

## Post-secularity in Emile Habiby's the Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist

Peter Chien-Yu Kao<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Postgraduate, Department of English, National Chengchi University  
No. 64, Sec. 2, ZhiNan Rd., Wenshan District, Taipei City 11605, Taiwan, R.O.C.

\*Corresponding Author: [appleskykid666@gmail.com](mailto:appleskykid666@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Despite the fact that the cause of 1948 and 1967 Israel-Palestine Wars has long associated with the "state penetration," "settlement project," and "military occupation," it is still unclear how the War can be or should be viewed and interpreted through post-secularity that helps lead to multiple individual self-identity. This paper mainly scrutinizes the 1948 and 1967 Israel-Palestine Wars through post-secularity to see how one's multiple individual self-identity is represented and has transformed through Emile Habiby's The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist. The research methods include: critical theories, fictional narrative and oral testimony in the novel. It is argued that instead of the preoccupied assumptions concerning "state penetration," "settlement project," and "military occupation," a certain understanding of one's multiple individual self-identity offers an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary viewpoint on 1948 Israel-Palestine War. Finally, it is suggested that post-secularity provides a pioneering view on the War and the author hopes that the concept can shed a new light on future research of peace building, conflict and confrontation in politics and IR.

## 1. Introduction

How are 1948 & 1967 Israeli-Palestinian Wars [2] represented in terms of the duality of individual self-identity? What is still missing when postsecular theories are adopted to investigate Israel-Palestinian conflicts? How are Palestinian victim survivors [3] portrayed through political representation in Emile Habiby's The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist (1974) [4]? What this paper will explore is war-time survivors' individual self-identity in the historical context of the 1948 and 1967 Israel-Palestine Wars in Emile Habiby's The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist. The dual/ oppositional forces during the period of Israel-Palestine 1948 & 1976 Wars through Emile Habiby's The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist (1974) will be examined. Roland Bleiker in "In Search of Thinking Space: Reflections on the Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory," argues that

"an aesthetic approach, by contrast, assumes that there is always a gap between a form of representation and what is represented therewith... Aesthetic insight recognizes that the inevitable difference between the represented and its representation is the very location of politics" [5].

## 2. Materials and Methods: Textual Analysis & Aesthetic IR Approach

What Roland Bleiker means is his deep concern towards "mimetic forms of representation" [5]. Whether "mimetic forms of representation" be the faithful presentation of the reality or another "fabrication of the reality" [6] the ethnic collective memory in wars and conflicts, remain unstable. Therefore, the debate deserves scholarly investigation at this current moment. An outcry requests "valid inferences by the systematic use of well-established procedures of inquiry through refined models and methods and [more importantly] 'practical knowledge' [7]. That practice knowledge involves the first-hand war-time experiences that call for and create "sympathy to the dual/ oppositional dilemma that Palestinian people have been through since 1948 and 1967 Israeli-Palestinian Wars and Conflicts" [8].

As shown in this thesis, aesthetic interpretation can serve as the bridge linking what is significant there in reality and how that significance in reality is constructed. It complements with postsecular theories by presenting first-hand personal experiences [8]. Aesthetic approach also serves the function of what Bleiker, King, Keohane and Verba mentioned a certain "practical knowledge." Furthermore, aesthetic approach helps shape and explore "how representative practices themselves have come to constitute and shape political practices" [5]. Aesthetic approach also channels between racial, ethnic and religious violence during wars and conflicts and transforms into a political way as the "restorative" [9] and "remedial" [10] schema for the victim survivors in violent conflicts during the Wars taking place in 1948 & 1967 between Israel and Palestine.

It should also be noted that duality/ oppositional forces through what Jurgen Habermas called "intersubjectivity" [11] has blurred the boundary between what is said and what is unsaid, what is heard and what is unheard, what is intentionally articulated and what is ideologically kept hidden. Based on "ethics," the fine line is not taken by the "discourse of modernity" [12] as fixed, but by multiple interpretations through inter-layered dimensions as mobilized and becoming dynamic. In analytic philosophy, "the intersubjective" became either a "strictly epistemological question (the problem of 'other minds') or a casualty of the fact/ value split ('meta-ethics' versus 'ethical praxis')" [13]. Individual self-identity [14] cannot be regarded merely through what realists think to be simply a kind of "rational choice" or "political rationality" [13]. Neither can individual self-identity be defined as the formation of what liberals term the formation and production of "absolute gains" [13].

