘the possession of originality cannot make an artist unconventional. It drives him further into convention, obeying the law of the art itself, which seeks constantly to reshape itself from its own depths.’⁴¹ Frye means that the artist restructures the tradition, but cannot claim complete independence from it as he remains linked to it.

In “Archetypal Criticism,” Frye refers to four ‘mythos’ or what he calls ‘archetypes’: ‘the Mythos of Spring,’ ‘the Mythos of Summer,’ ‘the Mythos of Autumn’ and ‘the Mythos of Winter.’ The second chapter focuses on “the Mythos of Summer: Romance” in which Frye believes that romance is ‘naturally a sequential and processional form, hence we know it better from fiction than from drama. At its most naïve form, it is an endless form in which a central character who never develops or ages goes through one adventure after another until the author himself collapses.’⁴² A hero in a story engages in a journey which leads him to ‘a major climactic adventure’⁴³ until the story reaches its end.

Frye claims that the journey is announced at the beginning of the narrative, ‘the completion of which rounds off the story.’⁴⁴ The completion of romance is embodied in a quest which is divided into three main stages: ‘the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero.’⁴⁵ Said otherwise, the

⁴⁰ Northrop Frye cited in Diane Dubois, *Northrop Frye in Context*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 03.

⁴¹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 132.

⁴² Ibid, 186.

⁴³ Ibid, 187.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 187.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 187.

hero engages in a quest which begins in the form of a journey, leading to an adventure and eventually to the hero's exaltation or death.

a. Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973)

To support Northrop Frye's theory, my second task is to apply Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) to prove that not only Hamid is influenced by *The Great Gatsby*, but misreads it to foreground his originality. In the discussion, I will examine Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* from Bloom's perspective to show that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a misreading which results in 'an anxiety of influence' sensed in the novella.

Monique Lojkine-Moreleg claims, '[r]esearch, on a large scale, is a meeting point of works. Some works come late; one cannot but admire them silently without a chance to equal them. While others come in time raising an issue that has just come into someone else's mind.'⁴⁶ [Trans. Mine] Lojkine-Moreleg is adamant that research be a confluence and a battlefield where an author expounds an idea which signals his triumph, igniting thus another author's anxiety, who deems the idea to be originally his. Hamid writes *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a way to appropriate the idea foregrounded in *The Great Gatsby* and distance himself from its author, Scott Fitzgerald. He engages in a battle with Fitzgerald to assert his originality. However, this case study should not only be understood in terms of 'Family Romance' between poets, but most importantly between the texts themselves.

⁴⁶Monique Lojkine-Moreleg, Preface to *T.S. Eliot: Essai sur la Genèse d'une Ecriture* (Paris : Klincksieck, 1985), v.

Harold Bloom misinterprets T.S Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) and studies it from a psychoanalytic point of view.⁴⁷ Eliot's theory is about interdependence and coexistence as the new joins the old, but the former represents erudition (i.e. authority) while the latter, completion⁴⁸ (i.e. inferiority) and both remain as such. Not so for Bloom who agrees that the tradition may include the ephebe (i.e. the new poet), but argues that the new poet is to engage in a psychological struggle (i.e. the agon) to find his afflatus (i.e. inspiration) and 'clear an imaginative space for'⁴⁹ himself. Bloom advocates 'poetic misprision', or what he calls 'misreading', as a way for the ephebe to distinguish himself and probably surpass the old poet (i.e. predecessor).⁵⁰ He posits six revisionary ratios, which are different types of misreading: Clinamen, Tessera, Kenosis, Daemonization, Askesis and Apophrades.

Methodological Outline

In addition to an introduction and conclusion, this dissertation takes the form of three chapters. In the first chapter entitled "Introduction to Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," I will give a summary to Hamid's novella and introduce Mohsin Hamid as a British Pakistani author. I will also give a historical background to both 1920s and post-9/11 America. In the second chapter entitled "The Similarities Between *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Great Gatsby*," I will start with comparing the two works in terms of plot and then characterization. Analyzing the novella from Northrop Frye's perspective, I will show that Hamid's plot fits the characteristics of romance. This will allow me to prove that Hamid is influenced by romance plot and protagonist of *The Great Gatsby*. In the third

⁴⁷ Paul Fry, "Influence," *Youtube Video*, 11:51, posted by "YaleCourses," September 1st, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vui_MuI0HU0.

⁴⁸ T.S Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent,' *Perspecta* 19, (1982): 38, accessed September 27, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567048>.

⁴⁹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 05.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

chapter entitled, “The Differences Between *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Great Gatsby*,” I will first demonstrate that Hamid misreads Fitzgerald’s novel, which entails an anxiety of influence. I will follow then by giving examples as to how Hamid misreads Fitzgerald’s romance plot, eventually showing how he misreads Fitzgerald’s *Gatsby* to foreground his originality.

Chapter One: Introduction to Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

In this chapter, I will give a summary to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and introduce Mohsin Hamid as a British Pakistani author. I will also give a historical background to both 1920s and post-9/11 America. My claim is that Mohsin Hamid seeks to direct the reader to the “Roaring Twenties” and invite them to compare post-9/11 with 1920s America. To figure out if Mohsin Hamid is influenced by Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, it is important to show first that Hamid recontextualizes Fitzgerald's novel and invites the reader to read it in the light of the post-9/11 era. Giving examples from the two works, I will attempt to prove that there is a shift in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as to the definition of America. Hamid's novella delineates two Americas; one stands for inclusion and multiculturalism while the other for exclusion and assimilation. America moves from its being factitiously ‘inclusive’ in the 1920s to its being an exclusive society in the post-9/11 era. The same goes for the American dream which takes the form of two definitions. The 1920s American dream stands for wonder and equality, success and money while the post-9/11 American dream stands for globalization and multiculturalism, inclusion and hybridization, immigration and recognition.

Summary to Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a novella written by Mohsin Hamid in 2007. It starts in Lahore in the Anarkali Bazaar where Changez Khan, a Pakistani, tells the story of his life at a café to a mysterious American tourist listening with rapt attention. After graduating from Princeton University, Changez Khan is hired by a cooperate world Underwood Samson whose initials stand for U.S. Owing to his being a creative and efficient student, Changez soon raises

to the top as he becomes a servant of U.S. Capitalism par excellence, assessing international firms all around the world.⁵¹

While in Greece with Princeton students, Changez meets Erica, a woman writer whose name stands for America, and falls in love with her. However, it turns out that this love is unrequited, for Erica is still in love with her dead boyfriend Chris. This latter who stands for Judeo-Christian religion and Puritan America, dies of lung cancer which symbolizes urbanization and industrialization threatening Chris's 'Old World Appeal.'⁵² Erica and Changez go through a predicament since Erica is obsessed by her dead lover's loss, preventing her thus from becoming sexually aroused. Erica ends up in a mental asylum and disappears at the end of the story for untold reasons. Am/Erica expresses a desire for multiculturalism and change (i.e. Changez), but has a propensity for the old puritan values (i.e. Chris). This hints at a forbidden romance between America and the East.⁵³

Changez is a lover of America until he meets Juan Bautista, a leader in Chilly, who reveals to him her ideological purpose. After the 9/11 attack on World Trade Center, Changez was in the Philippines. He expresses revulsion to America whose conservatism and hatred towards Muslims become evident. In consequence, Changez abandons his position in Underwood Samson (i.e. US) and cease serving U.S Capitalism. He returns back to Lahore, becomes a teacher there and turns out to be critical of America's politics. Changez becomes a fundamentalist and stands against America's 'war on terror.' The novella ends in Lahore at the Anarkali bazaar where Changez receives the American stranger. Changez hears a tinkling

⁵¹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007).

⁵² Ibid, 30.

⁵³ Ibid.

sound from the American stranger's pocket; it may be the pistol of an assassin sent to kill Changez because of his fundamentalism.⁵⁴

Biography of Mohsin Hamid

Mohsin Hamid is a British Pakistani novelist who was born in Lahore, Pakistan in 1971. He graduated from Princeton University in 1993 and enrolled in Harvard Law School in 1997. He rises to fame when he writes his first novel *Moth Smoke* (2000) and becomes an important figure in 21st Century Academia. He wrote also *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), *Exit West* (2017) and many essays collected in *Discontent and Civilizations* (2014).

Hamid's interest in psychoanalysis is evident in his writings as he attended a 'South Asian psychoanalytic forum.'⁵⁵ *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a psychological journey; Erica relapses into a nostalgia and understands who she really is while Changez grows conscious of America's ideology and becomes a fundamentalist. Hamid affirms, 'the world is changing and a central theme in the novel is the notion of nostalgia.'⁵⁶ He adds, 'it is the story of the past pressing on the present.'⁵⁷ Hamid also expresses his interest for the oedipal complex. He recalls,

[A] South Asian member of the psychology profession told me something very interesting. He said that the recurring myth of this inter-generational oedipal story plays itself out differently in South Asia, where very often it's not the case of the son desiring to destroy the father to sleep with the mother but rather it's the story of the father mistakenly thinking the son is a rival and destroying the son.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007).

⁵⁵ Mohsin Hamid, "Slaying Dragons: Mohsin Hamid discusses *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," *Psychoanalysis and History* 11, no. 2 (2009): 233, accessed November 12, 2016, url: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/E1460823509000427>.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 228.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 233.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 233.

Hamid shows his interest in psychoanalysis and ‘family romance’⁵⁹ which makes this case study possible. The novella is structured around the struggle between the father and the son, the ephebe text and the precursor text which further justifies this study of influence.

Hamid’s novels have been ‘featured on bestseller lists, adapted for the cinema [...] selected as winner or finalist of twenty awards, and translated into thirty-five languages.’⁶⁰ His literary commitment has also been praised by, among others, *Time*, *New York Times* and *The Independent*.⁶¹ Once released in 2007, Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* reaches a level of international recognition as it is shortlisted for *Man Booker Prize* in 2007, receives the *Anisfield-Wolf Book Award* in 2008 and the *Guardian’s Books of the Decade* in 2009.⁶²

Mohsin Hamid started writing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in 2001 ‘before this September 11th happened.’⁶³ He shows his story to a publisher who tells him, ‘[y]ou know, I don’t buy this Pakistani man, this Muslim guy living in New York, feeling really disenfranchised, wanting to go back.’⁶⁴ It can be noticed from the publisher’s reaction that Hamid lacked originality while writing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. However, the ‘September 11th had happened and my [Hamid’s] sort of quiet attempt to tell the story was overtaken by events.’⁶⁵ Hamid is helped by the 9/11 event which contributes to the development of his narrative and gives it a new perspective different from Fitzgerald’s.

⁵⁹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 08.

⁶⁰ “About,” mohcinhamid.com, Last modified November 13, 2016, <http://www.mohsinhamid.com/about.html>.

⁶¹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007).

⁶² “About: Awards and Recognitions,” mohcinhamid.com, Last modified November 13, 2016, <http://www.mohsinhamid.com/about.html>.

⁶³ Mohsin Hamid, “Slaying Dragons: Mohsin Hamid discusses *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*,” *Psychoanalysis and History* 11, no. 2 (2009): 230, accessed November 12, 2016, url: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/E1460823509000427>.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 230.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 231.

Background to 1920s America

During the 1920s, America was described as a land of both progress and decadence. Scott Fitzgerald defines the Jazz Age as ‘an age of miracles, it was an age of art, it was an age of excess, and it was an age of satire.’⁶⁶ The 1920s were made of dichotomies since, on the one hand, the era was avant-garde, but on the other, decadent. He also writes that the 1920s were a ‘generation whose girls dramatized themselves as flappers, the generation that corrupted its elders and eventually overreached itself less through lack of morals than through lack of taste.’⁶⁷ The 1920s people gave in to pleasure and hedonism, leading them thus to a state of atavism and decadence. Their lack of moral rectitude is evident in *The Great Gatsby* which revolves not only around West Egg’s celebration of wonder and vulgarity, extravagance and idealism, but also East Egg’s propensity for the old and conservatism manifest in Tom Buchanan’s sectarian and exclusive behavior.⁶⁸ Overall, the 1920s era were made of binary oppositions: the old and the new, the past and the present, progress and decadence i.e. conservatism and liberalism.

To illustrate the fact that the 1920s were made of contradictions, not only were the “Roaring Twenties” an era of liberalism embodied in people’s lack of mores and unbridled behavior, but also of religious fundamentalism evident in, for example, Prohibition (1919), John Thomas Scope’s trial and the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan. Peter Childs asserts in *Modernism* (2000), ‘[t]here were paradoxical if not opposed trends towards revolutionary and reactionary positions, fear of the new and delight at the disappearance of the old, nihilism and fanatical enthusiasm, creativity and despair.’⁶⁹ The 1920s were characterized by a political

⁶⁶ Scott Fitzgerald cited in Jack Lane and Maurice O’Sullivan, eds, *A Twentieth Century American Reader: Volume 1* (Washington D.C: the United States Information Agency, 1999), 258.

