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**The *Self* and the *Other* in the 1920s American
Literature**

Case Study: Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925)

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Dedication

*I dedicate this dissertation
to my beloved parents
to my dear brothers and sisters, Lamin,
Saaddinne, Somia and Malika
to Bilal Korich
to my dear friends Fatima, Rokia,
Ahlem, Hadjer, Sara, Meriem,
Nosseiba, and Nour
Thanks for your support, I love you all.*

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Praise be to ALLAH, his majesty for his uncountable blessing, and best prayers and peace be unto his best messenger Mohamed, his pure decedent, and his family and his noble companions.

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Abstract

The central concern of this research study is to show how some minorities (blacks, Jews, and women) have suffered from segregation, discrimination, and racial biases within the 1920s America. This study focuses on the identification of the difference between the Self, as a dominant entity, and the Other as a marginalized, a dominated one. It exposes the various relations existing between the Self and the Other through the analysis of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Furthermore, it elucidates that Fitzgerald consciously constructed some of his minor characters as Others different from the Anglo-Saxon race. Accordingly, he describes these characters with stereotypical markers of primitiveness, violence, and submission as if they were only objects. Finally, this study shows that Fitzgerald approaches the binary Self/Other from diverse ethnic, racial, and gender perspectives through the use of language in order to reflect the realities of the 1920s America.

Key Words: minorities, blacks, Jews, women, segregation, 1920s America, Self, Other, analysis, Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, language.

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General Introduction

The 1920s, as a decade, was known for its unprecedented economic growth and prosperity in the United States of America. Simultaneously, the economic, political, and technological developments were heightened; this brought a feeling of freedom and independence to millions of Americans. Nevertheless, the 1920s, or the "Roaring Twenties", were characterized by racial and religious prejudice towards minority groups, meaning blacks, Jews, and women. There was the process of "Othering" people who were different, in Americans' view, especially when compared to the Anglo-Saxon race (the Self). Accordingly, this was reflected in the literature of that time: by consequence, the idea of "Otherness" was shown in many works, especially in the works of the Lost Generation.

Thus, the objective of the current study is to provide a comprehensive review of literature concerning the concept of Otherness and how it was defined in relation to the American and Western sphere. It is absolutely true that the American life was boomed in the sense of economic prosperity; however, when speaking about societal matters, there were some minorities who suffered from segregation, discrimination, and abuse. Blacks, Jews, and women were treated like aliens to the American society, as Others. The practice of Othering means that you differentiate yourself from other people around you. Lajos Brons 's in his article *Othering, an Analysis* (2015) implements several theories of different thinkers (Levinas and Hegel). Within his work, he identifies the relationships existing between the Self and the Other: superiority/inferiority, neighbouring, or enmity relations. In all the cases, the Other is differentiated from the Self whether by his ethnic, racial, or sexual orientations. As such, Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (2010) explains the binary opposition created of men and women relationship. She suggests that men established

themselves as subjects to whom women were only objects. Meanwhile, Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*(2003) identifies the link between the discourse of Orientalism and the concept of Otherness as both share several characteristics that relegate the West as a Self and the East as an Other.

When speaking about Otherness in Western Literature, in particular American Literature during the 1920s, *Living Literary Others* (2014) demonstrates the practices of constructing the Other in American literature and how the minorities under concern were presented within the literary works of the 1920s American writers. Likewise, F. Scott Fitzgerald is a prominent writer who succeeded in portraying the 1920s with all its facets whether bad or good. Hence, there occurred a need to identify the different human relations existing between the Self and the Other within Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925). The choice of this novel is explained by the fact that this novel is considered as one of the greatest works that deals with the era of the 1920s. The way blacks, Jews, and women were characterized in Fitzgerald's work is also of great importance as it reflects his views and shows his commentaries on the social changes and the practice of Othering that occurred within the 1920s.

Therefore, the general aim of this research study is to explore the entangled concepts and relations existing between the Other and the Self with an emergent focus on American Literature during the 1920s. There is an attempt to articulate Otherness and how it is shaped by F. Scott Fitzgerald in his narrative, *The Great Gatsby*. There is a sense of urgency to find insights about the way Fitzgerald engaged certain characters with some racial, ethnic, or even sexual stereotyping. This research paper will seek to interrogate the representation of blacks, Jews, and women as Others by analyzing Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

The questions that this research seeks to answer are:

- What is Otherness?
- What do we mean by the Self and the Other?
- What are the different relationships existing between the Self and the Other?
- How do these minorities escape the different forms of literary segregation?
- How does Scott Fitzgerald approach Otherness within his novel *The Great Gatsby* by presenting stereotypes of blacks, Jews, and women?

This research claims that Fitzgerald consciously intends to stereotype blacks, Jews, and women within his novel, and that the different relations that happen to occur between the Self and the Other do really exist in *The Great Gatsby*. It is believed that Fitzgerald attempted to marginalize these categories of people through the use of the power of language.

Due to the complexity of the concept of otherness, as theory needed to be developed, we find that the analytical approach best suits this study. For, this study tends to analyze Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* in relation to the idea of Otherness. We intend to use the content-based method as far as this study is concerned with the collection of different ideas from various sources.

This dissertation will be structured in three core chapters. The first chapter of this study will serve as a background about the practice of Otherness within the American society during the 1920s. Meanwhile, the second chapter would talk about Scott Fitzgerald as a writer and the way he tackled the issue of Otherness (with/against) in his writings as well as some other American writings (and of course writers) dealing with the same idea. Finally, the third chapter will be more practical as it will analyze Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* - taken as a case study- in terms of race (white/black), ethnicity (Protestant/Jewish), and gender (male/female) qualities.

Chapter One:

Otherness: aTheoretical Background

A. The 1920s as a Root Cause to *Otherness*

B. Defining *Otherness*

B.1. The*Self*: aDefinition

B.2. The*Other*: a Definition

C. About the *Self /Other* Relations

C.1. Superiority/Inferiority Relationship

C.2. Neighbour or Enemy Relationship

D. *Otherness* in Relation to Edward Said 's
Orientalism

Chapter One:

Otherness: a Theoretical Background

The notion of Otherness is very vast, and it can be tackled from different angles. This chapter aims at providing a theoretical background about Otherness mainly in the field of humanities. Of course, a historical overview will be presented about the 1920s time span along with the circumstances under which some minorities were living in. The concepts of Otherness, the Self, and the Other will be introduced and defined from a Western point of view. Moreover, the different relations existing between the *Self* and the *Other* will be explained as far as blacks, Jews, and women are concerned. Finally, Edward Said's perspective about this concept would be also stressed in relation to the idea of Otherness.