It has been found that "intersubjectivity" [15] can be one of the significant elements that illustrate individual self-identity through postsecular theories' interpretation. Based on "postsecular theories" [16] aiming at post-secular individual self-identity [17], this thesis seeks to interrogate the aesthetic/ political representation of "dual/ oppositional forces" that help shape Israeli and Palestinian individual self-identity during the Israeli-Palestinian Wars between the period of 1948 & 1967. The two Wars help shape the individual self-identity of Arabian people. In Emile Habiby's 1974 *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist*, [18] readers through Saeed's [19] "narratives" and "oral testimonies" [20] are able to know how political and religious ideology are built upon "collective imagined memory" [21] and through self-understanding and self-recognition towards communal rituals in "a certain community" [22]. More important is "how representative practices themselves have come to constitute and shape political practices" [23].

It should be noted that the 1948 & 1967 Wars took place when post-secular theories did not develop yet. However, "post-secular theories" [24] provide a political matrix as an alternative interpretation to 1948 & 1967 Israeli-Palestinian Wars. [25] And since "postsecular theories" [26] serve to bridge the gap explained by secularization theories in terms of violence, conflicts, religiosity and historicity, Therefore, it is logical to investigate the extent that "post-secular theories" can interpret and help rethink Palestinian Arabs and Jews in the current world apart from what current scholars [27] often label the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts [28] as the struggle over religion and territory [29] issues and dimensions.

## 3. External Factors

### 3.1 "Territory"

Unlike what Beinun and Hajjar in "Palestine, Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Primer" affirmed: "It [the Six-Day War] is essentially a struggle over land, [30] power and resources," It is argued that the duality in terms of ambivalent national identity projected through Saeed's psychological condition between Israel and Palestine prevails in Emile Habiby's *The Secret Life of Saeed: A Pessoptimist*. And the cause of the War derives mainly from individual self-identity in terms of religion. Although Beinun and Hajjar made their argument in terms of the aspect of territory, power and sources, It is argued however that something making Saeed's struggle an everlasting issue between Palestinian Arabs and Jews rests upon the uncompromised dual or oppositional forces [31] in terms of the narrator's self-identity that always comes between the Palestinian Arabs and Jews.

According to Baumgart-Ochse in her 2014 "Opposed or Intertwined? Religious and Secular Conceptions of National Identity in Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," Shmuel Sandler in 1993 *The State of Israel*, the

Land of Israel. The Statist and Ethnonational Dimensions of Foreign Policy argues that "... the State of Israel...after the 1967 war [was] spearheaded by zealous Jewish religious settlers." David Newman in 2005 "From Hitnchalut to Hitnatkut: The Impact of Gush Emunim and the Settlement Movement on Israeli Politics and Society" emphasizes "double strategy" of Jewish religious settlers for on the one hand a "social protest movement," which "mobilized large parts of the public for its cause;" on the other, "they [the Jewish religious settlers].... have been seeking "to establish a close relationship with the state and its institutions" [32].

### 3.2 "Military Occupation" & "The Settlement Project"

Moreover, Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar point out that "military occupation" and "the settlement project" are two forces that have brought "Israel's democracy and its political culture to the brink of the abyss" [33]. In 2005, approximately 8,000 settlers and military bases were evacuated from the Gaza-Strip, which brought about the forefront antagonism between the duality of "the State of Israel" [34] and "the Land of Israel" [35] again dividing the whole state into the two entities. Moreover, Joyce Dalsheim, David Ohana, Neve Gordon and Oren Yiftachel views that the polarization of religion and secular nationalism are opposed but often intertwined. Their finding lies in "how the secular political establishment in fact instrumentalized religion for its policies and legitimization strategies" [36].

### 3.3 "State Penetration"

Those Jewish religious settlers, according to Newman, attempted to "get into Israel's political parties, to get elected to the Knesset," [37] and became members of the Israeli government. Moreover, the Jewish settlers "managed to secure for themselves influential positions within the administration in order to provide for the advancement of the settlement project." [38] In "Religious-Nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration-Lessons From Jewish Settlers' Activism in Israel and the West Bank," Oded Haklai described this process as "'state penetration': 'The case of the religious settler movement in Israel reveals an alternative mobilization strategy whereby through conscious penetration, a well-organized group can influence regime practices from within...'" [39]. As Haklai notes, "state penetration... denotes the ability 'to infiltrate into arms of the civil and military bureaucracies and build alliances with elements in the state apparatus...'" [40].