⁶⁷ Scott Fitzgerald cited in Jack Lane and Maurice O’Sullivan, eds, *A Twentieth Century American Reader: Volume 1* (Washington D.C: the United States Information Agency, 1999), 258.

⁶⁸ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995).

⁶⁹ Peter Childs, *Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 17.

and social turmoil since binary relationships emerged: past and present, conservatism and liberalism, the new and the old. 'Revolutionary and reactionary' refers to a political conflict pitting the new tradition (progressivism) against the old one (conservatism). 'Reactionary' shows the return of Americans to the Puritan principles (WASP) which stand for exclusiveness and nativism while 'revolutionary' stands for change and progress. This clash is evident in Fitzgerald's novel as Gatsby stands for change and the new while Tom Buchanan exclusively for conservatism and the old.

To explain further this contradiction, the 1920s witnessed, on the one hand, conservatism. To give an example as to 1920s conservatism, conservatives object immigration which is considered as a threat to America's 'purity.' As mentioned before, the 1920s are 'an era of contradictions.'⁷⁰ A disagreement is sensed as to the massive influx of immigrants at that time. Senator Albert Johnson advocates,

It is no wonder, therefore, that the myth of the melting pot has been discredited. It is no wonder that Americans everywhere are insisting that their land no longer shall offer free and unrestricted asylum to the rest of the world[...] The United States is our land. If it was not the land of our fathers, at least, it may be, and it should be, the land of our children. We intend to maintain it so.⁷¹

This passage refers to the 1924 Johnson-Reed act which stands against immigration; '[t]he intricacies of these laws need not be detailed: the Johnson-Reed act was so ill-devised that it took five years [...] and gave conscientious bureaucrats infinite trouble as long as it lasted.'⁷² Senator Johnson shows clearly an objection as to non-American people travelling to America. However, he does not seem to be aware that America is not quintessentially American, but a land made of different ethnic groups and 'a place [...] where fact and fiction, myth and reality dance a curious gavotte. It is a society born out of its own imaginings.'⁷³

⁷⁰ Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 506

⁷¹ Albert Johnson cited in *ibid*, 512.

⁷² *Ibid*, 512.

⁷³ Christopher Bigsby, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 01.

In addition to the Johnson-Reed act, the Prohibition Act (1919) was enacted to prohibit alcoholic beverages, which showed the prevalence of conservatism in the 1920s. However, '[t]he demand for alcohol was actually increased by prohibition and put millions of dollars into the pockets of bootleggers[...] and the very rich lived in whirl of parties, yachts, furs and cosmetics.'⁷⁴ This is evident in *The Great Gatsby* as Fitzgerald describes him becoming rich owing to Wolfsheimer who introduces him to bootlegging. Furthermore, the emergence of the KKK in 1924 constituted a threat to immigrants like Jews, Catholics, Blacks and many others since they believe that America is only limited to White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP). Hugh Brogan states, '[b]y 1926, it [KKK] had passed its peak.'⁷⁵ This is evident in Sacco and Vanzetti's case; they have been sentenced to death only because they are Italian.⁷⁶ Bartolomeo Vanzetti declares,

I not only am not guilty of these crimes, but I never commit a crime in my life,- I have never stolen (sic) and I have never killed (sic) and I have never split blood[...] I would not wish to a dog or to a snake, to the most low and misfortunate creature on earth- I would not wish to any of them what I have had to suffer for things that I am not guilty of.⁷⁷

This shows how exclusive America was in the 1920s as immigrants are portrayed as a mark of terror and threat to the 'stability' and 'purity' of the American nation. Vanzetti's quote shows him being innocent. Yet, he is sentenced to death only because he is Italian.

To further elaborate the dominance of conservatism in the 1920s, Tom Buchanan is associated with nativism, xenophobia and racism in *The Great Gatsby*. At the beginning of the novel, Tom foreshadows 'the rise of the colored empires.'⁷⁸ He states, '[t]he idea is if we don't look out, the white race will- will be utterly submerged.'⁷⁹ He adds, 'this fellow

⁷⁴ Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 510.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 519

⁷⁶ Ibid, 514.

⁷⁷ Bartolomeo Vanzetti cited in ibid, 513.

⁷⁸ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 19.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 19.

[Goddard] has worked the whole thing. It's up to us, who are the dominant race to watch out or these other races will have control of things.'⁸⁰ These quotes refer to Tom's racism and conservatism. He is faithful to the principles of WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) and the old institutions. He remarks, 'nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institution and next they will throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.'⁸¹ This reflects his worship of the Puritan patriarchy and his desire to maintain the mainstream discourse, widen the gulf between the rich and the poor, the white and the 'colored races,' the 'natives' and the immigrants. The 1920s are 'continually challenged by an older, more traditional culture. This older and more conservative culture expressed the views of generally less affluent, less urban and more rural America.'⁸² 'Rural' symbolizes the 17th century Puritanism which is dominant in the 1920s.

Apart from conservatism prevalent in the 1920s, America witnessed, on the other hand, progress and consumerism. Hugh Brogan reminds, ' [i]t is important to remember that throughout the twenties, the United States had been the only one of all industrial nations to seem solidly prosperous.'⁸³ This is because the First World War has been fought far from the US territories, which left America immune to destruction and loss. Progress was also evident in literature, art and culture. Brogan states, 'Harlem, not yet called, a ghetto, exploded in Jazz and poetry.'⁸⁴ This refers to "Harlem Renaissance" and the 1920s being called the "Jazz Age." Furthermore, progress was also manifest in economy. He writes, 'the market seemed to be infinitely buoyant[...]The economic impact alone was striking enough. The mass market for cars pushed to auto-makers into the front line of American businesses.'⁸⁵ In *The Great*

⁸⁰ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 19.

⁸¹ Ibid, 136.

⁸² "1920s Anxiety," Courses, Last modified March 15th, 2017, https://www.courses.psu.edu/hist/hist021_cjs18/021-12l.htm.

⁸³ Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 528.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 505.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 509.

Gatsby, people live in a prosperous era of inventions and human feats and Wall Street achieves an economic boom. Brogan also mentions the emergence of the Model T by Henry Ford. He notes, '[t]hanks to Henry Ford, the motor-car had come into its own. The Model T was the best selling automobile until 1926.'⁸⁶ He goes further to add,

The demand for petroleum products make the oil companies even larger, more profitable and more powerful. Demand for the materials which went to the making of automobiles- steel, glass, rubber, paint, for instance- soared, stimulating these industries too, and stimulating rapid technological innovation.⁸⁷

The 1920s ushered in a period of consumerism leading to an economic progress. Overall, the 1920s were an era of contradictions.

Background to Post-9/11 America

The 21st Century heralds the beginning of globalization. Sharmila Mukherjee comments, '*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* addresses some of cultural globalization's central issues... transnational Capitalism.'⁸⁸ This quote refers to a new era i.e. Globalization. Since Globalization is transnational, it means that it goes beyond national boundaries and marks also the emergence of border crossing and Multiculturalism. However, the 9/11 attack on World Trade Center reveals Multiculturalism and Globalization to be mere fallacies as shown in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.⁸⁹ America engages in a 'war on terror' to obliterate not only terrorism but also the countries that 'harbor' it.⁹⁰ As deduced from *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the Bush Administration brings out a 'grandiose' narcissism evident in America's persecution of Muslims.⁹¹ Edward Said claims, '[t]oday, bookstores in the U.S are filled with shabby screeds bearing screaming headlines about Islam and terror, Islam exposed

⁸⁶ Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 508.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 509.

⁸⁸ Sharmila Mukherjee, '*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*: A Novel Mohsin Hamid,' *Modern Language studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): 121, accessed October 09, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41445156>.

⁸⁹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007).

⁹⁰ George W. Bush, 'Sept. 20, 2001-Bush Declares War on Terror,' *Youtube Video*, 7:11, posted by 'ConspiracyWorld,' September 3rd, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSPbzitPL8>.

⁹¹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007).

the Arab threat and the Muslim menace.⁹² One may notice that the 21st century is very much similar to the 1920s; it is contradictory in the sense that it is not only an era of globalization and Multiculturalism, but also an era of conservatism.

To illustrate the view that the 21st century is an era of contradictions, Jim has not only a propensity for Multiculturalism, but also conservatism in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Being the director of a multicultural firm Underwood Samson (i.e. US), Jim works with many foreign people. He praises Changez's difference as long as this latter remains efficient and serves a Capitalist end. However, when Changez fails in a mission in Valparaiso, Chilly, Jim's scorn for Changez becomes evident. He confesses, 'I'm not a big believer of compassion at the workplace [...] I didn't think twice when it came to firing you. In fact, I wish I'd done it a month ago and saved us the headache you've given us.'⁹³ Working in a meritocratic firm, Jim's open-mindedness is temporary as it shows up only when Changez is efficient and creative. After the 9/11 attack, Changez arouses Jim and his colleagues' suspicion and fear due to his growing a beard. This scene reveals how Americans start looking at Muslims after the 9/11 event and signals the rise of conservatism. Changez declares, 'I had always thought of America as a nation that looked forward, for the first time I was struck by its determination to look back.'⁹⁴ Here is evident America's worship of the old Puritan tradition and conservatism. Overall, Jim's discourse appears contradictory as, on the one hand, he works in a multicultural firm in New York, but, on the other, leans to conservatism as a result of the 9/11 attack.

To illustrate further the idea that post-9/11 is an era of binary oppositions, America, on the one hand, welcomes an era of globalization, but, on the other hand, displays conservatism as a result of the 9/11 attack. This is evidenced in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as Changez,

⁹² Edward Said, Preface to *Orientalism* (1978, London: Penguin Group, 2003), xv.

⁹³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 181.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 131.

who is a Muslim Pakistani, is assimilated in the American society, but not recognized as to his being a Muslim Pakistani American. Assimilation 'is intended to mean a progressive change from a more diverse to a less diverse behavior.'⁹⁵ This means that he is integrated in a mainstream culture, but not recognized as to his difference which resides in his being Pakistani. Alba Nee (2003) also defines it as 'an attenuation of distinctions based on ethnic origin.'⁹⁶ In other words, Changez is tolerated, but not accepted; he is integrated, but not recognized as a Muslim Pakistani American, which calls into question America's status of a multicultural nation as it turns out to be exclusive after the 9/11 attack. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* projects America's confusion because, on the one hand, she appears as a land of change, freedom and multiculturalism (i.e. progressivism), but, on the other, as a land of xenophobia, bigotry and nativism (i.e. conservatism).

To delve more into the dichotomy between conservatism and multiculturalism, another example is evident in Erica who stands for America. Erica expresses nostalgia in Hamid's novella, which symbolizes America retreating back to her old Puritan values. However, Erica's love for Changez, who stands for change, means America's desire for hybridity and multiculturalism. Changez states, '[a]s a society, you were unable to reflect upon the shared pain that united you with those who attacked you. You retreated into myths of your own different assumptions, of your own superiority.'⁹⁷ America does not consider people of other cultures as undergoing the same situation as she does after the 9/11 attack, but targets them as responsible for it. One can deduce that America's open-mindedness shows up only when those different cultures contribute to her development and serves her interests. However, when she goes through a crisis, those cultures are considered as a threat to her 'stability.'

⁹⁵ Domenico de Palo et al., "The Social Assimilation of Immigrants" (Discussion paper, Institute for the Study of Labor, Italy, 2006), 03, url : <ftp.iza.org/dp2439.pdf>.

⁹⁶ Alba Nee cited in Domenico de Palo et al., "The Social Assimilation of Immigrants" (Discussion paper, Institute for the Study of Labor, Italy, 2006), 03, url : <ftp.iza.org/dp2439.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 190.

Changez's rejection by the American society tells much about Am/Erica's conservatism and exclusiveness while it also suggests the West/ East impossible reconciliation.

To illustrate America's retreat to the old tradition, Changez states, 'they all seemed to proclaim we are America not New York.' America reveals her traditional nature as she turns out to be exclusive after the 9/11 attack. The multiculturalism of New York, in which Changez's 'skin would typically fall in the middle of the color spectrum,'⁹⁸ is not regarded as such whatsoever since America returns back to her former exclusive state in which she is only 'America.' In the above quotes, Changez invites the reader to revise history since New York is not American, but a former Dutch settlement. Changez also refers to Underwood Samson as a 'Pantheon'⁹⁹ just as he describes New York as a land of multiculturalism.