A. The 1920s as a Root Cause to *Otherness*

When first discovered by European adventures and explorers in the fifteenth century, America symbolized a New World, a land of opportunities, and a preferred destination for millions of people coming from different places in the world. Ideally, the United States represented the jewel in the crown where dreams could be fulfilled and aspirations met. In the same way, when we think of the United States during the 1920s, we imagine people celebrating good times. In fact, the 1920s constituted one of the most dynamic and interesting decades in the American history. As the country struggled with the side-effects of World War I, Americans wanted to bring back peace to their lives away from the international conflicts. With three Republicans –Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover- dominating the executive branch, their rallying cry was in favour of

Isolationism as a foreign policy: for, American citizens expressed their discontent with the coming of immigrants. On the other hand, the mixture of social, political, economic, and cultural changes have brought the decade to be filled with many contradictions. As prosperity manifested itself in many forms, most notably in the fields of entertainment and technology, unequal distribution of wealth characterized the period with people (mainly farmers) living below the poverty line.(OpenStax 695,717-720)

During the 1920s or the "Roaring Twenties", Americans concentrated on adapting to economic growth and social change, as manifested in the culture of Consumerism. With the passage of the 19th Amendment, women guaranteed the right to vote, yet they were pulled between Victorian morals and 1920s lifestyles. Nevertheless, there occurred a new type of women -the "Flappers" – who celebrated more freedom concerning their attitudes, clothing, and social relationships: Flappers (named also the "new women") were rebellious and independent women who smoked and drank in public with their dresses highlighting legs and ankles. They wore heavy makeup and had shorter haircuts. Moreover, they started to treat sex in a casual manner, like having extramarital affairs. However, women in this period faced strong racial biases, discrimination, and sexual harassment in the work place on a regular basis along with minimum wages despite having the same jobs as men. Hence, although women had gained the right to vote, they were unable to assure for themselves equal rights the same as men. (710-712)

In the "Twenties", the United States witnessed the Great Migration of black population from the South heading to the North, mainly to Harlem, New York. The neighbourhood of Harlem was the start point from which the Harlem Renaissance came to existence. Harlem Renaissance, by definition, resembled the rebirth of African-American culture and sense of pride: it included music (Jazz and Blues), poetry, and even literature. Accordingly, Jazz

became the new trend of Modernity in American cities. African-Americans in this period celebrated more freedom in expressing themselves; using arts, they voiced their sufferings while living as the least likeable race in the US. For the first time in the American history, African American culture broke the “color-barrier”¹ and influenced the entire nation. However, black-Americans still endured slavery-like conditions: discrimination, segregation, and racial violence. (712-713)

In essence, the 1920s was a period of racial turmoil that was marked by varied and intense social and cultural conflicts. Racism and Nativism increased threatening some American minorities' civil liberties like blacks and Jews. Accordingly, a growing sense of Nativism spread throughout the United States. Nativists believed that Americans descending from the Anglo-Saxon race were superior to all other races. By consequence, this led to a desire of limiting immigration to the US. In specific, the most extreme expression of Nativism during the 1920s was led by the revived Ku Klux Klan. The KKK activities grew on a national level claiming 4 million members in 1924. They rose to a greater power as they were dominant in the state of Indiana; their program for ethnic hatred towards African-Americans was also extended to include the growing population of Catholics, immigrants, and most importantly Jewish Americans. In other words, these minorities suffered from being the focus of the KKK's attention.(702-706) In brief, in spite of the dramatic change that defined the 1920s, there were some minorities who were victims to racial prejudices and were treated like aliens to the American society, thereby, promoting the notion of *Otherness* in this Era. On this issue, Paul Murphy states,

That decade [1920s], despite its surface prosperity and supposed gaiety and exuberance, was characterized by waves of public intolerance seldom

¹Michael Goldfein's "The 1920's Arts – Music – Literature" page 3.

felt in the American experience. Much of this intolerance was merely an outbreak of familiar surface prejudices . . . towards . . . radicals, Jews, Negroes, Orientals, and other minority groups [women]. (Murphy 61)

B. Defining Otherness

The concept of "Otherness" is largely foreign to most individuals, yet it was discussed in many fields such as philosophy, psychology, and most importantly in the field of humanities. In fact, the word 'Otherness' refers to the quality of being different or distinct from what is usual. In other words, we use the word 'Other' to point on something that is abnormal and strange to the generally accepted standards of the society concerned. Otherness has been discussed most notably in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, class and religion as well as in relation to majority and minority groups. Angela Mullin-Jackson generalizes the concept of 'Otherness' so it would be "*conceptualized as a condition of difference – real or imagined- that is imposed upon a group of people by another, apparently a more powerful group*"(IV).

Likewise, the process of "Othering" implies the exclusion and the marginalization of a group of people- a minority- from society, for the fact of being not fitting to the norms identified by another dominant group.² In other words, it is the way of labeling one's position and identity while disapproving another, by means of vilifying this Other: it is, indeed, that the Other is characterized with stereotypical images (in literature) that makes him/her relegated to the periphery. In this case, the racial, sexual, and ethnic qualities are regarded as indicators to social degradation and even denial of human rights. The Other is diminished his/her social status, placed at the margins of society, and negatively drawn against the ideal

²The group which is defining the Other may be an entire society, a social class or a community within a society.

standard of the Self; he is subjugated and defined to a subordinate social category. (Beauvoir 13,26) In short, the process of 'Othering' refers to the construction of a 'Self' against an 'Other'. In this light, the identification of the concept Other and Self is needed to show the direct correlation existing between them:

B.1. The Self: a Definition

When defining the notion of the Self, we mean the inner character, personality, or feelings that distinguish one person from other people. Who I am? In what way I am different from others? Are the questions that should be asked when dealing with the concept of the Self as an entity existing on its own. The philosophy of the Self seeks to identify the internal/external qualities that are confined to a person's distinctive being. Furthermore, the Self is shaped by our social interactions with other people. In fact, the Self confirms its identity in opposition to the Other. The capacity to understand and differentiate the unknown Other is an integral part of the conception of Self (Beauvoir 27). Self-conceptions and behaviors are all dependent on the interactions you have with other people, including the ones who would influence you and also the ones from whom you want to differentiate yourself.

In the late 18th century, the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) points out on the issue of the Self/Other binary, "*The concept of the Self requires the existence of the Other as the counterpart entity required for defining the Self*", by means, the Other is a constituent element of human preoccupation with the Self (Miller 589) Hence, the concept of the Self and the concept of the Other are closely interrelated as one cannot be defined without the other.

B. 2. The Other: a Definition

By definition, the word "Other" is a technical term used in the social sciences and humanities for the way in which a person is viewed, by people from another group, as dissimilar and separated. The Other is an individual who is considered as foreign and belonging to an out-group, for the differences he is characterized with. The Other in most –if not all- cases is denied legal rights and status equal to the Self, and he is rarely attributed to human qualities; the Other is frequently seen as an 'Object' deemed inferior, passive, and alien to the 'Subject' Self. (Miller 591) the Other may be someone who is of...