"State penetration" [41] in terms of its dual entities between Ultra-Orthodox and the national religion politics is also scrutinized by Yehezkel Lein's 2002 "Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank, B' Tselem, Jerusalem." Lein adopted different "sources of law and infiltration of various administration branches for the appropriation of Palestinian land in the West Bank" [42]. In 2011 "The Israeli Military: Imprisoned by the Religious Community," [43] Yagil Levy argues in terms of symbolic duality on religion for Jewish Diaspora that "the main symbolic return for their military participation was the chance to carry out the mission of renewing Jewish control over what they perceived as the Holy Land" [44].

## 4. The Pessoptimist Palestinian with Dual Identity

When delineating legal practices that deals with Arabian individual self-identity, Farid Ghanem [45] mentions that "... the measures and dictates of security in the state of Israel as they encroach upon the basic every day, personal, and national rights of the 'remaining handful of Palestinian Arabs'" [46]. On the other hand, Seraje Assi notes that Habiby meant to portray the "paradoxes of Palestinian life in the Israeli state." [47] As Assi further mentions, in this period between 1948 and 1967, "seeing identity in this [wartime] context as a form of practice, survival tactics employed in a game that involves affirmation and rejection, collaboration and resistance but never fixed" [48]. Something that is not fixed is the Palestinians' self-identity as "victim survivors" and "civilians of Israel" [49]. According to Assi, the very notion of "complex identity, which continues to dominate intellectual and political discourse on the 'Israeli Arab,' a category that never developed into a coherent form of identity" [50].

## 5. "International Politics after Secularism" vs. "The Postsecular in International Relations: An Overview"

### 5.1 Secularization Theories

William T. Cavanaugh in 1995 "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State" focuses on religious violence and the way "revulsion to killing in the name of religion [that] is used to legitimize the transfer of ultimate loyalty to the modern State" [51]. He critiqued against the 16th- and 17th-

century "Wars of Religion"... are evoked as the founding moment of modern liberalism" [52]. In "Secularization, Enlightenment, and Modern Religion" of 1994 *Public Religion in the Modern World*, [53] Jose Casanova argues that "the religious revival signaled simultaneously the rise of fundamentalism and of its role in the resistance of the oppressed and the rise of the 'powerless'." [54]

What Casanova implies lies in the assumption that the rise of fundamentalists was meant to subvert the traditional sense that religion is with power and so is the nation state. And the rise of fundamentalism channels the power to the people unprivileged within the realm of religion (i.e. Catholic Church) and of nation state. Casanova further points out two dimensions that form secularization theories: "the decline" and "the privatization" [55] of religion in the modern world. "The decline," according to Casanova, means religion gradually losing power and influence to the secular nation state while "the privatization" signifies the religious rituals and practices that can be performed in public and private spheres without a certain intervention of churches. However, what Casanova fails to elucidate is how the "declination" and "privatization" [56] of religion have been replaced and become transformative by a certain personal sentiment that is deeply seated in each individual. In other words, the phenomena of "declination" and "privatization" cannot help explain the situation of the Palestinians to become civilians of Israel or remain their inherent ancestry that invite multiple interpretations of the Palestinian's individual religious identity, social interaction and political recognition.

## 5.2 Postsecular Theories

In terms of revised version of secularization theory, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart argues that secularization theory emphasizes the extent to which "people have a sense of existential security— ..., the feeling that survival is secure enough that it can be taken for granted" [57]. In Norris and Inglehart's viewpoint, "the importance of religiosity persists most strongly among vulnerable populations, especially those living in poorer nations, facing personal survival-threatening risks" [58].

Why postsecular theories are chosen in this paper to contextualize the Israeli and Palestinian self-identity issue lies in the following reasons. First, Hurd asserts that "religion had long been ignored based on secularization" and therefore it should be "brought back" [59] to IR. Second, according to Hurd, "restoring religion in the right way will help address the problems associated with having ignored in IR, paving the way for the marginalization of violent religion and globalization of religious freedom" [60]. Hurd's postsecular approach, in other words, undertakes a critical analysis of this "restorative narrative and the religious and political world it is creating" [61]. Since Israeli-Palestinian Wars, in part, cannot be without religion, it will be appropriate to investigate the 1948 & 1967 Wars with a certain discussion of religious allegory and this kind of allegory through restorative narrative is embodied. Similarly, as Mavelli and Petito mention, "postsecularity" [62] has been used to explain "the return or resilience of religious traditions in modern life. This has resulted, on the one hand, in the attempt to develop conceptual frameworks that could account for their unexpected feature of modernity beyond the paradigmatic assumptions of the secularization theory; and, on the other hand, in a plea for new models of politics able to include religious views" [63].