Apart from the binary opposition pitting multiculturalism against conservatism, another binary opposition emerges which pits Islam against the West as a result of the 9/11 event. Raoula Khalaf argues, 'the region [the East] has slipped into an easy anti-Americanism that shows little understanding of what the US is really like as a society.'¹⁰⁰ The post-9/11 era reveals the true facet of what America means since globalization and multiculturalism are hindered by the persistence of the American conservatism and 'Old World Appeal.'¹⁰¹ Anti-Americanism is a central theme to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as Changez understands what America is, which leads the protagonist to become anti-American. The continuity of the West/East binary relationship reveals that the West 'gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.'¹⁰² America describes Muslims in the novella as a demonization to define herself as a freedom-loving nation. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Hamid shows that America targets Islam as the new

⁹⁸ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 37.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 48.

¹⁰⁰ Raoula Khalaf cited in Edward Said, Preface to *Orientalism* (1978, London: Penguin Group, 2003),xxi.

¹⁰¹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 30.

¹⁰² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978, London: Penguin Group, 2003), 03.

threat and the new 'scare.' Changez shows along Hamid's narrative that America's 'war on terror' is groundless and seeks to assert that fundamentalism comes as a response to America's discourse. Overall, a new binary opposition emerges pitting the West against Islam which is associated with scare, terror and fundamentalism.

To illustrate Islam/West dichotomy, America targets Islam as terrorism in the novella and wages 'a war on terror.' America's compromise with the new Afghan government and India to fight against the Talibans damages Pakistan's relation with America.¹⁰³ Sarah Illot claims that 'although America and Pakistan are ostensibly allies in the 'war on terror' [...] the relationship would be better understood as mutually suspicious and built upon national interests rather than a friendly cooperation.'¹⁰⁴ The lack of collaboration makes Pakistan a repository of Al-Qaeda and other groups with the same cast of mind as shown in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.¹⁰⁵ These animosities are promoted by media coverage. Edward Said claims,

[A]ccompanying such warmongering, expertise have been the omnipresent CNNs and FOXes of this world, plus myriad numbers of evangelical and right-wing radio, plus innumerable tabloids and even middle-brow journalists, all of them re-cycling the same unverifiable fictions and vast generalizations so to stir up 'America against the foreign devil'¹⁰⁶

Media coverage stirs up the relationship between the West and Islam. It promotes stereotyping and portrays Islam as the new 'scare' and the 'foreign devil.' Said also refers to CNN, FOX and other media as 'right-wing' which illustrates the post-9/11 conservatism.

As an aftermath of the 9/11 attack, America enacts the 'Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism' Act

¹⁰³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 144.

¹⁰⁴ Sarah Illot, "Generic Frameworks and Active Readership in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 5 (2014): 577, accessed November 20, 2016, url : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2013.852129>.

¹⁰⁵ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007).

¹⁰⁶ Edward Said, Preface to *Orientalism* (1978, London: Penguin Group, 2003), xv.

(USA PATRIOT ACT) which bestows her the right to imprison individuals without due trials, including the ability to wiretap (Safe Streets Act).¹⁰⁷ This calls into question the validity of Habeas Corpus which is defined by *Cambridge Dictionary* as ‘a legal order that states that a person in prison must appear before and be judged by a court of law before he or she can be forced by law to stay in prison.’¹⁰⁸ Herbert Marcuse claims, [t]he West is guilty of genocidal crimes against every civilization and culture it has encountered.¹⁰⁹ Marcuse’s quote reveals the conservative identity of America, a nature which Hamid stresses after the 9/11 attack.

In addition to the PATRIOT ACT, another aftermath of the 9/11 attack is America’s enactment of “Foreign Policy.” Karl K. Schonberg states, ‘it is clearly not the case that the 9/11 attacks were unimportant to World history[...] [w]hat changed after 9/11 was not the world, but the way in which Americans perceived it.’¹¹⁰ Although the 9/11 event does not change the world, America’s new perception of the world and her “Foreign Policy” change it. Schonberg believes that the Bush Administration constructs a new image of America, of the world.¹¹¹ America’s foreign policy is evident in its view of what freedom and terrorism mean; ‘the world was divided into two camps, loosely defined as “civilization” versus “terrorism.”’¹¹² America is perceived as a freedom-loving nation while Changez as a fundamentalist and terrorist in Hamid’s novella. David Lowenthal believes, ‘there we had enemies as fanatical as dedicated to our destruction, and in some ways much more difficult to

¹⁰⁷ ‘Justice Information Sharing,’ Office and Justice Programs (OJP), Last modified: July 29th, 2013, <https://it.ojp.gov/PrivacyLiberty/authorities/statutes/1281>.

¹⁰⁸ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “Habeas Corpus,” accessed June 16th, 2017, url: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/habeas-corpus>.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Cultural Marxism: The Corruption of America,’ Americans for a Free Republic, last modified: August 9, 2010, <http://www.afr.org/cultural-marxism-the-corruption-of-america-a-review-of-james-jaegers-film-by-nelson-hultberg/>

¹¹⁰ Karl K. Schonberg, *Constructing 21st Century Foreign Policy : Identity, Ideology, and America’s World Role in a New Era* (New York: Palgrave MacMilan, 2009), 02.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 75.

¹¹² Ibid, 75.

cope with because, like us, they spoke the language of liberty and equality.¹¹³ Lowenthal's discourse is biased as he believes America's 'war on terror' to be justified. Not so for Hamid who counters this discourse, corrects misconceptions and give another definition to fundamentalism, freedom and terrorism.

As America wages a 'war on terror,' Hamid shows that this latter (i.e. war) goes unjustified and denounces America's rhetoric of a 'freedom-loving' nation through Changez. This reveals that the definition of America and the notion of the American dream change from 'positive' in the 1920s to negative in the post-9/11 era. Eric Hobsbawm believes that change is a rejoinder 'to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations.'¹¹⁴ The shift as to the definition of America and the American dream occurs 'to meet changing practical needs'¹¹⁵ (i.e. 9/11 event). Bertolt Brecht also claims, '[f]or time moves on [...] new problems flare up and demand new techniques. Reality alters; to represent it, the means of representation must alter too. Nothing arises from nothing; the new springs from the old but that is just what makes it new.'¹¹⁶ The present constitutes the continuity of the past. However, the former changes the perception of the latter. Hamid borrows the 1920s context to change its definition by comparing it to the context of the post-9/11. His aim is to change the vision of the past through that of the present.

To sum up, I have given a summary to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and introduced Mohsin Hamid as a British Pakistani author. Giving examples from both Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), I have given a historical background to both 1920s and post-9/11 America to compare between the two

¹¹³ David Lowenthal, *Present Dangers: Rediscovering the First Amendment* (Dallas: Spencer publishing Company, 2002),xiv.

¹¹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 02.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 03.

¹¹⁶ Bertolt Brecht, 'The Popular and the Realistic,' in *Marxist on Literature*, ed. David Craig (Hamondsworth: Pelican, 1974), 421.

different contexts. My aim is to prove that the definition of America and the conception of the American dream change from 'positive' in the 1920s to negative in post-9/11 America as a result of the 9/11 event. So far, I have noticed that Mohsin Hamid recontextualizes *The Great Gatsby* to revise the definition of 1920s America and give it another turn which changes its former vision. Hamid invites the reader to reread Fitzgerald's novel in the light of the post-9/11 era and ponder on misconceptions; for example, terrorism, fundamentalism and freedom. His novella delineates two Americas; one stands for inclusion and Multiculturalism, the other for exclusion and assimilation. America moves from factitiously 'inclusive' in the 1920s to exclusive in the post-9/11 era as she stands against immigration and Multiculturalism although in a globalized world. Now that I have shown that the definition of America changes from the 1920s to the post-9/11 era, it is throughout the next chapter that I shall discuss "The Similarities Between *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Great Gatsby*."

Chapter Two: The Similarities Between Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

In this chapter, I will compare *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Great Gatsby* in terms of plot and characterization in order to illustrate aspects of Fitzgerald's influence over Hamid's literary imagination. To achieve this purpose, I will read the two works as tragic romances by applying Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism, "Mythos of Summer: Romance." This will allow me to show that Hamid is influenced by *The Great Gatsby*'s plot and protagonist. In this chapter, I claim that Hamid's protagonist pursues a sense of identity deeply embedded in the ideal of the American dream and shaped by the meaning that he ascribes to his involvement with Erica. For this, he embarks on a series of adventures which would help him achieve the recognition that post-9/11 America is an exclusive society, which has repudiated the multicultural ideal cherished by the successive waves of immigrants who reached the continent since the first English settlement in Virginia in the 1620s.

Romance and Quest for the American Dream

Frye defines the plot of romance as being a journey 'leading up to a major or climactic adventure, usually announced from the beginning [...] we may call this major adventure, the element that gives literary form to the romance, the quest.'¹¹⁷ He also claims that romance is divided into three stages: journey and adventure, crucial struggle and the exaltation or the death of the hero.¹¹⁸ Parvin Ghasemi and Mitra Tiur go further to define the quest as 'the search for romantic wonder.'¹¹⁹ This definition informs Jay Gatsby's journey and sense of wonder in *The Great Gatsby*. Being creative and ambitious, Jay Gatsby, formerly James Gats,

¹¹⁷ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 187.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 187.

¹¹⁹ Parvin Ghasemi and Mitra Tiur, 'The Promises and Failure of the American Dream in Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction,' *The Institute of Research & Community Outreach* 11, no. 2 (2009): 124. Accessed June 08th, 2017, doi: [10.9744/kata.11.2](https://doi.org/10.9744/kata.11.2).

decides to leave his impoverished conditions and commits 'himself to the following of a grail.'¹²⁰ The Holy Grail and its quest is defined by *Princeton University Press* as,

[A] legend [...] The Grail itself is an ancient Celtic symbol of plenty as well as a Christian symbol of redemption and eternal life, the chalice that caught the blood of the crucified Christ. The story of the Grail sheds profound light on man's search for the supreme value of life, for that which makes life most meaningful.¹²¹

This defines Gatsby's quest which makes his life meaningful. Gatsby travels from his native Midwest (North Dakota) to the East (New York) to fulfill a dream which is to become wealthy and construct a new identity helped by his involvement with Daisy.

In 1917, Lieutenant James Gatsby makes Daisy's acquaintance which is hindered by his involvement in WWI. Daisy marries Tom Buchanan 'with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before.'¹²² Before her marriage, Daisy receives a letter from Lieutenant James Gatsby asking her to wait for his return, but Daisy cannot stop her marriage with the wealthy Tom Buchanan. After the war, James Gats 'meets with Wolfsheimer in Winebrenner's poolroom on forty-third Street, New York and asks for a job.'¹²³ He, therefore, starts his career as a bootlegger. Bootlegging is the result of the 1919 Prohibition act during which, Thomas Weiskopp states,

[A]lcohol was banned by the U.S. Constitution, as provided for by the 18th Amendment. This constitutional amendment, approved by the U.S. Congress on December 18, 1917, declared the manufacture, transportation, and sale—but not the consumption as such—of "intoxicating liquors," that is alcohol for beverage purposes, illegal.¹²⁴

As a result, 1920s American people start engaging in bootlegging. Research posits that bootlegging 'refers to an unofficial way of pursuing innovative activities when facing

¹²⁰ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 155.

¹²¹ "Princeton University Press," [press.princeton.edu](http://press.princeton.edu/titles/6369.html), last modified April 20, 2017, <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/6369.html>.

¹²² Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 82.

¹²³ Ibid, 25.

¹²⁴ Thomas Weiskopp, "Prohibition in the United States: The German-American Experience, 1919-1933," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* no. 53 (2013): 31. Accessed June 08th, 2017, url: https://www.ghi-dc.org/fileadmin/user_upload/GHI_Washington/Publications/Bulletin53/bu53_031.pdf.

organizational obstacles.’¹²⁵ This activity allows Gatsby to buy a huge property in West Egg so that to see Daisy’s ‘green light’ ‘across the bay,’ ¹²⁶ a color which symbolizes hope and fertility. Thanks to Wolfsheim, James Gats becomes Jay Gatsby, builds his wealth by himself and becomes a magnum whose ambition and talent represent the deviant deals of America during the “Roaring Twenties.”

Despite his huge success, Gatsby does not forget the founding fathers’ past as he embodies their perseverance. Gatsby uses this past which has relevance to his future. He strives to bring back his first love, the love that gives shape to his ambition and pushes him to adopt an identity which identifies with the spirit of wonder and the freedom of the early settlers as envisioned by Thomas Jefferson. Governor John Winthrop states,

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God's sake. We shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are a going.¹²⁷

The early settlers envisioned the future of the new found land. Their prediction turns out correct as America is today the most powerful nation on earth. Gatsby, although there is no hint as to him being Puritan, shares the founding fathers’ optimism and makes himself as America does. He changes his name from James Gats to Jay Gatsby, becomes a ‘nouveau riche’ and reaches success and fame.