- a different race (White vs. Black),
- a different religion (Christian: Protestant vs. Jew),
- a different sex (men vs. women)

Together, Kitzinger & Wilkinson 1996 cites "'we' use the Other to define ourselves: 'we' understand ourselves in relation to what 'we' are not" (qtd. in Brons 75). Consequently, this would represent the dual relation between the Self (in this study, Americans) and the Other (minority groups) in which the former bears no resemblance to the latter. In the same way, cultural geographer Crang (1998) describes *Othering* as "a process ... through which identities are set up in an unequal relationship" (qtd. in Brons 70). Meaning, the process of *Othering* is based on a biased relationship when constructing identities: some groups (white, Protestant, male groups) have more power than other minority groups (black, Jew, female groups). Similarly, Staszak (2008) expresses his view about this relation, "*the in-group constructs one or more others, setting itself apart and giving itself an identity. Otherness and identity are two inseparable sides of the same coin. The other only exists as relative to the self, and vice versa.*" (2) In short, Lajos Brons (2015) concludes:

A phenomenon [the Self] maintains its identity in semiotic systems only if other units are represented as foreign or 'other' through a hierarchical dualism in which the first is privileged or favored while the other is deprivileged or devalued in some way. This process must itself be hidden or covered up, so that the hierarchy can be assumed inherent in the nature of the phenomena, rather than a motivated construction. (75)

C. About the *Self* / *Other* relations

The binary Self/Other relation is perhaps one of the most ancient theories concerned with the field of humanities claiming that the recognition of a Self is conditioned with the existence of an Other, a not-self. (Schalk 197) In fact, the concepts of "the Other", "Othering", and "Otherness" were highly influenced by Hegel's "*Master-Slave Dialectic*" (1807) in which he identified and distanced the encounter of the Self from the encounter of the Other. Cole (2004) explains that *The Master-Slave Dialectic*, "wrestles with some idea of the 'other' as that against which you define yourself" (qtd. in Brons 69). In other words, when defining one's self within the first encounter with the other, the Self sees itself as both self (similarities) and not-self (differences). In this way people are able to see themselves in the eyes of the others; their Impressions and how they think about themselves may change to be more fitting to the norms made by others. This would be reflected in their personalities as well as the way they behave. (Zevallos) Brons Lajos explains that this relation is not easy to be noticed or understood, and it is involuntary done within different occasions happening within a community, he states

This relation between the Self and the Other mainly comes in a subtle form; most of time, it is unconsciously done by individuals living within one community. In essence, the concept of the Other is mainly used, in various occasions, to designate differences occurring between two groups, taking into consideration that these groups may share some characteristics too.

(74)

C. 1. Superiority/Inferiority Relationship

There exist various relationships between the *Self* and the *Other* among which superiority and inferiority relation is the most common. One of the characteristics of this relation is that the *Self* feels himself better than the *Other* in a way that makes him think of himself more superior; that is, he has the power to control and dominate other people: he is able to make them subordinate to him. Superiority/inferiority relation is often bound up with colonizer/colonized binary opposition: it is based on the domination of a group who tend to exert their power and influence on another subordinate group. In the course of Colonialism, colonizers established unequal relationship with the colonized whom they considered as inferior and sorely lacking human qualities. Ideally, the practice of Othering was the prevalent cultural perspective of the European imperial powers. White men (the West) believed themselves superior to black people-coming from Africa- to whom they felt an urgency for civilization so they would be saved from the primitive and savagely style of life they encountered in their hometowns.(Miller 588)

Blacks were treated as mere objects different, separate, and ranked the lowest status when compared to the white race. They were denied existence as human beings as if they were invisible. White/black binary is mostly identified with a master-slave relationship in

which the white race is privileged with superiority that would enable him civilize, control, construct, and present blacks. The concept of Ethnocentrism is suitable for designating the binary white/black in which a group of people (white) are to be considered as superior to members of another group (blacks) in terms of values, civilization, knowledge, and ethnicity. In effect, the act of Othering is inclusive of a protecting superiority created against the Other which serves to comfort the Self with its feeling of supremacy (Staszak 1). On this issue, Brons states,

Othering is the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group, but this superiority/inferiority is nearly always left implicit.(70)

C.2. Neighbour or Enemy Relation

When using the word "neighbour" we mean someone that is next to another person of the same type and living within the same community, whilst, the word "enemy" indicates opposition and competition between two people or communities. In the same way, we can link both of these concepts to the idea of Otherness. Levinas 's (1948) thought of the other as *"a neighbor, and the self is constituted in its relation with that other-as-neighbor. (And consequently, the self is responsible for that other, and vice versa.)"*(Brons 74).The neighbor is someone that you can differentiate yourself from and, to a lesser extent, there exist some shared similarities. i.e. the practice of Othering is made in a way that creates a considerable

distance between the Self and the Other. This idea applies to the existence of women living next to men, in which, there is no absolute separation or essential alienation; they are accepted by the society and considered as human beings, yet they are viewed as subordinate, weak, and dependent on men.

On the other hand, the Other is dissimilar to and mostly the opposite of the Self, thereby, he is constructed as the enemy. Brons explains, "*the other (. . .) is reduced to mere faceless enemy (as in Hobbes's 'state of nature' or Hegel's 'Master-Slave Dialectic')*"(74). In the 1920s, Jewish presence in the United States was seen as threatening to the well-being of Americans, for Americans –as explained before- were favoring an Isolationist policy towards people belonging to other ethnic groups. So, Jews were believed to be the 'enemy within'.

Simone De Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex*(1949) declares that people (women) are well defined only when compared –through binary oppositions- to other people (men) who are different or considered to be much better than them, "*The category of Other is as original as consciousness itself. The duality between Self and Other can be found in the most primitive societies. . . . No group ever defines itself as One without immediately setting up the Other opposite itself*"(26). Furthermore, Beauvoir represents woman as the sexual Other in relation to man: the sexual Other is a minority, the least-favored social group. Usually the Man–Woman binary is described in a dominator–dominated relationship.(Miller) Women were mistreated in an American patriarchal society. Whether liked or not, they were to be the neighbor: passive, voiceless, and obedient to the center, men:

The Other is not necessarily a numerical minority. In a country defeated by an imperial power, the far more numerous natives become the Other,

Similarly, women are defined and judged by men, the dominant group, in relationship to themselves, so that they become the Other. Hence Aristotle says: "The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities; we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness.(The Other)

Meanwhile, the Other as an "enemy" in this study is related to Jews. Their existence is both recognized and recognizable, rather than invisible, by the American community. However, they are designated as a separate group opposing the Self (Protestants), in terms of their ethnic origins. The Other then is not so much (implicitly) inferior, but radically alien, an enemy. (Brons 72) Jews had their own voice; nevertheless, it was confined to the rules of the American society. Slavenka Drakulic's (1992) comment on this matter is, *"I understand now that nothing but "otherness" killed Jews, and it began with naming them, by reducing them to the other".*(qtd.in Brons 69)In an attempt to interpret American anti-Semitism, Michael Dobkowsky states:

Thus the Jews who crossed the Atlantic to find new hope in the beaconing land of freedom. . . .for the most part, did not find a corresponding appreciation of their religion. Americans brought them as emotional and cultural baggage many of the prejudices and misconceptions prevalent in the Old country and added a few of their own. A nation built of many nations did not rid itself so easily of the intolerance and suspicion that was the legacy of Europe.(168)

In brief, the different relations- superiority/inferiority, neighbor, and enemy- existing between the Self and the Other elucidate the complexity of Otherness identified within the 1920s American society.