Postsecular theories [64] help decode and deconstruct inherent secularization tradition, discourse [65] and epistemology that frame the dual/ oppositional forces (the religious vs. non-religious, primordial vs. modern, conservative vs. liberal) of the "Israeli-Palestinian relations" [66] in terms of Arabian self-identity through the War time oral testimonies and narratives— are important and needs further investigations. The adoption of "postsecular theories" is important because on the one hand it serves as preparation for the consideration of different historical truth interpreted concerning contemporary Israeli and Palestinian conflicts and confrontations. And on the other, postsecular thoughts serve as a self-reflective schema from one's first-hand experiences as a response to Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Finally, "postsecular theories" [67] challenge the secularization theories by emphasizing "complex identity" secularization theories fail to illustrate.

To further "postsecular theories" [68] one must understand their relevant critique. Postsecular theories did not arise until the 90s and provide an alternative way in this thesis to look back and help examine Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Like "post-" school [69] postsecularity challenges the secularization theorists' viewpoints [70] that the more modern we are, the less religious we will be.

Postsecularity theorists might claim that "the universalistic claims associated with modernity can no longer be sustained without demurral" [71]. Therefore, secularization theories come to an end with the termination of modernity project. Instead, self-identity based on religious beliefs is imperative for the Jewish people. Second, postsecular theories that are discussed in this thesis help shape a certain understanding as foreground towards identity politics beyond the duality in terms of secular configurations (i.e. land and territory) between the Israeli and Palestinian. Third, postsecular theories help build theoretical framework to interrogate individual self-identity of the Israeli and Palestinian. Therefore, it is logic to pinpoint what major arguments of secularization theories are and then to focus on postsecular theories.

As for the theoretical framework of this paper, Luca Mavelli and Fabio Petito's 2012 "The Postsecular in International Relations: An Overview" and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd's 2013 "International Politics after

Secularism" are discussed as foregrounds to vindicate the argument. It is argued that Israeli-Palestinian Wars and Conflicts should be interrogated in terms of the multiplicity of individual self-identity through one's value, beliefs, and faith rather than simple and clear-cut oppositional duality that secularization theorists have highlighted through the interrogations of "power," "authority" and "sources" [72]. And postsecular interpretation with aesthetic approach through Saeed's testimonies and narratives can manifestly mitigate the contradiction that secularization theories fail to present each individual self-identity. The failure of secularization theory is characterized by: the decline of religion with the advent of modernization and the condensed nationalism that is biased and single dimensioned.

## 6. Historical War Events: Israeli-Palestinian Wars between 1948 & 1967

According to editor teams of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Arab-Israeli Wars were series of military conflicts between Israeli and various Arab forces, most notably in 1948-49, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, and 2006" (Encyclopedia Britannica). The 1948 and Six-Day War/ June War [72] in 1967 were inaugurated from 5 to 10 Jun in 1967. Since then, Israeli-Palestinian wars have been built on settler projects recognized as external factors that result in "the duality." Scholars such as Joyce Dalsheim and Assaf Harel have shown how "binary divisions' between left and right, secular and religious, and those opposed vs. those in favor of Israeli settlement have long [been] characterized" [73].

Ian S. Lustick in his 1988 *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* interrogated on the Jewish settler project in terms of the "Occupied Territories" [73] conceptualized in Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar's *Lords of the Land- The War Over Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007* published by Nation Books in 2007 while Emanuel Sivan in "The Enclave Culture" of *Fundamentalisms Comprehended: The Fundamentalism Project*, vol. 5 published by The University of Chicago Press in 1995 presents the thesis: "the Jewish religious settlers differ" (Sivan, 1995) from the State of Israel's secular nationalism.

## 7. Emile Habiby's *The Secret Life of Saeed: Ill-Fated Pessoptimist* (1974) "Narratives Ethics" [73]

Narrative in the novel plays the role not only as testimonies conveyed by the narrator, but also as a kind of representation that delivers ethics. With postsecular theories, the function of narrative [74] is imperative because it shares collective memory, cultural practices and political language— all express what cannot be touched as trauma but what can be narrated for readers to feel sympathetic. As Adam Zachary Newton emphasizes the function of narratives that convey the meaning and collective shared knowledge, "the narrative triad comprises: a) a narrational ethics (...signifying the exigent conditions and consequences of the narrative act itself); b). a representational ethics (the cost incurred fictionalizing oneself or others by exchanging 'person' for 'character'); and c). a hermeneutic ethics (the ethico-critical accountability which acts of reading hold their readers to oral testimonies" [74].