Frye further defines romance as ‘nearest of all literary forms of wish-fulfillment dream[...].no matter how great a change may take place in society, romance will turn up

¹²⁵ E.K. Knight cited in Kamel Sakhdari and Erfan Jalali Bidakhavidi, “Underground Innovation: How to Encourage Bootlegging Employees to Disclose their Good Ideas,” *Technology Innovation Management Review* 6, no. 03 (2016):06. Accessed June 08th, 2017, url: https://timreview.ca/sites/default/files/article_PDF/SakhdariBidakhavidi_TIMReview_March2016.pdf (5-12)

¹²⁶ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 84.

¹²⁷ “John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian Charity (1630),” history.hanover, Last modified: August 1996, url: <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>.

again, as hungry as ever looking for new hopes to feed on.’¹²⁸ This is illustrated through Fitzgerald’s themes of hope and desire associated with Gatsby. Nick states, ‘there was something gorgeous about him [Gatsby], some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life.’¹²⁹ Nick also states that Gatsby ‘has an extraordinarily gift for hope.’¹³⁰ His hope and idealism are reflected in his summer parties which are meant to attract Daisy to his mansion in West Egg. His wish is to be with Daisy, a wish which is fulfilled by Nick Carraway who turns out to be Daisy’s cousin. Nick accepts to do Gatsby a favor and invites Daisy for tea. Soon after Gatsby meets her, Nick tells the reader, ‘she waited, listening for a moment longer to the turning-fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips’ touch, she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.’¹³¹ As can be gauged from this passage, a romance begins between Daisy and Gatsby.

Fitzgerald believes that America ‘is the history of all aspiration, not just the American dream but the human dream.’¹³² He also adds, ‘I lived with a great dream. The dream grew and I learned to speak of it and make people listen.’¹³³ Referring to Fitzgerald’s dream, Parvin Ghasemi and Mitra Tiur write, ‘like John Keats, who Fitzgerald imagined, was sustained to the end by his hope of being among the English poets.’¹³⁴ ‘To be among’ means to be equal with his English counterparts. This value of equality is reflected through Gatsby who seeks to stand among the rich of that time. Ghasemi and Tiur argue,

In its American guise, the dream Fitzgerald sought to realize flowed from the most elusive and original of the rights proclaimed by The Declaration of Independence. Framed as an

¹²⁸ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 186.

¹²⁹ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 08

¹³⁰ Ibid, 08.

¹³¹ Ibid, 118.

¹³² Scott F. Fitzgerald.. *The Crack-up* (New York: New Directions, 1945), 64.

¹³³ Ibid, 37.

¹³⁴ Parvin Ghasemi and Mitra Tiur, “The Promises and Failure of the American Dream in Scott Fitzgerald’s Fiction,” *The Institute of Research & Community Outreach* 11, no. 2 (2009): 122. Accessed June 08th, 2017, doi: [10.9744/kata.11.2](https://doi.org/10.9744/kata.11.2).

‘unalienable’ and espoused by the other founders of this revolutionary nation [America], ‘the pursuit of happiness’ magnified the American Dream into an abiding, almost sacred promise.¹³⁵

Ghasemi and Tiur implicitly link Fitzgerald’s dream to *The Declaration of Independence* first drafted by Thomas Jefferson. ‘Revolutionary nation’ shows America being a progressive nation which advocates change and progress as evident in Gatsby’s personality. Fitzgerald’s character embodies the values foregrounded by Jefferson in *The Declaration of Independence* evident in Gatsby’s pursuit of equality and happiness, but he also engages in a quest for wealth and high social status. The character’s quest for money ‘is the familiar Anglo-Saxon Protestant ideal of personal material success.’¹³⁶ This is evident in the Buchanan’s interest in wealth, which means that Gatsby represent both Jefferson’s values and some of the Puritan ones. In other words, Gatsby not only embodies the nation’s past and its present, but also the nation’s future and all of its values.

In addition to Gatsby’s journey evident in his quest to construct a new identity, social status and be with Daisy, *The Great Gatsby* is also characterized by what Frye calls a ‘crucial struggle.’¹³⁷ Frye claims, ‘[a] quest involving conflict assumes two main characters a protagonist or hero and an antagonist or enemy.’¹³⁸ The love relationship is triangular and complicated in the sense that it involves Gatsby, Daisy and Tom Buchanan. Gatsby engages in a quest for the American dream which stands for success, happiness, progress and equality, but he encounters impediments on his way. Many elements and characters constitute the crux of the narrative’s problem. In *The Great Gatsby*, an enemy cannot be identified once and for all since many characters and elements thwart Gatsby’s quest: Tom Buchanan, George Wilson, Daisy Fay and the American dream itself. This latter turns out to be a failure which impedes the character’s progress and romance. Frye claims, ‘[t]he enemy may be an ordinary

¹³⁵ Parvin Ghasemi and Mitra Tiur, “The Promises and Failure of the American Dream in Scott Fitzgerald’s Fiction,” *The Institute of Research & Community Outreach* 11, no. 2 (2009): 122. Accessed June 08th, 2017, doi: [10.9744/kata.11.2](https://doi.org/10.9744/kata.11.2).

¹³⁶ Ibid, 124.

¹³⁷ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 187.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 187.

human being, but [...] the more attributes of divinity will cling to the hero and the more the enemy will take on demonic mythical qualities.’¹³⁹ While Gatsby embodies the values of a hero as he goes for adventure to win back Daisy and construct a new identity, Tom Buchanan may be referred to as ‘demonic’ as he embodies all the epithets of a foe: hatred and manipulation.

As a result of the ‘crucial struggle,’ Daisy and Gatsby’s romance is left unfulfilled in *The Great Gatsby*. The romance between the two characters is characterized by both love and rejection. Gatsby buys his house ‘so that Daisy would be just across the bay.’¹⁴⁰ This illustrates Gatsby’s wealth and Daisy’s materialism since she acquiesces to engage in a love story only because Gatsby becomes wealthy. This refers to the 1920s materialism. Kathleen Parkinson comments, ‘Daisy and Gatsby are lovers again, though this is intimated only indirectly by Gatsby’s closing his house to his guests: Fitzgerald omits any account of their affair.’¹⁴¹ Fitzgerald provides no direct clue as to Jay and Daisy’s true love to each other, but alludes to a romance which is left unfulfilled due to Gatsby’s death.

The theme of romance evident in Gatsby’s quest for a new identity, high social status and a woman’s love is also relevant to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* through Changez. Hamid’s novella revolves around a journey which leads to a quest. Not only does Changez make a physical journey as he comes from Pakistan to New York, but also a psychological one since he grows conscious as to America’s ideological project and understand who he is. Changez is an immigrant who goes from the East, Pakistan, to settle, study and work in the West, America. His ideal resides in his desire to fulfill a dream which is to live in a multicultural America and construct an identity as a Muslim Pakistani American. Changez tells the reader, ‘I worked in New York, and before that attended college in New Jersey [...] it

¹³⁹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 187.

¹⁴⁰ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 84.

¹⁴¹ Kathleen Parkinson, *The Great Gatsby* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 31.

was Princeton.’¹⁴² Graduating as the best of his class after being granted a scholarship to study in the U.S, he is bestowed a position by Jim the director of a famous corporate world Underwood Samson whose initials stand for US. ‘Corporate’ is defined by *Cambridge Dictionary* as ‘large company that ha[s] a lot of influence in the economy of the US, Britain, Germany, etc.’¹⁴³ ‘World’ refers to business taking worldwide dimensions in the beginning of the 21st century as a result of globalization. Hamid’s protagonist is described as a traveler and a servant of American Capitalism who evaluates firms worldwide. Changez changes while in the heart of a ‘Meritocratic Capitalism’ and becomes anti-American at the end of the story due to events which shall be discussed later.

Changez’s journey to Greece marks the beginning of a romance. He goes to Greece with Princeton University students and meets Erica through a friend. Mohsin Hamid comments, ‘Changez’s story is the story of a young man, a college graduate going to work in the corporate world and dealing with being away from home and also falling in love. The woman he’s falling in love with is named Erica.’¹⁴⁴ Hamid means that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is romance as Changez falls in love with Erica whose name stands for America. Changez states, ‘I felt we both understood that something had been exchanged between us, the first invitation to a friendship, perhaps, and so I waited patiently for an opportunity to resume our discussion.’¹⁴⁵ This shows the beginning of a romance between Changez and Erica. However, he discovers that she is still in love with her dead boyfriend Chris and engages in a quest to win her heart.

¹⁴² Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 03.

¹⁴³ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “corporate,” accessed June 06th, 2017, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/corporate>.

¹⁴⁴ Mohsin Hamid, “Slaying Dragons: Mohsin Hamid discusses *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*,” *Psychoanalysis and History* 11, no. 2 (2009): 227, accessed November 12, 2016, url: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/E1460823509000427>.

¹⁴⁵ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 22.

Romance is further defined by Frye as ‘the victory of fertility over the wasteland.’¹⁴⁶ This defines Changez who is fertile i.e. hopeful. His wish is to be with Erica and live in a multicultural America. Multiculturalism is defined by *Cambridge Dictionary* as ‘the belief that different cultures within a society should all be given importance.’¹⁴⁷ Changez claims, ‘I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker.’¹⁴⁸ ‘I was never an American’ refers to Changez being against the exclusive America. ‘I was immediately a New Yorker’ means the multicultural America. New York is defined in Hamid’s novella as ‘cosmopolitan’¹⁴⁹ and Underwood Samson as a ‘pantheon.’¹⁵⁰ From this, one can deduce that New York is viewed by Changez as a multicultural land. He adds, ‘[a]nd that was one of the reasons why for me moving to New York felt –unexpectedly– like coming home.’¹⁵¹

Changez tells the reader, ‘I found myself wishing during the course of the evening that Erica were there.’¹⁵² This refers to Changez’s desire to be with Erica. He is invited by Jim to attend his party in the Hamptons and desires Erica to be there as much as Gatsby desires Daisy to attend one of his parties in West Egg. Being a woman writer, Hamid refers to Erica’s unfinished novella and states, ‘[i]t was simply a tale of adventure, of a girl on an island who learns to make do. The narrative shimmers with hope.’¹⁵³ This refers to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a tale of adventure, desire and hope embodied in Changez. Furthermore, Changez is also described as having a sense of wonder like Gatsby. He immigrates to America and envisions a land of multiculturalism and equality, immigration and recognition. He states, ‘[c]ertainly, much of my early excitement about New York was

¹⁴⁶ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 193.

¹⁴⁷ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “multiculturalism,” accessed June 06th, 2017, url: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/multiculturalism>.

¹⁴⁸ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 37.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 55.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 48.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 36.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 50.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 189.

wrapped up in my excitement about Underwood Samson. I remember my sense of wonder.’¹⁵⁴ The use of words like ‘excitement’ and ‘wonder’ portrays Changez as optimistic and hopeful.

In addition to desire and hope, Frye also claims that ‘the perennially childlike quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia.’¹⁵⁵ *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* revolves around nostalgia which is embodied in Am/Erica. ‘Erica is this classic in love/ill woman and Changez finds himself trying to win the heart of a woman from a man who is already dead [Chris].’¹⁵⁶ Changez strives to woo Erica, but her nostalgia causes her to reject Changez whose quest is thwarted. Being considered as a ‘frontiersman,’¹⁵⁷ Changez finds his progress and quest for love, identity and Multiculturalism hampered by Am/Erica; she rejects Changez (i.e. change) as she is still in love with Chris (i.e. Judeo-Christian religion).

Margaret Walsh believes that women have not been considered in the frontier which is a masculine territory.¹⁵⁸ She also claims that ‘women’s traditional place on the American frontier has been as invisible helpmate or at best as some shadowy figure who appeared occasionally when describing pioneer homes and lifestyles.’¹⁵⁹ Their exclusion from the ‘frontier’ may be due to their being an impediment to the frontiersmen’s quests. Erica suffers from nostalgia and reminisces her past which may stand for America’s past. This precludes impossibility as to Erica’s relationship with Changez (i.e. change). While being with Erica, Changez states, ‘I can still recall her muscularity, made more pronounced by her gauntness and the near-inanimate smoothness and coolness of her flesh as she leaned back and exposed

¹⁵⁴ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 37.

¹⁵⁵ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 186.

¹⁵⁶ Mohsin Hamid, “Slaying Dragons: Mohsin Hamid discusses *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*,” *Psychoanalysis and History* 11, no. 2 (2009): 227, accessed November 12, 2016, url: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/E1460823509000427>.

¹⁵⁷ “The Frontier in American History,” *xroads.virginia*, Last modified: September 30th, 1997. url: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>

¹⁵⁸ Margaret Walsh, “Women’s Place on the American Frontier,” *Journal of American Studies* 29, no. 02 (1995): 241. Accessed June 08th, 2017, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27555925>.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 241.

to my touch her breasts.’¹⁶⁰ This refers to Erica and Changez’s first sexual intercourse. She accepts to make love with Changez only because he pretends to be Chris. Focusing on Margaret Walsh’s idea that women constitute an impediment to men’s quests, Changez’s quest in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is left halfway because of Erica.