D. Edward Said and Otherness

Edward Said, in full Edward Wadie Said, is a Palestinian American postcolonial writer. His ground-breaking work *Orientalism* (1978) is one of the most influential books during the 20th century, in which, he carried out a comprehensive study concerning the Western concepts of the Orient (Other). This work has given rise to a large number of studies on how Western-colonial discourses constructed the Other. Occidents -Westerners- were designated as superior because they belonged to the 'center', whereas Orients- the Eastern blog- were shown as inferior, belonging to the margins of the world:

Those experiences were part of a much wider European or Western relationship with the Orient, but what seems to have influenced Orientalism most was a fairly constant sense of confrontation felt by Westerners dealing with the East. The boundary notion of East and West, the varying degrees of projected inferiority and strength, the range of work done, the kinds of characteristic features ascribed to the Orient: all these testify to a willed imaginative and geographic division made between East and West, and lived through during many centuries.(Said 201)

Orientalism, by definition, is the practice of associating a set of clichés and stereotypes to the Orientals: inferiority, barbarism, passivity, superstition are all linked to the Orient other. By Orientalism Said means the collection of stereotypes, distortions, myths, and fantasies

that the Occident (the West) has imposed in order to dominate the Orient(3): Said notes, *"Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"*(2). People, in the context of Orientalism, are either belonging to the Western world or to the Eastern world. Easterners are designated as the Other, as the non-Western Self (Miller). Via Orientalizing the Orient, many characteristics are attributed to the Orient: *"a web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanizing ideology"* (Said 27)

Edward Said tries to identify the relationship between the West and the East, as the latter is to be considered as subordinate to the former. In essence, Said points out *"the notion of 'Oriental' is an administrative or executive one, and it is sub-ordinate to demographic, economic, and sociological factors. . . . the Oriental. . . . is a member of a subject race and not exclusively an inhabitant of a geographical area."*(92): that is, the Oriental is not necessary the Arab of the East, but other minorities like "blacks and women" may fall also in the category of Orientalism.(326)

Meanwhile, the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is directly related to the notion of power, authority, and hegemony (6). Orientals are being ascribed, in western writings, to the notions of feminism, irrationality, and inhumanity in contrast to the masculine, rational, humane West. (138) In other words, Western scholars represented the Orientals as Others by placing stereotypical images on them,

the Orient and Orientals [are considered by Orientalism] as an "object" of study, stamped with an otherness—as all that is different, whether it be "subject" or "object"—but of a constitutive otherness, of an essentialist character. . . . This "object" of study will be, as is customary, passive, non-participating, endowed with a "historical" subjectivity.(Said 97)

Hence, the supremacy of the Occident would be unchallenged, and Orientals would always remain different, as Others. Karl Marx, in the *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, notes, “*They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented*” (qtd.in Said xxv) Meaning, the other is unable to speak and represent himself; thus, a western representation of the Other is needed. Therefore, a close look should be casted to see how western writers, mainly American novelists, portrayed and represented the Other in their writings, during the 1920s. Henceforth, the representation of the Other and the Self would be featured by several writers taking into consideration that each writer has a particular style of writing when depicting the notion of Otherness in his literary writings.

Chapter Two:

***Otherness* in the 1920s American Literature**

- A. The 1920s American literature
- B. American Writers dealing with the Notion of *Otherness*
- C. Scott Fitzgerald's Biography
- D. Scott Fitzgerald's View about *Otherness*

Chapter Two:

Otherness in the 1920s American Literature

Literature is very valuable as a form of art; it encompasses large amounts of information concerning different issues: historical, philosophical, psychological, and even political. These issues are to be expressed and presented differently by different writers in various pieces of writing. In this context, this chapter focuses on the representation of the notion of Otherness - involving blacks, Jews, and women as oppressed minorities- in the 1920s American Literature. In this light, Scott Fitzgerald is considered to be one of the early pioneers who portrayed the social upheavals of the decade in their works: his works mirrored the 1920s fully providing like visual images about the drastic social and economic changes happening in this decade, yet he couldn't hide his sense of superiority when presenting women, Jews, and blacks in his works. For this reason, a biographical representation of Fitzgerald shall be included in this chapter as his novel *The Great Gatsby* happens to be the work under study. Finally, his view about the idea of Otherness is of great importance, so a clarification will be made concerning this subject.

A. The 1920s American Literature

"By art alone we are able to get outside ourselves, to know what another sees of this universe which for him is not ours, the landscapes of which would remain as unknown to us as those of the moon"(1).

Marcel Proust, in *Time Regained*, describes art as a powerful mean that enables people understand and observe things around them the same way other people see them. It can take them to different places with multiple dimensions spiritual, social, cultural, and even ethical ones. By art, here, we mean literature. Literature is known for its high sensibility that makes people see, feel, and most importantly live the experiences of others. This appeal urged writers to be more realistic in their portrayal of the events happening in the world. With the coming of World War I, people started to search for meaning for their lives. They had no faith as the church lost its powers. Hence, writers wanted to comfort people with the confines of art and literature; therefore, art started to be considered as the new religion. The Twentieth century literature was influenced by Modernism that was disseminated in Europe and the world affecting different facets of life.

After the First World War, America emerged as the world's new leading power. Industrialization and Modernization were increasing as they turned to be the new custom of the 1920s. Luxury and lavish spending characterized the life styles of Americans. As a result, they became no more interested in the intellectual activities such as reading literature, poetry, and other genres. Consequently, this led to the alienation of the American writers within their communities: they felt lost, so they escaped to Europe wherein they could taste recognition and appreciation of their talents. These expatriate writers were known as the 'Lost Generation'; a very talented group that included F. Scott Fitzgerald, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and Ernest Hemingway. (Schindel 47)O. C. Auringer expressed the lack of appreciation of these gifted writers in *The New York Times*,

My own belief is that the prime cause of our National deficiency in this respect lies most largely in the constitution of our society. The realm of poetry is an aristocracy; and we are in the midst of the reign of the milieu,

and the milieu has no soul. Poets, artists, composers, scientists—save of the utilitarian order—are in its sense but so many light-brained individuals, precocious children whose amusing capers are rewarded by a tolerating smile, but whose value to life and civilization is stubbornly denied.(qtd.in Schindel 49)

The term "Lost Generation" was first coined by Gertrude Stein when he said, "*You are all a génération perdu . . . All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation*" (qtd.in Schindel 48). Their new home was to be Paris as it welcomed art and artists coming from different places in the world. These writers tried to show the deficiencies their country was suffering from as the culture of Consumerism was widely spread causing the loss of morals and values in the American society. Problems of ethnicity, race, colour, and gender were commonly expressed in their works. They were highly inspired "*due to being in one of the largest cultural centers of the world*" (50), Paris.