### 7.1 Duality

It is noted that in this thesis, a certain aesthetic representation of Saeed's narratives and oral testimonies [74] concerning Israel-Palestine Wars as duality trajectories is analyzed. Three dimensions are presented: history, satire of narratives and identity politics.

### 7.2 Whose History?- Israeli or Palestinian

Avi Shlaim in "The Debate about 1948" notes the dualistic standpoints as an alternative to interpreting history for Israeli and Palestinian people. For Palestinians, Israelis in 1948 War were regarded as attackers and conquerors and Palestinian people deemed themselves to be victim survivors of the first Arab Israeli War, which they call "al-Nakba" (The Disaster) [75]. However, the Israelis did regard themselves as unquestionable victors in the 1948 War, which they call it the War of Independence. For Palestinians, the 1948 War was a justification for Israelis to propagate "more effectively than their opponents their version of the fateful war" [75].

However, as Shlaim mentions, the conventional Zionist account [75] of the 1948 war holds a different view to the interpretation of historicity for the Jews and Arabs [75]. The conflict arose between Jews and Arabs in Palestine following the passage on 29 Nov 1947 of the United Nations partition resolution, which called for "the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab" [75]. The Jews accepted the UN plan while the Arab League rejected it. Later, with the proclamation of "the State of Israel," [75] five Arab states waged the war in Palestine and caused hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to flee to Arab states.

This traditional Zionist account of "Old History" of the 1948 war is featured by: a). "It is not history in the proper sense..." [75]. In other words, the traditional Zionist account of "Old History" is not written by professional historians, but by war participants, politicians, soldiers, chroniclers, journalists and biographers. The features also comprise b). this tradition is short on "political analysis of the war" and long on "chronicles of the military operations" [75] and c). it is maintained that "Israel's conduct during the war was governed by higher moral standards than those of its enemies, which was associated with the 'percept of tohar haneshek,' or the 'purity of arms,' which means that weapons remain pure as long as they are used only for defensive purposes" [75].

Moreover, Saeed's former school teacher also claims that "Conquerors, my son, consider as true history only what they have themselves fabricated" [76]. The significance of the quotation lies in multiple history shared by different racial and ethnic groups. Saeed stays in the "newborn Jewish country" and will become "Palestinian citizen of Israel" [76].

### 7.3 Pessoptimist: Satire

Emile Habiby's *Secret Life of Saeed: The Ill-Fated Pessoptimist* (1974) is a tragicomedy with satire as comic return embedded in Saeed's narrative through letters to his learned friend as letter recipients. Habiby does not design Saeed as a protagonist with pessimistic tone as he deals with Saeed's displaced and paradoxical individual self-identity. Rather, satire is projected through Saeed's language and narratives. "Satire" [77] helps raise a question about Saeed. Is he authentically Palestinian? Is he a Palestinian of Israel state? It involves his self-perception as he fled to Lebanon. His self-identity also induces others' recognition. "Satire," according to Simpson, is "a curious and rather elusive one" [78]. Saeed's upbringing makes those around him curious and at the same time is elusive because his identity in terms of loyalty during the two Wars is not easily defined. Satire is "a somewhat slippery term to define" [79]. Randall, for example, defines satire as "criticism made with the hope... that there will be reform" [80]. Berger portrays satire as "the deliberate use of the comic for purpose of attack," emphasizing "the boundaries of satire and its relation to humor" [81].

Moreover, Ashworth defines satire as "a joke about serious things within a moral framework, criticizing and provoking humor at the same time" [82]. Moreover, satire is defined as "the ridicule of a subject to reveal its shortcomings and undervalue it" [83] to arouse readers' attention by mobilizing Saeed's identity. "Satire" [77] is also "a primary technique for deflating egos and providing social criticism" [77]. Is Saeed socially constructed to be a man struggling over his identity? Or is he defined by how he views himself and how he thinks himself to be viewed? The dilemma, as Habiby noticed, is best portrayed through writing technique: satire. Rosenheim who focuses on satire's "relation to historic individuals and passed events (cultural and social background)" defines it as "an attack by means of a manifest fiction upon discernible historic particulars" (77).