Changez’s adventure leads the hero to engage in a ‘crucial struggle.’ Northrope Frye claims, ‘[h]ence the hero of romance is analogous to a mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world and his enemy is analogous to demonic powers of a lower world.’¹⁶¹ As Fitzgerald’s novel, an enemy cannot be identified once and for all as many characters and elements embody Changez’s foe: Chris, Erica, America and the American dream. Changez is portrayed as a savior since he denounces at the end America’s pretention of a freedom-loving nation and as a harbinger of equality, salvation and multiculturalism since he strives to live in a multicultural America and be accepted as a Muslim Pakistani American. Frye’s quote also helps define Chris, who is from ‘a lower world,’ as Changez’s enemy. As Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* which revolves around a triangular love story, Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is ‘a strange romantic triangle’¹⁶² as it involves not only Changez and Erica, but also Erica’s dead boyfriend Chris. Changez states, ‘[i]t was immediately apparent that I would not have, in my wooing of Erica, the field to myself.’¹⁶³ He seeks to establish a love relationship with Erica, a relationship which is characterized by complexity and impossibility.

Although Changez engages in a quest to win Erica’s heart, his romance with Erica is left unfulfilled in Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The novella is characterized by both love and rejection. She is described as being materialistic to some extent due to her being

¹⁶⁰ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 121.

¹⁶¹ Northrope Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 187.

¹⁶² Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 121.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 20.

from a 'bourgeois' background. He states, 'I found it difficult to enter her; it was as though she was not aroused. She said nothing while I was inside her, but I could see her discomfort, and so I forced myself to stop.'¹⁶⁴ This passage refers to a sexual intercourse between Erica and Changez as it also portrays Erica as frigid. The rejection is, on the one hand, due to her being still in love with Chris, but is also due, on the other, to the difference in social class as Erica is a American 'bourgeois' while Changez a Pakistani nouveau riche. Changez and Erica's romance is considered as an 'infatuation' as the two characters do not resume their romance which is aborted at the end of the novella. Overall, the romance ends tragically in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

Changez and Gatsby: The Self-made Men

In the previous section, I have noticed that both Gatsby and Changez engage in a quest for an ideal and have read both works as tragic romances. Fitzgerald and Hamid's protagonists pursue a sense of identity embedded in the ideal of the American dream, a dream which is given meaning owing to their involvement with Erica and Daisy respectively. Both Changez and Gatsby embark on a series of adventures to fulfill their dream and construct a new identity. Northrop Frye claims that 'romance is nearest of all literary forms of wish-fulfillment dream.'¹⁶⁵ Changez and Gatsby's romance with their female counterparts is considered as a partial fulfillment of their dream. In this section, I will show how the protagonists in both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* are portrayed, focusing on their backgrounds and origins, career and talent.

Laurence Coupe claims, 'while myth may be paradigmatic and while it may imply a social and cosmic order, or perfection, it also carries with it the promise of another mode of

¹⁶⁴ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 102.

¹⁶⁵ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 186.

existence.¹⁶⁶ This defines Gatsby and Changez who both seek to improve their lives, thus engaging in a quest for the American dream which promises ‘another mode of existence.’ Both characters leave their poor backgrounds and lower status and feature the characteristics of ‘frontiersmen’¹⁶⁷ who strive for success, fame and happiness.

First of all, Gatsby comes from an impoverished background. Jay Gatsby lives in North Dakota with his family until he decides to go East, deeming that his environment not to be fertile to fit his imagination and ambition. Gatsby pushes the ‘frontier’¹⁶⁸ and engages in a quest for a new identity in the East. His new life as a nouveau riche is recent in the novel, but, ‘for underneath, Jay Gatsby’s million-dollar façade is James Gatz, a college-dropout, janitor-turned-swindler “young roughneck” from a poor family.’¹⁶⁹ Wolfshiem states, ‘I raised him up out of nothing right out of the gutter.’¹⁷⁰ This illustrates Gatsby’s poor conditions during his childhood until he gets initiated into bootlegging by Wolfshiem who contributes to his success and fame. He changes his name from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby to forget about his past and engage in a quest for the American dream and a new identity. Bereft of his original identity, Gatsby manifests a generous sense of accomplishment and self-fulfillment.

Before he succeeds to build his wealth and construct a new identity, Gatsby discards his past and family which are considered as an impediment to his ambition and idealism. He goes East to construct a new life, leaving his parents behind. He is portrayed as having ‘spr[ung] from his platonic conception of himself.’¹⁷¹ Gatsby begets himself by himself thanks to his efforts and strength. Mr. Gatz (i.e. his father) states, ‘he was reluctant to close the book,

¹⁶⁶ Laurence Coupe, *Myth* (New York : Routledge, 1997), 88.

¹⁶⁷ “The Frontier in American History,” *xroads.virginia*, Last modified: September 30th, 1997. url: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ “The Problem of Poverty in *The Great Gatsby*,” Sojo, Last modified October 05th, 2013. url: <https://sojo.net/articles/problem-poverty-great-gatsby>.

¹⁷⁰ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 178.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 104.

reading each item and then looking eager at me.’¹⁷² Gatsby is portrayed as implicitly resentful to his father who does not give him the necessary education that he deserves as an ambitious child. Nick states, ‘[h]is parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people- his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all.’¹⁷³ Thus, Gatsby decides to break away from the bondage of his family who hampers his progress and improvement. He states, ‘I was brought up in America but educated in Oxford, because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years as it is a family tradition.’¹⁷⁴ Gatsby alters reality and constructs a new identity to start afresh and inspire people’s curiosity and wonder.

As he leaves his family, Gatsby pushes the ‘frontier’ and strives to fulfill a dream. He moves East to build himself like a ‘frontiersman.’ Frederick Jackson Turner defines the ‘frontier’ as,

Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people--to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life.¹⁷⁵

Turner means that the first settlers have faced challenges which contribute to the development of the American society. By dint of moving westward, Americans experience new circumstances and face complexities which help them construct a new society different from others. The same goes for Gatsby who is portrayed as a new ‘frontiersman’ since he moves from the Midwest to conquer the East and construct a new identity. Along his journey, James Gats meets Dan Cody, an old man who decides to bequeath his wealth to him.

As he engages in a quest for an ideal, Gatsby gets interested in fishing, gets involved in WWI as a lieutenant, eventually getting initiated into bootlegging by Wolfsheimer. Nick

¹⁷² Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 180.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 105.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 71.

¹⁷⁵ “The Frontier in American History,” [xroads.virginia.edu](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/), Last modified: September 30th, 1997. url: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>

states, '[f]or over a year he had been beating his way along the south shore of lake superior as a clam-digger and a salmon fisher or in any other capacity that brought him food and bed.'¹⁷⁶ Thanks to Dan Cody whom he rescued from a ship wreck, Gatsby is introduced to the life of the rich and almost inherits Cody's wealth. After this latter's death, however, a next of kin inherits Cody's riches, leading James Gats to resume again his quest. In 1917, Gatsby meets Daisy but soon gets involved in WWI as a lieutenant. He states, 'I accepted a commission as first lieutenant when it began[...] I was promoted to be a major and every Allied government gave me a decoration.'¹⁷⁷ After Gatsby comes back from the war, he is initiated into bootlegging by Wolfshiem. This latter states, 'I got him to join up in the American legion [bootleggers] and he used to stand high there.'¹⁷⁸ Here is shown Gatsby's position as a servant of American Capitalism; he succeeds to build his wealth thanks to bootlegging.

Furthermore, owing to the career and the identity that he constructs, Gatsby is portrayed as exceptional and talented in Fitzgerald's novel. Referring to his mansion, Gatsby states, 'It took me just three years to earn the money that bought it.'¹⁷⁹ Gatsby is described as ambitious, strong and capable of great achievements. He is also known for his sense of wonder. His father describes his optimism stating, 'he had a big future before him, you know. He was only a young man, but he had a lot of brain power here [...] If he of lived, he'd of helped build up the country.'¹⁸⁰ Gatsby's individual talent and resourcefulness is evident in this passage. Though coming from poor conditions, Gatsby achieves fame and success, a reward which he gets as a result of his hard work and talent. He makes efforts to construct his new identity as a nouveau riche and resume his 1917 aborted romance with Daisy, a past

¹⁷⁶ Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925, London: Penguin Group, 1995), 105.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 72.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 178.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 97.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 145.

which he strives to repeat. He also proves to be endowed with a business acumen which gives him the position of a servant of American Capitalism par excellence.

Like Gatsby who comes from impoverished conditions in North Dakota and becomes a servant of American Capitalism, Changez also comes from impoverished conditions in Pakistan and becomes a financial manager. Changez's concern about money and status is evident in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. He asserts his identity at the beginning and engages in a quest for an ideal to construct a new one. He states, 'I was from Lahore, the second largest city of Pakistan, ancient capital of the Punjab, home to nearly as many people as New York, layers like a sedimentary plain with the accreted history of invaders from the Aryans to the Mongols to the British.'¹⁸¹ Changez asserts his identity and origins. His poor background is also hinted at when Jim asks him questions during the job interview. Jim states, 'I get where you come from, Changez. You're hungry.'¹⁸² Jim implies that Pakistan is an underdeveloped country. Changez is portrayed as hungry, squalid and poor. Jim feels as if Changez has no choice but to work for Underwood Samson (i.e. US) to improve his situation. After all, Changez immigrates to America because he deems that Pakistan does not fit his ambition like Gatsby who moves from North Dakota to find a suitable environment in the East.

Like Gatsby who abandons his parents, Changez also engages in a quest which makes him repudiate his family. As he is near to a dream which is more valuable, Changez relinquishes his past and abandons his family. Being given a scholarship and then graduating from Princeton University, he is hired by Jim and given a position in a corporate world Underwood Samson. He states, 'Underwood Samson had the potential to transform my life as surely as it had transformed his [Jim] making my concerns about money things of the distant

¹⁸¹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 08.

¹⁸² Ibid, 10.

past.¹⁸³ He adds, ‘those rare cases of abuse [...] happened [...] in America as in all countries to the hapless poor, not to Princeton graduates earning eighty thousand dollars a year.’¹⁸⁴ Changez is portrayed as nouveau riche since he does not belong to the poor class whatsoever thanks to Underwood Samson. It shows also the extent to which a corporate world can shape an individual’s life and repute in exchange for their contribution. Underwood Samson makes Changez forget about his concerns, the concerns about money and status which he often encounters in Pakistan. Changez states, ‘[t]here was a mental state I used to attain [...] myself would disappear, free of doubts and limits, free to focus on nothing but the game. When I entered this state I felt unstoppable.’¹⁸⁵ This illustrates further how Changez repudiates his family, forgets about his past to construct a new identity and focus on his dream.

In addition to him repudiating his family, Changez is hired to evaluate firms as part of his professional career. As a financial manager, he ‘traverses the world so freely- from Pakistan, to Greece, to the US to Latin America,’¹⁸⁶ which means that he travels both inside and outside of America. Being efficient, Changez is praised by Jim who soon calls him ‘a shark.’¹⁸⁷ He is an acolyte of Capitalism and a servant of the American empire par excellence. Thanks to trainings that Changez and his counterparts follow, they prove to be efficient and creative. He also states, ‘Princeton University inspired in me the feeling that my life was a film in which everything was possible.’¹⁸⁸ This quote refers to Changez’s American dream ‘come[ing] true.’¹⁸⁹ He idealizes a myth which makes his life meaningful and improves his former impoverished conditions. However, Changez grows conscious as to the fallacy of this dream, an insight which Juan Bautista gives him while in Valparaiso, Chilly. As a result,

¹⁸³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 16.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 107.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 14.

¹⁸⁶ Ira Pande, ‘A Life in a Day,’ *India International Center Quarterly* 34, no.1 (2007): 153, accessed September 10, 2016, url : <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23006055>.

¹⁸⁷ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 80.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 03.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 03.

Changez becomes ‘an anti-American Agitprop.’¹⁹⁰ Bautista reminds him of his position as a modern ‘janissari’¹⁹¹ who unconsciously destroys his own civilization and contributes to the development of the United States (Underwood Samson). A ‘janissary’ is defined by Lord Kinross as an Elite Christian soldier who, indoctrinated, protects the Ottoman Empire rather than his nation.¹⁹²

Owing to his ambition and the career that he succeeds to build, Changez is portrayed as talented and exceptional. Thanks to his efforts and perseverance, Changez ensures a powerful place for himself in both Princeton University and Underwood Samson. The interest of the American empire resides in Changez being ‘hungry’¹⁹³ for knowledge. Changez proves to be endowed with a business acumen which gives him an important position in Underwood Samson. Furthermore, he studies in Princeton University which is also an incubator of intellectuals in which he succeeds ‘without having a single B.’¹⁹⁴ He adds, ‘students like me were given visas and scholarships complete financial aid and mind you and invited into the ranks of meritocracy.’¹⁹⁵ Meritocracy is defined by Barbara Celarent who states, “‘merit’ would be measured by intelligence tests administered continuously over the life course.”¹⁹⁶ This means that a meritocratic system considers only the individual’s talent and intelligence. Hamid also defines meritocracy as, ‘if you do well, you will be rewarded, if you don’t, you’ll be out the door.’¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁰ Raymond Bonner, ‘A Ticking Bomber,’ *The National Interest* no. 97 (2008): 78, accessed September 10, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42896190>.