In the 1920s, American writers were trying to improve their writing by experimenting on narration, time, space, and so on. The search for new topics raised the complexity of their choices of the subjects discussed. Mostly, their writings expressed the feelings of loss, alienation, and disillusionment that characterized the transitional period between the end of World War I and the Great Depression (1929). However, some of them wrote positively describing the new liberties offered to people during this period. As women guaranteed the right to vote by the passage of the 19th Amendment, they were mainly described as being more rebellious and opposing to the principles designed by the American patriarchal society. Meanwhile, Harlem Renaissance emerged as an African-American cultural movement that portrayed the atrocities African-Americans encountered during their lifetimes. These writers

aimed at challenging the stereotypes inflicted to them by reviving their traditions and self-pride. (Clark)

B. American Writers dealing with the Notion of *Otherness*

The black, the Jew, and the woman, she concluded, were objectified as the Other in ways that were both overtly despotic and insidious, but with the same result: their particularity as human beings was reduced to a lazy, abstract cliché (“the eternal feminine”; “the black soul”; “the Jewish character”) that served as a rationale for their subjugation. (Beauvoir 13)

Simone De Beauvoir (1949) believed that the colonizers or the West in general fixed certain stereotypes to blacks, women, and Jews in order to maintain their control and dominance. The use of Clichés like “*the eternal feminine*”, “*the black soul*”, and “*the Jewish character*” is a predominant element in the Western literary works. These minorities were treated like objects that can be studied and have experiments on as if they were not humans.

Otherness, as we have explained in the first chapter, is typically associated with things and people that are different from the norms. This Otherness can be “*marked by outward signs like race and gender*” or inward signs such as religion and ethnic beliefs. Otherness has also been associated to the Lack of voice. These minorities had no voice to speak for them: they were always presented; by means of depriving them of their sense of power. On the whole, these people belonged to the margins of society as they were “*disempowered, robbed of a voice in the social, religious, and political world*” (Onbelet). In literature, this difference was often attributed with signs of superiority that was exerted by the dominant group. Lisa Onbelet further gives an example of this practice, she says: “*in Colonial literature the native*

is either portrayed as the innocent Noble Savage or the barbaric cannibal." And then she continues,

Without the permission from the dominant social group to speak, marginalized people cannot tell their own story, cannot define themselves, but rather, must submit to the descriptions assigned to them by the dominant group. So not only are they robbed of their voice, they are also robbed of their identity, their sense of self, and their sense of value.(Onbelet)

During the 1920s, American cities witnessed the Great Migration of blacks coming from the South. These black people stationed in large groups in Harlem, New York. Wherein, they started to form communities. This existence of blacks within the white urban society shook the national consciousness about the issue of supremacy and dominance. In addition, African-Americans started to rebel against the stereotypes of being weak, ignorant, submissive, and primitive that were assigned to them. Hence, they started to produce their own forms of art including music, literature, and poetry in order to redefine themselves as well as their identities to the whole world:

artists had a duty to convey certain positive, refined representations of African Americans to society at large. Such "proper" images of blacks, they insisted, were crucial to countering more than a century of racist black stereotypes in American pop culture. Art could not be divorced from politics, integration supporters said; blacks must use their art to gain recognition as cultural equals. Once blacks were recognized as cultural equals, they reasoned, political and social equality would follow.(Bodenner 2)

When speaking about narration and the power of literature in conveying meanings, Lisa Onbelet explains that literature has the ability to simplify things better than theories do. She claims:

Narrative, the telling of stories, however, helps me imagine the other in a way that theory cannot. Theory helps to explain something but uses an intellectual language that remains distant from me. Narrative, however, uses a language that seems more intimate and draws me nearer to the dialogue. The telling of stories creates in me a space for imagination, recognition (of both self and other), and empathy. It also seems to be the preferred medium of expression of those who have been marginalized, or those seeking to give form and meaning to the events of their life.(Onbelet)

Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Langston Hughes were popular African-American intellectuals who chose to speak on behalf of their people and represent the black identity to the world. These writers, alongside with others, offered a cultural exchange with writers of the Lost Generation merging their styles of writing in order to portray the complexities of Modern post-war America. (Bodenner 7) Du Bois tried to use art to gain political and social recognition for blacks in the United States claiming that this was the only way by which they would be treated as human beings equal to the white race. In this context, he assumed, "*[U]ntil the art of the black folk compels recognition they will not be rated as human,*" (qtd.in Bodenner 7).

Meanwhile, Langston Hughes in his essay "The NegroArtist and the Racial Mountain" (1926) called his fellows not to be affected by the constraints that were placed on them by the white society. He wanted them to feel free when expressing their emotions and what they

suffered. There should not be any feeling of shame; on the opposite, they had to be proud of their skin-colour and history. In his manifesto, Hughes wrote:

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. . . . If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.(qtd.in Bodenner 8)

On the other hand, when speaking about the Jewish representation in the 1920s American literature, Nevena Stojanovic notes: "*distinctions between Jewishness and Anglo-Saxon whiteness were drawn to emphasize difference over sameness*" (10). Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* (1912) reflected the harsh realities that Jewish Americans went through when coming to America. Antin wanted to show the way in which the Jews were treated along with the difficulties they experienced while preserving their religious and cultural identities. (Michaels 657) Furthermore, this clash between the Self- personified in American Protestants- and the Other (Jewish immigrants) was also demonstrated in other works like Louisa May Alcott's *Behind a Mask* in which she alluded to the Jewish presence within the American society along with the mistreatments of women and their resistance to the patriarchal authorities.(72)

In short, blacks and other minorities (women and Jews) in the 1920s chose not to remain silent as they stood between the crowds proving that they were present and alive in this white, Protestant, and patriarchal American society through the usage of arts and literature.

Nevertheless, some American writers concealed their supremacy through the stereotyping of these minorities in their works: a great example is F. Scott Fitzgerald.

C. Scott Fitzgerald's Biography

A dominant literary figure of the 1920s, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in ST. Paul, Minnesota, on September 24, 1896. Born to the Catholic family formed by Edward Fitzgerald and Mary (Mollie) Mcquillan Fitzgerald. His father's original state was Maryland, so he was a devout believer in the southern societal values, like racism and the supremacy of the white race. Fitzgerald studied at ST. Paul Academy. With the age 13, his first writing attempt was "*The Mystery of the Raymond Mortgage*" in which he wrote a short detective story. Actually, Fitzgerald was writing a monthly chronology of events happening in his life which later served as a helpful source for information about his life time experiences. (Tate 3)

Later on, Fitzgerald entered Princeton University; however, he depended highly on reading in order to educate himself. In 1917, he joined the army and fought in the war. When he was assigned to serve in Montgomery, Alabama in the summer of 1918, he was destined to the love of his life, Zelda Sayre. (4) By 1919, he wrote his first novel entitled *This Side of Paradise*- an autobiographical work- by which he achieved public recognition and success. Fitzgerald's style was demonstrated in his, as Mary Jo Tate puts it, "*ability to capture how things really were without resorting to straight documentary writing but rather using evocative details and nuances of style to convey moods*" (5).