¹⁹¹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 171.

¹⁹² Lord Kinross, *Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* (New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1977), 52.

¹⁹³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 10.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 04.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 04.

¹⁹⁶ Barbara Celarent, The Rise of Meritocracy, 1870-2033 by Michael Young,’ *American Journal of Sociology* 115, no. 01 (2009): 323. Accessed June 4th, 2017, url: www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/605763?origin=JSTOR-pdf.

¹⁹⁷ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 39.

Moreover, Changez is also considered as a ‘frontiersman.’ Frederick Jackson Turner further defines the ‘frontier’ as ‘the line of most rapid and effective Americanization.’¹⁹⁸ He also claims that ‘in short, at the frontier, the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish.’¹⁹⁹ Changez whose name symbolizes strength proves resilient. As he goes to the West, one can sense Changez’s desire to be recognized as a Muslim Pakistani American. He strives along the novel to fulfill this dream (i.e. challenge) which is to live in a multicultural America, an America of acceptance, equality and immigration. He pushes the ‘frontier’ and strives to conquer the West for multiculturalism to prevail over assimilation.

While applying Frye’s “Mythos of Summer: Romance,” I have noticed that Mohsin Hamid and Scott Fitzgerald’s plots share similarities. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is romance as much as *The Great Gatsby* is. Their protagonists engage in a quest for an ideal; they go for a journey which leads them to a ‘climactic adventure’ and eventually either to their exaltation or their death. Furthermore, I have noticed that Hamid and Fitzgerald’s protagonists share also similarities. Both the characters share attributes and values, such as the belief in the American dream and the conquest of the frontier, change and immigration, talent and hard work, which make them similar. Throughout this analysis, I have not only shown that Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is romance, but also the influence of *The Great Gatsby* on both its plot and characters. Now that I have shown that Hamid is influenced by the plot and protagonist of *The Great Gatsby*, I will move to the third chapter “The Differences between *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Great Gatsby*.”

¹⁹⁸ “The Frontier in American History,” xroads.virginia, Last modified: September 30th, 1997. url: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>. Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Chapter three: The Differences between Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

In this chapter, I claim that Mohsin Hamid misreads *The Great Gatsby* and foregrounds his originality to distance himself from Fitzgerald's tradition. J.T Shaw et al. define literary influence as 'shown in style, images, characters, themes, mannerisms, and it may also be shown in content, thought [and] ideas.'²⁰⁰ They go further to note that 'influence study can be particularly interesting when it can be traced through an author's development.'²⁰¹ An author's literary development can be studied through influence which forms a literary tradition. T.S Eliot claims that tradition is a 'historical sense'²⁰² which 'compels a man to write not merely with his generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature [...] composes a simultaneous order.'²⁰³ Hamid invites the reader to read Fitzgerald's novel in the light of the post-9/11 era so as to change the 1920s vision of the American dream, give *The Great Gatsby* another reading and find his originality. In my analysis, I will start with analyzing Hamid's novella showing that an anxiety of influence is sensed as a result of misreading which is 'an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation.'²⁰⁴ This will allow me to give examples as to how Hamid misreads Fitzgerald's plot, eventually showing how he misreads Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist: The Case of 'Anxiety of Influence'

Mohsin Hamid tells the reader, 'the party was being held at Jim's house in the Hamptons, a magnificent property that made me think of *The Great Gatsby*.'²⁰⁵ This passage is the only one in which Fitzgerald's novel is referred to. This shows Hamid's reading of

²⁰⁰ J.T Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies," in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. Henry H.H. Remak et.al. (Chicago : Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 67.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 67.

²⁰² T.S Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent,' *Perspecta* 19, (1982): 37, accessed September 27, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567048>.

²⁰³ Ibid, 37.

²⁰⁴ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30.

²⁰⁵ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 48.

Fitzgerald's novel as much as the influence of *The Great Gatsby* on Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Hamid could not help thinking of *The Great Gatsby* while writing his novella. Hamid states, '[t]ime only moves in one direction [...] Things always change.'²⁰⁶ Hamid follows the events of Fitzgerald's novel, but misinterprets them and introduces new events which constitute his originality. He also declares, '[y]es, we have acquired a certain familiarity with the recent history of our surroundings and that -in my humble opinion- allows us to put the present into much better perspectives.'²⁰⁷ Hamid further argues that in revisiting the past, one can better understand the present. Monique Lojkine-Moreleg affirms,

[E]very reader has no eternity but the time of his own reading. His reading cannot be someone else's. It is not even his after a period of time. Every time undoes, completes and restructures the reading of a previous author and nothing escapes this mutability.²⁰⁸ (Trans. Mine)

Lojkine-Moreleg refers to Eliot's historical hermeneutics which is 'the study of written texts and their meaning.'²⁰⁹ She follows Eliot's theory and claims that the importance does not reside only in the text but also in the meaning inside the text. She believes that an author should redefine what the previous author expounds, making thus the tradition progress.

The same goes for Richard Schusterman who claims, 'since understanding is always situation-dependent, and since the changing of the world is continuously imposing new situations [...] we cannot rigidly hold to our past, interpretation, assessments and beliefs.'²¹⁰ Schusterman refers again to Eliot who chooses hermeneutics over objectivism since interpretation reshapes the tradition and makes it progress. He also claims that tradition 'is not immune to change'²¹¹ which is inevitable and requires interpretation to fuel its progress. The change in tradition is brought about in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* through the process

²⁰⁶ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 109.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 52.

²⁰⁸ Monique Lojkine-Moreleg, *T.S Eliot: Essai sur la Genèse d'une Ecriture* (Paris : Klincksieck, 1985), 02.

²⁰⁹ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. "hermeneutics," accessed June 06th, 2017,

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hermeneutics>.

²¹⁰ Richard Shusterman, 'Eliot as a Philosopher,' in *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, ed. David Moody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 43.

²¹¹ Ibid, 44.

of ‘misinterpretation’²¹² which seeks to restructure *The Great Gatsby* ‘as though the precursor [Fitzgerald] had failed to go so far.’²¹³ Hamid argues, ‘I tried therefore to be as nonchalant as possible; this naturally led to my becoming stiff and self-conscious.’²¹⁴ Hamid’s misreading of Fitzgerald’s novel makes him undergo an anxiety of influence, or what Bloom calls ‘self-consciousness’²¹⁵ which is embodied in his novella. Bloom defines the anxiety of influence as ‘not an anxiety about the father, real or literary, but an anxiety achieved by and in the poem, novel, or play. Any strong literary work creatively misreads and therefore misinterprets a precursor text or texts.’²¹⁶

Mohsin Hamid misreads *The Great Gatsby* as a way to foreground his originality. Hamid’s novella starts with Changez having a one-sided conversation with an American stranger and not allowing him to retaliate. While recounting his story, he tells ostentatiously the mysterious stranger, ‘have I guessed correctly?’²¹⁷ Changez shows the latter that he has knowledge which empowers him; he is portrayed as intimidating and seeks to assume power over the American tourist. Michel Foucault claims, ‘there is no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.’²¹⁸ Foucault claims that knowledge is linked to power. By way of illustration, Changez tells the American stranger,

Excuse me, sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard. I am a lover of America. I noticed that you were looking for something more than looking, in fact, you seemed to be on a mission and since I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language, I thought I might offer you my services.²¹⁹

²¹² Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30.

²¹³ Ibid, 14.

²¹⁴ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 85.

²¹⁵ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 29.

²¹⁶ Harold Bloom, Preface to *The Western Canon : The Books and School of the Ages* (Florida : Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 08.

²¹⁷ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 02.

²¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1977New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 27.

²¹⁹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 01.

In this passage, Changez may stand for Mohsin Hamid and the American stranger for Scott Fitzgerald. Hamid summons Fitzgerald and reveals the need for the tradition to be improved. This misreading means that the precursor returns from the dead but in the way the new poet seeks him to.²²⁰ Hamid is the ‘master’ or should one say the ‘strong poet’ who gives the precursor (i.e. Fitzgerald) a chance to come back from the dead not as erudition but as completion. ‘May I be of assistance’ demonstrates Hamid’s need to restructure Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* which is deemed to be unsatisfactory. ‘I thought I might offer you my services’ means that Hamid insists offer Fitzgerald assistance ‘as though [the latter] had failed to go so far.’²²¹ This informs as to an encounter of both the precursor and the ephebe; the dead poet returns but in the voice of the new poet ‘at least in part, at least in moments, moments that testify to [the ephebe’s] persistence.’²²²

To elaborate further the idea that Mohsin Hamid misreads *The Great Gatsby* to foreground his originality, another example is manifest in Hamid’s novella. Changez asserts, ‘I have access to this beautiful campus, I thought, to professors who are **titans** in their fields and **fellow students** who are philosopher-kings in the making (Emphasis added).’²²³ This indicates Hamid’s pursuit of a literary identity. ‘Philosopher-king in the making’ means that Hamid’s quest for originality is underway while writing his novella. It also means that the ‘fellow student’ (i.e. Hamid) has finally authority over the ‘titan’ (i.e. Fitzgerald) owing to his knowledge and qualification (i.e. Princeton University). ‘This is a dream come true’ may refer to Eliot’s “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) in which the new poet’s dream surpassing the dead poet is not possible.²²⁴ However, Hamid considers this to be practical at

²²⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 141.

²²¹ Ibid, 14.

²²² Ibid, 14.

²²³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 03.

²²⁴ T.S Eliot, ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent,’ *Perspecta* 19, (1982): 38, accessed September 27, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567048>.

last. He improves the precursor's version which is, according to him, unsatisfactory. The return of the dead is so well-performed that the roles are exchanged since Fitzgerald returns but only as a 'yes-man' who completes Hamid's work. A 'yes-man' is defined by *Cambridge Dictionary* as 'a person who agrees with everything their employer, leader [...] says in order to please them.'²²⁵ This puts Hamid in a strong position while Fitzgerald in a subservient one.

Furthermore, Changez tells the American stranger, 'your gaze from one point to the next brings to mind the behavior of an animal that has ventured too far from its lair and is now in unfamiliar surroundings, uncertain whether it is predator or prey.'²²⁶ The American stranger is described as a tourist just as Fitzgerald is. Changez receives the tourist in Pakistan, Changez's territory. This shows that Hamid holds power and becomes the authority while Fitzgerald the anxious poet. The roles are exchanged since Fitzgerald, who once was the literary authority, becomes the ephebe; Hamid uses *The Great Gatsby* as a means to an end and assumes that it is Fitzgerald's novel which completes *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, but not the opposite. Hamid refers to *The Great Gatsby* as a way to complete his novella which he considers more valuable than Fitzgerald's. The American stranger (i.e. Fitzgerald) holds a subservient position as he is relegated to the place of 'other'²²⁷ and completion while the ephebe (i.e. Hamid) promoted to the place of 'self'²²⁸ and erudition.

To support the view that Hamid misreads *The Great Gatsby* to foreground his originality, another example is present in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Changez tells the American stranger, '[d]o sit down, I implore you, or you shall force me to stand as well. As it is, I feel rude to remain in this position while my guest feels uncomfortable.'²²⁹ Changez is

²²⁵ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. "yes-man," accessed June 06th, 2017, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/yes-man>.

²²⁶ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 35.

²²⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Group, 1978).

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 69.

described as intimidating. He adopts an imposing tone as he feels comfortable and empowered while taking his new status of precursor. This can be interpreted as Hamid making use of ‘Symbolic Violence’²³⁰ to assume power and undermine the precursor’s authority. Pierre Bourdieu claims,

[T]he only way in which relations of domination can be set up, maintained, or restored is through strategies which, being expressly oriented towards the establishment of relations of personal dependence, must be disguised and transfigured lest they destroy themselves by revealing their true nature.²³¹

To illustrate Bourdieu’s idea, Changez tells the stranger, ‘[i]f you are not yet ready to reveal your purpose in traveling here- your demeanor all but precludes the possibility that you are a tourist wandering aimlessly through this part of the world.’²³² This refers again to Fitzgerald’s life as a tourist. Hamid endorses literary authority while Fitzgerald is relegated to status of an anxious poet. Making use of ‘symbolic violence’ defines Hamid’s desire to maintain his new position of a strong poet who succeeds to surpass his precursor. The one-sided conversation is supposed to be the final scene of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, but the novella starts with it since it describes Changez as a strong poet who dominates the conversation.