On April 3, 1920, Fitzgerald and Zelda were married in New York. They enjoyed the luxuries Fitzgerald's writings provided. Thereafter, they moved to Europe visiting different places: England, Paris, and Italy, whereby he became classified as a member of the Lost Generation. Furthermore, in October 26, 1921 the Fitzgeralds welcomed their new baby-girl,

Frances Scott Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald had written many works: *The Beautiful and the Damned*, *Flappers and Philosophers*, *Tender is the Night*, and *The Great Gatsby* and many other short stories on which he depended highly in order to finance himself and his family. (Tate 5) While working on his fifth novel, *The Love of the Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald suffered from a heart attack that caused his death by December 21, 1940. (10)

D. Scott Fitzgerald's View about Otherness

Scott Fitzgerald was a very talented writer who succeeded in revealing his views about Otherness within his works in a careful and skillful way. Women, blacks, and Jews were all stereotyped in most of his works. In his view, Otherness was something inevitable, for he lived in a period of social and cultural tensions within America, the period following the end of the First World War (1920s). Fitzgerald's ideas about social and political issues were blended with the extravagant descriptions of the Jazz Age.

When speaking about women during the 1920s, the works of Fitzgerald serve as the best examples that popularized the new women of the age, the Flappers. In fact, he was inspired by his wife Zelda who was a typical flapper as she enjoyed the liberties offered by the Modern standards without giving much care to her surroundings in terms of romantic individualism, social rebellion, and sexual liberation. In Fitzgerald's mind, Rena Sanderson argued, "*the flapper should be regarded as one of the great authentic characters in American history. A virtual emblem of American modernity, she and all she stood for were envied, desired, feared, and emulated throughout much of the Western world,*" (143) However, they were also regarded as being submissive, voiceless, seductive to men.

Meanwhile, Karl Radl alluded to Fitzgerald's views about the Jewish presence in America during the 1920s. He claimed that Fitzgerald considered Jews as the first and the

most dangerous enemy that America confronted with early twentieth century. In his works: *The Beautiful and The Damned*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *May Day* he depicted Jews as Radl put it, "*as a racially alien, fundamentally evil and diabolically clever people; who will stop at nothing to achieve their ends,*" and then he continued: "*who were dangerous and subversive to both said country and the people who founded it*"(Radl).

On the other hand, Fitzgerald concealed his opinions about blacks living in America, yet he was highly influenced by his devout father who showed his discontent with black-skin coloured people. In many of his works: Fitzgerald demonstrated his sense of nationalism and Patriotism. In fact, Scott Fitzgerald confirmed his racial worldviews about black people when he said, "*My reactions were all philistine, anti-socialistic, provincial and racially snobbish. I believe at last in the white man's burden. We are as far above the modern Frenchman as he is above the Negro. Even in art!*" (The racial worldview of F. Scott Fitzgerald)

In the same way, *The Great Gatsby* (1925) was overloaded with images of stereotyped women, Jews, and even blacks. Hence, an analysis of it shall be made in an attempt to reveal the subtle realities of Scott Fitzgerald's sense of superiority over the aforementioned groups. In other words, the representation of these minorities, in terms of Otherness, in the novel explains the way things were going within the 1920s American society. As Fitzgerald explains, "*You don't write because you want to say something, you write because you have something to say.*"

Chapter Three:

the Representation of the Other in

Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

A. The Great Gatsby's Plot Relation to Otherness

B. Blacks Other

C. Jews Other

C. 1. Meyer Wolfsheim

D. Women Other

D. 1. Daisy Fay Buchanan

D. 2. Jordan Baker

D. 3. Myrtle Wilson

Chapter Three:

the Representation of the Other in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

The Great Gatsby, first published in 1925, is considered to be Scott Fitzgerald's groundbreaking masterpiece. It serves as a commentary on the 1920s America with all its facets whether good or bad. In fact, this literary work raises series of questions concerning social, ethnic, and racial issues. In this context, the main focus of this chapter is to conduct a thorough analysis of Fitzgerald's work in order to show the way he depicted women, blacks, and Jews and to some extent how he stereotyped them as being Others. The representation of certain characters shall be operated in order to reveal the repressed and the hidden manifestations of the practice of Othering that are consciously made by Fitzgerald in the novel.

A. *The Great Gatsby's* Plot Relation to Otherness

Including nine chapters and less than 150 pages, *The Great Gatsby* is a short novel, yet condensed with various themes and ideas that represented the 1920s American society and people's lust for the American dream. Actually, this novel echoes Fitzgerald's brilliance incompressing too many subjects within few pages. This narrative is told by Nick Carraway who serves as the central consciousness of the novel, playing both as a narrator and a character within the story. As readers, we perceive the events happening through the eyes of Nick; his judgments of other characters serve as a key source of information about the

chronology of events that happened before his arrival to New York in the summer of 1922. He rents a house in West Egg in Long Island which is the local centre of the 'nouveau rich'. Shortly after, he is invited by his cousin Daisy Fay and her husband Tom Buchanan who are living in the East Egg- 'Old money' originated people- where he meets Jordan Baker whom he starts dating shortly afterwards.(Prigozy 344-345)

Nick, thereafter, is invited to one of his neighbour's extravagant parties thereby he meets the protagonist of the novel, Jay Gatsby. Gatsby is described as a mysterious person on whom rumors and controversies were turning around. Shortly afterwards, Nick learns of Gatsby's lust to meet Daisy as they once had a love relationship five years ago. At Gatsby's request, Nick arranges a meeting between Gatsby and Daisy wherein they revive their mutual love. In addition, other events happen as Nick is introduced to Tom's mistress Myrtle who is living in the Valley of Ashes with her husband George Wilson. Meanwhile, Nick makes the acquaintance of Meyer Wolfsheimer who is Gatsby's business partner. (346)

When Tom learns of Gatsby and Daisy's extramarital affair, he arranges a collective meeting in New York City where he reveals Gatsby's illegal activities of selling Alcohol- which was banned by the passage of the 18th Amendment in this period- and bootlegging. In doing so, conflict arises between Gatsby and Daisy. In their way back home, Daisy strikes Myrtle in a car accident leading to her death. George Wilson, driven by anxiety to revenge for his wife's death, shoots Gatsby to death and then he shoots himself. At Gatsby's funeral, Nick finds himself only with two men attending the ceremony, as one of them turns to be Gatsby's father. Finally, the novel ends with Nick's return to his hometown Minnesota with huge feelings of disgust and discontent concerning the emptiness of people whom he encountered on the East Coast.(347)

In effect, the portrayal of some characters exposed Fitzgerald's unique skill in making the Other a common figure within this narrative. Particularly, the narrative strategy Fitzgerald uses is based upon binary oppositions- white/black, men/women, and Protestants/Jews- which offer some insights about the issues of multiculturalism and inter-racial relationships that once occurred within the 1920s American society. On these grounds, the radical differentiation between the former categories of people, as we are going to see in the novel, creates an ongoing debate over the issue of Otherness; together, the use of certain images, symbols, and vocabulary work as evidences in supporting this claim.

B. Blacks Other

The binary white/black is quite used in most relations when related to the superiority /inferiority relation. The notion of power, here, is attributed to the white race who identify themselves as 'us' or 'we' against Others, 'them'. In this context, The Self, in this case, stands for Tom, Nick, and Daisy who denote the extremist expressions of racial prejudices that were directly attributed to the coloured -blacks- people presence in *The Great Gatsby*. They showed feelings of superiority of the Anglo-Saxon white race while speaking about other dark-skinned beings. In his visit, Nick encounters a dialogue between Daisy and Tom: this dialogue is about a book Tom was reading entitled "*The Rise of the Colored Empires*". Actually, Tom argues that in order to maintain the supremacy of the white races, coloured people must be controlled so they would forever remain subordinate and inferior, as Others. Tom says, "*It's up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things*". In support of his claim, Daisy continued: "*We've got to beat them down,*" (Fitzgerald 7)

Moreover, a direct indication of the relation that existed between the white and the non-white during the 1920s comes when Gatsby and Nick were going on their first trip to New York. Nick did not hesitate when he laughed in a satirical way when they were over passed by a group of blacks on the bridge. Nick narrates, "*As we crossed Blackwell's Island a limousine passed us, driven by a white chauffeur, in which sat three modish negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled toward us in haughty rivalry. 'Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge,'*" (36). In Fact, Nick laughs at the fact that these black people think that they can be potential competitors to the whites, as if they were equal. This provides a clear example of Fitzgerald's racial paradigms that he placed into his novel.

C. Jews Other

C. 1. Meyer Wolfsheim

One of the apparent ethnic prejudices and Othering practices that are made clearly in the novel is represented in the characterization of Jews in the novel. Meyer Wolfsheim is the only Jewish character that Fitzgerald created within *The Great Gatsby*. When presented by Nick, Wolfsheim is described with "*A small, flat-nose,*" "*large head,*" "*with two fine growths of hair,*" and "*tiny eyes in the half-darkness*" (36). Actually, Jews were always identified by their unique physical appearance, having big noses. Fitzgerald stereotypes this Jewish character in order to indicate his difference. In addition, he wants to distance him from the Anglo-American aristocracy. Fitzgerald depicts this character so it would look like a real life gangster, Arnold Rothstein. (Malinovitz)

The character of Wolfshiem is prescribed with violence, corruption, vulgarity, and moral decadence. Wolfshiem also represents money-obsessed people. When Nick meets

Wolfshiem, Nick is interrupted by Wolfshiem who arrogantly drives Nick's attention to see his cuff buttons. Nick states in his dialogue with Wolfshiem: "*I see you're looking at my cuff buttons. I hadn't been looking at them, but I did now. They were composed of oddly familiar pieces of ivory. Finest specimens of human molars,*" (Fitzgerald 38) this dialogue indicates Wolfshiem's violent activities as his cuff buttons were made of human molars. In short, this ironic depiction of Jews shows Fitzgerald's own outlook about Jews and the way he perceived them, as enemies.

D. Women Other

D. 1. Daisy Fay Buchanan

When examined, *The Great Gatsby* reflected the changing roles of women during the 1920s, for they won the right to vote by the passage of the 19th Amendment. Fitzgerald depicted the new type of women that occurred in that decade, the Flapper. All of his female characters shared the same characteristics the Flapper had: short hair cuts, skinny dresses, and so on. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, Daisy Fay Buchanan is one of the main characters in the novel. She is married to Tom Buchanan. She is also the cousin of our narrator, Nick, and the love of our protagonist Jay Gatsby. Actually, Daisy places the center of the narrative on whom the events turn around. She presents a typical Flapper who rejected the traditional roles attributed to her in having extramarital affairs with men other than her husband and being a housewife and a mother. She was a careless person: when it comes to her baby, she showed no love and paid no attention; when Nick asked her about her daughter, she said: "*I suppose she talks, and—eats, and everything.*" (Fitzgerald 9)

Nevertheless, Daisy suffered from her husband's biases. He neglected her womanly feelings by having a mistress. He always wanted to control her, and Daisy was fully aware of this. When she had a baby girl, she wished that she would be a "*beautiful little fool*". In other

words, Daisy believed that the best thing that a woman can do is to remain silent, passive, and submissive to the demands of the world surrounding her as she did. In order to move on with their lives, women had to show no seeds of intelligence, if so, they would be segregated by the patriarchal American society they were living in. As she assumes the focus of both men Tom and Gatsby, Daisy shows no feelings of comfort and liberty as both men only want to exert their power and masculinity by possessing her.

In Daisy's opinion, women had no place in the world as they had to remain dependent and subordinate to men, yet her actions through the novel showed nothing of rebellion and lust for change of her status. Nonetheless, she also did not pay much attention to the care of her husband and family. By having an affair with Gatsby, Daisy exhibited the unfaithfulness of love and duty that her husband owed to her. Her lust for money, wealth, and power that Tom provided her with made her betray her beloved Gatsby and choose Tom instead of him. This greed, in fact, characterized most of Americans in the Roaring Twenties.

D. 2. Jordan Baker

Another female character, Jordan Baker is accounted as an icon of the American women during the 1920s. She is the friend of Daisy, and a successful golf player. Later on, Jordan becomes Nick Carraway's girlfriend. Nick is driven by his "tender curiosity" for her. Fitzgerald portrays Jordan as an arrogant and irresponsible person, a Flapper. Jordan is an independent person who enjoyed the company of men. She did not present the traditional woman. On the contrary, she was presented by Fitzgerald as she shared certain qualities with them. When describing his first encounter with her, Nick identifies some characteristics in her body that makes her look like a man. He says, "*she turned a page with a flutter of slender*

muscles in her arms" (Fitzgerald 10). Usually, only men are described with having muscles in their physical appearance not women. In a full description of her, Nick states,

Jordan Baker instinctively avoided clever, shrewd men, and now I saw that this was because she felt safer on a plane where any divergence from a code would be thought impossible. She was incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage and, given this unwillingness, I suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of her hard, jaunty body.(Fitzgerald 31)

Jordan embodies some Flapper values of detachment in her behaviours as well as betrayal and irresponsibility for her actions. Despite the fact that she knows of Tom's affair with Myrtle, Jordan chooses not to tell Daisy the truth. Nick comments, *"It made no difference to me. Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame"*(Fitzgerald 31). To Fitzgerald, Jordan stands as a model for the 1920's woman in the transition between old Victorian values and new Modern standards. In the pursue of freedom and liberty, women, as Fitzgerald tried to present in his novel, lost their femininity.