Hamid’s misreading of *The Great Gatsby* allows him to claim discontinuity from Fitzgerald’s tradition. Harold Bloom believes that poetic misprision (i.e. misreading) is a way to disrupt the continuity and counter the fact that the predecessor is the only authority.²³³ He claims that ‘he who lives with continuity alone cannot be a poet.’²³⁴ Bloom means that repetition is not to be adopted as it is stagnation. For example, Jim tells Changez, ‘you’re

²³⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Eds. Ernest Gellner et.al. and trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 191.

²³¹ Ibid, 191.

²³² Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 88.

²³³ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 78.

²³⁴ Ibid, 78.

hungry, and that's a good thing in my book.'²³⁵ 'Hungry' implies original. Originality improves the latter (i.e. literary tradition) which keeps on bettering as explained in Eliot's "Tradition as the Individual Talent" (1919).²³⁶ The use of the word 'book' refers to the literary tradition. Eliot claims that 'novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it, you must obtain it by great labour.'²³⁷ A new poet should prove his strength and genius to be accepted in the tradition. Jim praises Changez's strength and hunger for originality and knowledge as they are the key to making the literary tradition progress. Though the ephebe belongs to the tradition, he cannot claim complete independence whatsoever due to the tradition being persistent.

To elaborate further the idea that Hamid's misreading of *The Great Gatsby* allows him to claim discontinuity from Fitzgerald's tradition, another example is evident in the novella. Changez tells Erica, 'I see that you have noticed the scar on my forearm, here, where the skin is both darker and smoother than that which surrounds it. I have been told that it looks like a rope burn.'²³⁸ Hamid describes a 'scar' which means Fitzgerald's influence crippling his literary imagination. He also refers to a 'rope burn' which symbolizes discontinuity. Changez also states that 'the source of my injury was rather prosaic.'²³⁹ 'Prosaic' means unproductive. The influence of *The Great Gatsby* leaves Hamid unimaginative and unproductive at the beginning of the novella until he misreads *The Great Gatsby* and becomes original from the middle to the end of it. His originality resides mostly in the 9/11 event which contributes to the development of his narrative and gives an original approach to it.

²³⁵ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 10.

²³⁶ T.S Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent,' *Perspecta* 19, (1982): 37, accessed September 27, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567048>.

²³⁷ Ibid, 37.

²³⁸ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 53.

²³⁹ Ibid, 53.

To sustain Hamid's claim for discontinuity, another example is evident in the novella. Changez believes, 'it is remarkable how theatrical manmade light can be once sunlight has begun to fade, how it can affect us emotionally [...] Surely, New York by night must be one of the greatest sights in the world.'²⁴⁰ Hamid associates the splendor of New York at night with greatness; this alludes to *The Great Gatsby*. 'Light can be once sunlight has begun to fade' shows Fitzgerald's fame being taken by Hamid who becomes the new authority. 'How it can affect us emotionally' reveals Hamid's anxiety of influence after misreading *The Great Gatsby*. 'Manmade light' refers to Gatsby's 'self-made' personality and America's invented literary tradition. Hamid implies that if Gatsby and America succeed to claim discontinuity from their former backgrounds and become a self-made man and a self-made nation, so can he.

To delve more into Hamid's claim for discontinuity, another example shows Hamid's desire to shun Fitzgerald and break away from his tradition. Changez tells the reader, 'we keep our homes well-stocked with candles so that it does not unduly disrupt our lives. As a child, during such a time of load-shedding [Blackout], I grabbed hold of one of these candles, tipped it over, and spilled molten wax on myself.'²⁴¹ Bloom refers to inspiration as 'fire.'²⁴² In the above passage, 'candles' symbolize the precursor's 'fire' i.e. inspiration. 'Tipping it over and spilling the molten wax on himself' means that Hamid empties *The Great Gatsby* of its inspiration which causes the fire (i.e. inspiration) to put out, emptying also the inspiration of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in the process. However, Hamid 'takes care to fall soft while the precursor [Fitzgerald] falls hard'²⁴³ as he brings a perspective which is not found in Fitzgerald's novel. Said otherwise, since Hamid is influenced by *The Great Gatsby*, it means

²⁴⁰ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 54.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 54.

²⁴² Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79.

²⁴³ Ibid, 91.

that its inspiration resides also in Hamid's novella. If he empties Fitzgerald's novel of its inspiration, he also empties the inspiration of his novella in the process, but he remains strong owing to his originality. In view of an argument which shall be discussed later, Hamid's originality is mostly apparent in his instilling a new event in his narrative i.e. the 9/11 event and his giving a new definition to the American dream. It is also shown in the way the story is told, the characters shaped and the plot elaborated.

Hamid's claim for discontinuity leads him to express a desire for individuation. Erica tells Changez, 'you know what I'd like to do ? [...] I would like to rent a room on one of these islands and just write [...] I'm not good at being alone. But you [Changez], on the other hand [...] I think you'd be fine.'²⁴⁴ Hamid does not only refer to Erica as a weak poet as she is unable 'to clear an imaginative space for [herself]'²⁴⁵ and finish writing her book, but also hints at Changez's ability to put up with solitude. Changez recalls, 'I have never, to the best of my knowledge, had any fear of solitude.'²⁴⁶ It shows Hamid's desire to achieve individuation and isolate himself from Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* to achieve his originality. Another example is Changez telling Erica, 'when I was a child, there were eight of us, eight cousins, all in the same compound – a single boundary wall surrounded the plot of land my grandfather left to his sons, you see.'²⁴⁷ Hamid tells the reader that Changez belongs to an extended family. This refers to the whole literary procession that influences Hamid, which contributes to his literary development as a writer; it also refers to Hamid and Fitzgerald's 'family romance.'²⁴⁸ Hamid desires to find his own space and achieve individuation by engaging in a death struggle to symbolically kill the father, which is sensed inside Hamid's

²⁴⁴ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 21.

²⁴⁵ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 05.

²⁴⁶ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 21.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 21-22.

²⁴⁸ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 08.

text. Sigmund Freud defines this as ‘parricide’²⁴⁹ which is the son showing the father some tenderness (continuity), but desiring to kill him, for he is a rival (discontinuity).²⁵⁰ [Trans. Mine] Overall, Hamid misreads Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* as a way for him to find his originality and achieve individuation.

Hamid’s Misreading of Fitzgerald’s Plot

In the foregoing chapter, I have shown that Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* are similar in terms of plot and characterization. This reveals an influence which does not mean ‘intellectual poverty,’²⁵¹ but ‘a noble trust in one’s own strength, the hope of discovering new worlds, following the footsteps of a genius[...] the desire to master one’s model and give it a second life.’²⁵² Hamid agrees with Fitzgerald to some extent with regard to plot, but ‘swerves away [...] [t]his appears as a corrective movement [...] which implies that the precursor [Fitzgerald] went accurately up to a point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poem [text] moves.’²⁵³ This section follows the similarities outlined in the second chapter to show the differences which Hamid injects in his narrative as a way to foreground his originality in terms of plot.

Harold Bloom claims, ‘[t]he poet confronting his Great original must find the fault which is not there, and at the heart of all but the highest imaginative virtue. The poet is beguiled to the heart of loss [...] as he finds [...] the poem that is not there.’²⁵⁴ Bloom claims, ‘poetic influence need not make poets less original, as often it makes them more original

²⁴⁹ Sigmund Freud, « Dostoïvski et le Parricide », *Revue Française de psychosomatique* 39, (1928) :109-125, accessed June 16th, 2017, url : <http://www.cairn.info/revue-française-de-psychosomatique-2011-1-page-109.htm>.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 109-215.

²⁵¹ J.T Shaw, “Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies,” in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. Henry H.H. Remak *et.al.* (Chicago : Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 62.

²⁵² Ibid, 62.

²⁵³ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 31.

though not necessarily better.²⁵⁵ Influence and originality are interrelated as the latter cannot exist without the former. J.T. Shaw et al. state, '[t]hey [authors] seem to have felt that originality consists, not exclusively or even primarily in innovations in materials or of style and manner, but in the genuineness and effectiveness of the Artistic moving power of the creative work.'²⁵⁶ The same goes for Northrop Frye who claims that 'the possession of originality cannot make an artist unconventional. It drives him further into convention, obeying the law of the art itself, which seeks constantly to reshape itself from its own depths.'²⁵⁷ Originality is not an invention, but a contribution to the already existent lore of knowledge.

First of all, Hamid misreads Gatsby's journey. While Gatsby comes from the American Midwest (North Dakota), Changez comes from the East (Pakistan). In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the protagonist's journey is made both in the inside and outside of America while in *The Great Gatsby* the protagonist focuses only on the inside of America. This tells much about the 21st Century globalised Capitalism. While Nick introduces himself as a servant of U.S Capitalism in Walt Street, Changez introduces himself as a servant of a 'meritocratic' Capitalism in Underwood Samson. Even though *The Great Gatsby* deals with hard work and self-fulfillment, the notion of meritocracy is only implied and deduced. Hamid's novella 'antithetically completes'²⁵⁸ *The Great Gatsby* and focuses more on the notion of meritocracy. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* restructures the 1920s Capitalism by putting it in a globalised context.²⁵⁹ This type of Capitalism leads Changez to undertake

²⁵⁵ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 07.

²⁵⁶ J.T Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies," in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. Henry H.H. Remak et.al. (Chicago : Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 58.

²⁵⁷ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957, London: Penguin Group, 1973), 132.

²⁵⁸ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14.

²⁵⁹ Sharmila Mukherjee, 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist: A Novel Mohsin Hamid,' *Modern Language studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): 121, accessed October 09, 2016, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41445156>.

worldwide journeys, leading thus the protagonist to different adventures. Furthermore, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* focuses on the characters' psychological journey more than it does on their physical journey. Changez grows conscious as to America's exclusiveness and asserts his identity as a Pakistani when he returns to Pakistan at the end of the story.

Misreading Gatsby's journey leads also Hamid to misread Gatsby's adventure. The latter introduces the 9/11 attack in his narrative to bring originality. He completes the notion of death as American imperialism triggers only three deaths in *The Great Gatsby* while the 9/11 attack may not only involve the death of Am/Erica, but also 'thousands of innocents.'²⁶⁰ At this juncture, Hamid's originality is sensed as he introduces a new event which is absent in *The Great Gatsby* i.e. the 9/11 event. Changez tells the reader, 'I turned on the television and saw what at first I took to be a film. But as I continued to watch, I realize that it was not fiction but news.'²⁶¹ 'I realize that it was not fiction, but news' means that Hamid's narrative is more realistic than Fitzgerald's. *The Great Gatsby* is idealistic and fictitious while *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* swerves from idealism to focus on facts. Hamid's title reflects the content of the novella as this latter inspires disillusionment and reluctance while *The Great Gatsby* idealism and greatness. Hamid reshapes the notion of death and embodies it in the failure of the American dream and the disappearance of Erica who may be dead at the end of the novella. Hamid's narrative tackles the apocalyptic side of the American dream more than it does of its positive one while *The Great Gatsby* tackles its positive side more than it does of its negative one.

In addition to Hamid misreading both Gatsby's journey and adventure, he misreads Gatsby's romance. Admittedly, the two works are about a triangle love story, but Hamid 'retains its terms [and] mean[s] them in another sense, as though the precursor [Fitzgerald]

²⁶⁰ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 83.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 82-83.

had failed to go so far.’²⁶² The notion of romance is reshaped, a new quest is introduced and another ideal is emphasized in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* which is evident in Changez’s dream for a multicultural America and desire to construct a new identity and promote change. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* restructures *The Great Gatsby* as Hamid puts Fitzgerald’s novel in a new context. On the one hand, Hamid’s notion of romance proves to be different as Erica appears loyal to her dead boyfriend while Daisy hypocritical to both Tom and Gatsby. Although both Changez and Gatsby share the same dream as to change, the pursuit of happiness and equality, Changez changes as he becomes increasingly aware of the fallacy of the dream that Underwood Samson (U.S) promises to offer. Admittedly, being with Erica is Changez’s desire, but his ideal is to live in a multicultural and a more inclusive America, which proves impossible. In other words, Changez’s ideal is not only limited to Erica as a character, but also extends to America as a nation.

Hamid not only misreads Fitzgerald’s journey, adventure and Gatsby’s romance, but also Fitzgerald’s death of the hero. Hamid does not put an end to Changez’s journey, but only hints at a tinkling sound coming from the American stranger’s pocket, which may be a pistol. That is to say, he does not continue *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* insofar as to achieve the protagonist’s end, but leaves the end of the narrative to the reader to discover or invent. Hamid confesses, ‘it’s more a novella than a novel [...] it leaves space for your thoughts to echo.’²⁶³ After America wages a ‘war on terror,’ the situation in Pakistan goes ‘precarious, it was rumored that India was acting with America’s connivance [...] to coerce [the Pakistani] government into changing its policies.’²⁶⁴ Changez resigns office in Underwood Samson (U.S), returns to Pakistan and becomes critical of America’s politics. Changez strives through the narrative to convey the real meaning of fundamentalism which is not terrorism, but a

²⁶² Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14.