D.3. Myrtle Wilson

The wife of George Wilson and the mistress of Tom Buchanan, Myrtle serves as a side character in the novel of *The Great Gatsby*. She lives with her husband who owns an auto garage in the Valley of Ashes. Myrtle is extremely desperate to leave this place. Her lust for money and wealth drove her to betray her husband. This character is not shown in positive light as she ignores her husband and treats him badly. She cheats on him with Tom in a

rented apartment in New York City. Fitzgerald describes Myrtle with foolishness as she thinks that Tom loves her and he would leave Daisy for her sake. In fact, Tom considers Myrtle only as a sexual object with which he would have some fun. He provides her with lavish and luxurious gifts making her think that she is valuable when she is not. At the end, Myrtle's stupidity leads to her own death as she runs into a car thinking that it was Tom's car.

Although Fitzgerald succeeded in presenting the 1920s figure of emancipated women- the Flapper- in his novel, yet his descriptions were based on patriarchal beliefs that he manifested in support of male supremacy. Women were subjugated by men, yet they were considered as neighbours to the white male dominion. This process of Othering the female character is apparent throughout the whole narrative. It is true that men- Tom, Gatsby, and Nick- hover over women, yet women are still powerless in many aspects. Fitzgerald showed women as independent creatures; however, they were denied the opportunity to speak for themselves. Instead, all the judgments, actions, and opinions were a male province. In the novel, we can notice that Nick expressed the unsaid and spoke on behalf of these marginalized categories depending on his impressions and observation of events. In this light, Said relates the course of Orientalism to anti-feminism, he claims:

Orientalism itself, furthermore, was an exclusively male province; like so many professional guilds during the modern period, it viewed itself and its subject matter with sexist blinders. This is especially evident in the writing of travelers and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing.(207)

These minorities, blacks, Jews, and women, were constructed as silent Others who were treated as mere objects identified with their stereotypical characteristics of primitiveness (blacks), violence (Jews), and submissiveness (women). They are all in need for representation, in the Self's view (the dominant race), as they don't have the ability to voice their ideas and opinions. This foregrounds the theme of *Otherness* existing in *The Great Gatsby* and helps to better understand Fitzgerald's commentaries on the 1920s American society.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

After the end of the First World War (1914-1918), America embarked on one of the most prosperous and sensitive decades in history. Life was revolutionized as inventions spread rapidly in the whole world (the automobile). On the other hand, America witnessed radical changes concerning social order. However, within the economic and social boom, there existed discrimination, segregation, and marginalization of some groups. Racism and Nativism spread rapidly amongst the American societies causing a national fear.

Within the 1920s American Literature, Scott Fitzgerald's works were considered as a reflection of the social, economic, and political changes that took place in this period. It has been proved, within this study, that Fitzgerald's representation of some minorities as Others is largely interwoven with many other things besides 'truth'. He manages to embrace the binary oppositions existing within the American society into his work by giving voice to the white male Protestant characters while silencing and marginalizing non-white, Jewish, and female characters; thereby, he promotes the notion of Otherness. Certainly, Fitzgerald succeeded in reflecting power relations existing between the Self and the Other through the use of the medium of language which plays a central instrument of cultural domination. The analysis of the novel reveals that the relations of superiority/inferiority, neighbouring and enmity are identifiable within the representation of some of the characters.

This research study would be very helpful for further understanding of any literary work and characterization that deals with the idea of Otherness. Similarly, this research will be a medium for future students, who are interested in the literature that speaks about marginalized minorities. Hence, the conclusion of this research may be the beginning of a

new study on the same novel or similar works. Indeed, it may be itself a problematic for another research.

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Abstract

The central concern of this research study is to show how some minorities (blacks, Jews, and women) have suffered from segregation, discrimination, and racial biases within the 1920s America. This study focuses on the identification of the difference between the Self, as a dominant entity, and the Other as a marginalized, a dominated one. It exposes the various relations existing between the Self and the Other through the analysis of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Furthermore, it elucidates that Fitzgerald consciously constructed some of his minor characters as Others different from the Anglo-Saxon race. Accordingly, he describes these characters with stereotypical markers of primitiveness, violence, and submission as if they were only objects. Finally, this study shows that Fitzgerald approaches the binary Self/Other from diverse ethnic, racial, and gender perspectives through the use of language in order to reflect the realities of the 1920s America.

Key Words: minorities, blacks, Jews, women, segregation, 1920s America, Self, Other, analysis, Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, language.

Resumé

La préoccupation centrale de cette étude est de montrer comment certaines minorités (noires, juives et femmes) ont souffert de la ségrégation, de la discrimination et des préjugés raciaux dans les années 1920 en Amérique. Cette étude se concentre sur l'identification de la différence entre le Soi, en tant qu'entité dominante, et l'Autre comme marginalisé, dominé. Elle exposera les diverses relations existant entre le Soi et l'Autre par l'analyse de *The Great Gatsby* (1925) de Scott Fitzgerald. En outre, elle élucide que Fitzgerald a consciemment construit certains de ses personnages mineurs comme Autres différents de la race anglo-saxonne. En conséquence, elle a décrit ces personnages avec des marqueurs stéréotypés de primitivité, de violence et de soumission comme s'elles étaient des objets. Enfin, cette étude montre que Fitzgerald a approché le Soi / Autre binaire de diverses perspectives ethniques, raciales et sexuelles à travers l'utilisation du langage dans d'autres pour refléter les réalités de l'Amérique des années 1920.

Les Mots Clés: minorités, noires, juives et femmes, l'Autre, Soi, *The Great Gatsby* (1925) de Scott Fitzgerald, ségrégation, l'Amérique des années 1920, langage.

ملخص:

إن الشاغل الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة البحثية هو إظهار كيف عانت بعض الأقليات (السود واليهود والنساء) من التمييز والتحيزات العنصرية في العشرينيات من القرن العشرين. تركز هذه الدراسة على التعرف على الفرق بين الذات، ككيان مهيم، والآخر كمهمش. فإنه سيعرض مختلف العلاقات القائمة بين الذات والآخر من خلال تحليل. وعلاوة على ذلك، فإنه يوضح أن فيتزجيرالد بين بوعي بعض من شخصياته الثانوية كما آخرون مختلفة عن النسل الأنجلوسكسوني. وبناء على ذلك، فهو قد وصف هذه الشخصيات بعلامات نمطية عن البدائية والعنف، وتقديمها كما لو كانت أشياء. وأخيراً، تظهر هذه الدراسة أن فيتزجيرالد اقترب من ثنائية الذات / الآخر من المنظور العرقي والجنسي المتنوعة من خلال استخدام اللغة لتعكس واقع أمريكا في 1920.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأقليات، السود، اليهود، النساء، التحيزات العنصرية، الذات، الآخر، سكوت فيتزجيرالد غاتسبي العظيم (1925)، اللغة، أمريكا في 1920