²⁶³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 58.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 169.

reaction to America's 'war on terror.' The first scene in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is in reality the final one as Changez has a one-sided conversation with the American stranger after he becomes a fundamentalist.

Hamid's Misreading of Fitzgerald's Hero

Now that I have proven that Hamid misreads the plot of *The Great Gatsby*, it is to the later section that I will now turn, which shows Hamid's misreading of Gatsby. In the second chapter, I have shown that Gatsby and Changez are similar. In this section, I will show that Hamid creates differences from those similarities as he agrees with *The Great Gatsby*, but only to some extent. Hamid misreads Gatsby and creates differences as a way to foreground his own originality. He tells the reader,

Perhaps by taking the **personae** of another, I had diminished myself in my own eyes; perhaps I was humiliated by the continuing dominance, in the strange romantic triangle of which I found myself a part of **my dead rival** [Fitzgerald], I was worried that I had acted selfishly (Emphasis added).²⁶⁵

'Taking the personae of another' refers to Hamid borrowing Fitzgerald's characters. Hamid takes Fitzgerald's Gatsby and gives him other attributes to create Changez. 'Humiliated by the continuing dominance' describes the persistence of Fitzgerald's influence. 'Strange romantic triangle' emphasizes the view that the novella is 'family romance' as Hamid (i.e. the son) struggles with Fitzgerald (i.e. the father) over inspiration (i.e. the muse). 'I was worried I acted selfishly' reveals Hamid appropriating Fitzgerald's inspiration or his 'muse.' 'Diminished myself' means that idealizing the predecessor makes a poet weak. For Bloom, the task of a strong poet (i.e. the ephebe) is 'to rally everything that remains, and [neither] to sanctify'²⁶⁶ nor 'idealize.'²⁶⁷ The ephebe should not copy the precursor's text, but create a

²⁶⁵ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 121.

²⁶⁶ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 22.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 05.

new perspective. Influence should be accompanied by an originality which makes a poet a strong one. In other words, 'tradition [is] as much progressive as reactionary.'²⁶⁸ It is about continuity and discontinuity. However, Hamid does not only idealize, but also brings originality. He joins the tradition and brings his own touch which recontextualizes Fitzgerald's version.

First of all, Hamid misreads Gatsby's portrait in terms of the American dream and meritocracy. He agrees with Fitzgerald with regard to Gatsby, but only up to a point. Gatsby's desire to achieve his American dream leaves the character unconscious and idealistic to the end of the story. So is Changez, but only at the beginning of the novella as his judgment is clouded by the luxuries that Underwood Samson (U.S) promises to offer. However, Changez, unlike Gatsby, grows conscious and becomes realistic. Hamid invents his own perspective as he creates Changez out of Gatsby, but endows him with originality. As far as meritocracy is concerned, Hamid puts the story in the context of the 21st century. The notion of Meritocracy is implied in Fitzgerald's novel as Gatsby makes himself owing to his hard work and ambition. However, Hamid clearly makes reference to the notion of meritocracy as Changez works in Underwood Samson which is a meritocratic firm. While Gatsby is killed, Hamid's originality is obvious in Changez's consciousness as to the American dream being a failure. This leads the character to his reluctance, fundamentalism and anti-Americanism at the end of the story.

To elaborate further Hamid's misreading of Gatsby, another example is evident in the novella. Changez appears to be disillusioned at the end of Hamid's novella. He objects, '[a]s a society, you were unwilling to reflect upon the shared pain that united you with those who attacked you. You retreated into myths of your own difference, assumptions of your own

²⁶⁸ Peter Dale Scott, "The Social Critic and Discontent," in *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, ed. David Moody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 60.

superiority.²⁶⁹ Changez debunks the American dream which proves a failure. Hamid ‘antithetically completes’²⁷⁰ his precursor, by so reading the parent poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense.²⁷¹ Hamid describes the American dream as promising at the beginning of the narrative, but then swerves to describe it as apocalyptic. According to Bloom, the dominance of the ‘parent poem’ is always present even though the idea is different, for the ephebe’s muse ‘has whored with many before him.’²⁷² Changez insists that ‘[e]conomy’s falling apart though, no? corruption, dictatorship, the rich, living like princes while everyone else suffers.’²⁷³ Changez refers to the consequences that Capitalism causes while this is overlooked in Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* in which the author neither negates Capitalism nor does he link the death of Gatsby to it. Hamid redefines Fitzgerald’s notion of the American dream so as to denounce the xenophobia, hatred and injustice that it hides.

Hamid’s misreading of *Gatsby* is also obvious in Changez’s mindset. The author ‘follows received doctrine along to a certain point, and then deviates, insisting that a wrong direction was taken at just that point and no other.’²⁷⁴ Fitzgerald’s *Gatsby* foregrounds an open-minded sense of what it means to be American, a path which Changez takes when he asserts, ‘I am a lover of America.’²⁷⁵ Changez loves America, but the multicultural one which resides according to him in New York. However, he deviates to denounce the falsity of multiculturalism which is manifest in: racism, xenophobia and exclusiveness apparent after the 9/11 attack. Changez declares, ‘I was not at war with America, far from it. I was the product of an American university; I was earning an American Salary; I was infatuated with

²⁶⁹ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 190.

²⁷⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 14.

²⁷² Ibid, 61.

²⁷³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 62.

²⁷⁴ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 29.

²⁷⁵ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 01.

an American woman. So why did part of me desire to see America harmed.'²⁷⁶ This passage reveals ambivalence as it alludes to two Americas: an exclusive America and a multicultural one as discussed previously. Changez expresses love for the 'multicultural America' and seeks to be recognized as a Muslim Pakistani American. 'Why did part of me desire to see America harmed' refers to Changez's scorn for the 'exclusive America' which assimilates cultures. Assimilation is further defined as 'the process of becoming a part, or making someone become a part of a group, country, society,'²⁷⁷ but without receiving recognition.

To give another example as to how Hamid misreads Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Hamid swerves from portraying Changez as great to anti-American. *Gatsby* symbolizes a factitious greatness whereas Changez fundamentalism. The titles of the two works may refer to the difference that characterise the two protagonists. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* connotes resentment, revulsion and pessimism while *The Great Gatsby* connotes happiness, idealism and optimism. Hamid depicts Changez as great at the beginning of the novella when he states, 'Princeton inspired in me the feeling that my life was a film in which I was a star.'²⁷⁸ The use of the word 'star' means great. However, he swerves to give his character a fundamentalist touch due to the fallacy of the American dream. *Gatsby* does not experience this change since he dies unconscious. From the middle of the novella onward, Hamid builds an opposite meaning of what it means to be American so as to complete Fitzgerald's definition which is left incomplete. Changez predicts, 'I hoped one day to be the dictator of an Islamic republic with nuclear capability.'²⁷⁹ Hamid foreshadows Changez's anti-Americanism; his protagonist turns out against America. Overall, Changez's Anti-Americanism is the result of the failure of the American dream which turn out to be

²⁷⁶ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 84.

²⁷⁷ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. "assimilation," accessed June 06th, 2017, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/assimilation>.

²⁷⁸ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 03.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 33.

mere terror and violence. The character also insists that ‘such America had to be stopped.’²⁸⁰ This leads the mysterious American stranger to go to Pakistan and encounter Changez. He may be an American assassin sent to kill a Pakistani fundamentalist who is a potential threat to America’s supremacy.

While applying Harold Bloom’s theory, I have shown that Mohsin Hamid engages in a struggle with Fitzgerald, misreads *The Great Gatsby* through *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* which entails an ‘anxiety of influence.’ In other words, Hamid expresses an ‘anxiety of influence’ which appears mainly in Changez as a result of misreading *The Great Gatsby*. Furthermore, I have proven that Hamid misreads Fitzgerald’s romance plot. Hamid gives Changez another quest evident in his ideal to live in a multicultural America. I have also proven that Hamid misreads *Gatsby* and injects his originality to create Changez. To prove this, I have given examples as to how Hamid gives his plot and protagonist another turn so as to foreground his own originality. This has allowed me to show that Mohsin Hamid agrees with Fitzgerald’s novel, but only to some extent as he swerves and creates his own perspective. Hamid’s novella misinterprets *The Great Gatsby* and constructs his literary identity. The author himself invites the reader to read Fitzgerald’s novel in the light of the post-9/11 event so as to change the 1920s vision of it.

²⁸⁰ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 190.

General Conclusion

This research around Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* has allowed me to show that not only has Hamid read Fitzgerald's novel, but also has been influenced by it, resulting thus in an anxiety of influence sensed in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. It has also allowed me to show that Hamid restructures Fitzgerald's novel and puts it in the post-9/11 context so that the former reading of *The Great Gatsby* would be called into question and revised. The notion of change is emphasized as Mohsin Hamid shows that the present changes, altering the perception of the past in the process. This 'ripple effect' makes one redefine Fitzgerald's novel and give it another reading. Thus, Hamid misreads *The Great Gatsby* as a way to update its events to the post-9/11 era and foreground his own originality out of the influence of *The Great Gatsby*, which entails an anxiety of influence.

In the first chapter, I have given a summary to Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and introduced Mohsin Hamid as a British Pakistani author. This has allowed me to find out that Hamid is interested in psychoanalysis and that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* features the characteristics of 'family romance,' portraying Hamid as the son (i.e. ephebe) and Fitzgerald as the father (i.e. predecessor). I have also found out that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* has not been original at the beginning until Hamid gives it another turn owing to the 9/11 event. Furthermore, I have also given a historical background to both 1920s and post-9/11 America. Giving examples from both *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Great Gatsby* has allowed me to find out that the notion of the American dream changes as a result of the 9/11 attack, leading Changez to become anti-American due to America turning exclusive. The perception of Islam changes, becoming thus a 'scare' and an overgeneralization which blurs Islam's meaning. This paves the way for misconceptions to emerge in the post-9/11 era. Hamid seeks

the audience to compare 1920s with post-9/11 America to prove that the American dream, which once stood for inclusion and equality, immigration and the pursuit of happiness, tolerance and liberalism reveals its apocalyptic side after the 9/11 attack which stands for exclusion and injustice, xenophobia and hatred, nativism and conservatism as shown in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. This has also helped me conclude that globalization is not about multiculturalism, but about power and assimilation.

In the second chapter, I have compared the two works in terms of plot and characterization. Analyzing both *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Great Gatsby* from Northrop Frye's "Mythos of Summer: Romance," I have proven that the two works feature the characteristics of romance which are embodied in the characters' quest for an ideal. Both the protagonists engage in a journey which leads them to manifold adventures, leading eventually to the heroes' exaltation or death. This has helped me find out that romance in both Hamid and Fitzgerald's works end tragically. In the second section, I have analyzed the two works in terms of characterization. I have found out that both *Gatsby* and *Changez* stand for multiculturalism and immigration, hard work and talent, belief in the American dream and the conquest of the frontier. Relying on these sections, I have also shown that Mohsin Hamid's narrative is not only romance, but it is also influenced by Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. That is to say, all of these similarities in romance plot and characterization suggest not only Hamid's reading of *The Great Gatsby*, but also its influence on *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, a study which is possible and justified as mentioned at the beginning of this research.

In the last chapter, I have analyzed *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* from Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). In the first section, I have shown that Mohsin Hamid misreads Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* to distance himself from it and foreground his

originality; this misreading entails an anxiety of influence evident in Hamid's novella. This section helps pave the way for the next two sections which give examples as to how Hamid misreads Fitzgerald's romance plot and *Gatsby*. Relying on the second chapter which focuses on similarities, I have found out through the second section of the third chapter that Hamid misreads Fitzgerald's romance plot. I have proven through differences that Hamid swerves to create his own perspective. In other words, Hamid gives Fitzgerald's novel another turn which stands for his originality. He uses many techniques to revise it, to claim discontinuity from Fitzgerald's tradition and find his imaginative space. However, Bloom's theory reveals that the tradition is always persistent and discontinuity possible but not quite. In the last section, I have shown that Hamid misreads *Gatsby* so as to create *Changez*. Giving examples from the novella, I have found out that Hamid misreads Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* and swerves to create his own perspective embodied in *Changez*'s foreignness and new vision of the American dream. Misreading *The Great Gatsby*, Hamid gives another perspective to it and recontextualizes it to change the 1920s vision of it.

To sum up, this research has revealed that Mohsin Hamid is influenced by Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, but misreads it through *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, which results in an anxiety of influence sensed in the novella. Hamid himself invites the reader to read *The Great Gatsby* in the light of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* to redefine it. His novella has spilled an ever-increasing flow of writing that one cannot understand it once and for all. This novella can be studied from other perspectives, such as Eric Hobsbawm's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) and Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975).

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