### 7.4 Identity Politics [84]

#### 7.4.1 Individual Self-Identity: Multiple Identities

Saeed can be seen by readers as victim survivors because he fled to Lebanon as Israeli-Palestinian Wars took place. He can also be regarded as civilians of Israel nation state because he somehow recognizes a certain emotion and sympathy that urge him to take a look at the two Wars differently. At the same time, he regards himself encountering with exotic culture as "aliens" [4] coming from "outer space" [4]. Absolutely, he has his own ancestry [4]. He is also a participant in the "War of Independence" [4]. He is a pilgrimage in courtyard of Jazzar Mosque [4]. Saeed also remembers himself as a "Martyr" [4] at the Lebanese border not to die because of a sign delivered to give him a mission. He is also victim survivor and was saved by "true dawn" in the "Subterranean Tunnels of Acre" [4]. He even has experience of becoming a leader in the Union of Palestinian workers [4]. Saeed is a refugee [4]. Served as Israel's informer [4], Saeed felt proud and delighted. As a writer, Saeed cannot help but stop writing because of "reasons of security" [4]. His personality is depicted to change to be like a cat [4]. He becomes a "man with mission" [4].

Saeed's personal identity is twisted as he encountered different circumstances happening in his life. For example, when Saeed's teacher began singing the anthem, "Palestine Is My Country, So Come All My Children..." [4], Saeed could not help but burst out into laughter, which made that teacher "came to an abrupt stop," and he could hear his "apprehensive classmates quicken their breathing" [4]. Saeed could not identify himself to be either the Arab as victim survivor or the civilian of Israel. For him, it does not make any sense to his personal self-identity because he finds it difficult to align himself with: more Arabian or Israel. He feels confused as it recalled to him. His teacher came to him and asked him to copy twenty times the following verses from the pre-Islamic poet-prince Imru al-Qais. As the verse goes,

"My friend wept to see the road ahead  
 And realized that it to Caesar led;  
 I told him, "Allow not your eyes to weep, for we  
 Our kingdom back must get or die and pardoned be" [4].

From the verse above, readers might sense that Saeed's teacher wants him to remember how the Arabians have been suffering and how they have been regarded as property of Israeli government. As the narrator mentions, "For she [Baqiyya] even believed, really and truly, that the Arabs who had remained in Israel were themselves also government property" [4]. Once one has been regarded as his government's property, his personal recognition, mutual recognition with government, and individual subjectivity— all have been reduced and even eliminated. He does not know whom he has been fighting for. Saeed's ambivalent attitudes toward his personal identity is magnified when he fled to Israel and later became the informant of Israeli government. Therefore, Saeed is paradoxically portrayed as "Man with a Mission" [85][4]. This shift of personal self-identity is fairly comic.

In explaining failure of secular nation-state into the transition of religious nationalism, Mark Juergensmeyer, from the starting point of religious nationalism, in 1994 *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism* [86] *Confronts the Secular State* [87] and 2010 "The Global Rise of Religious Nationalism" [88] implicates that "a kind of New Man" [87] is born and expected to lead Israel as secular state to a different political direction and future. As Juergensmeyer mentions, "Tensions between the religious and secular dimensions of the state have been a persistent theme in the recent struggle for Israeli nationhood [and personal identity]" [88]. The "secular flag" that Herzl designed was not enough. Another nationalist group, the Merkaz Ruhani, or Mizrahi, which called for "the formation of a religious state" follows the "precepts of the Torah" [88]. However, this essay holds a distinct view. Because Saeed fled to Israel and was no political leader, one cannot identify him as strong political figure. Therefore, it is not religious nationalism that defines Saeed's individual self-identity, but the dual self-perception and his and Israeli government's recognition.

## 8. Conclusion

Duality is embodied in Israel-Palestine Wars in 1948 and 1967. Its ambivalence is not merely projected out in terms of the division of territory, the formation of Israel as nation state and military occupation. More importantly, duality in between two Wars helps shape unique but ambivalent individual self-identity. Saeed's ambivalent self-identity is characterized by his multiple identities as victim survivor, civilian of the State of Israel, a refugee and a informer for Israel government. Saeed's narratives and oral testimonies in Emile Habiby's *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist* are imperative to readers.

Narrative itself induces ethics and readers get a sense of "sympathy." The aesthetic approach seen as the extension of postsecular theories in this thesis provides an alternative and interpretive method that investigates individual self-identity which is unfixed and mobilized. Saeed's story can be seen and is supposed to be presented as a sort of "narrative ethics" and authentic records that manifestly embody the personal first-hand experiences. Duality serves not only as an alternative way to the Wars, but also help represent personal individual self-identity through emotion. Therefore, it is argued that individual self-identity is one of the dimensions to the understanding of Israeli-Palestinian War instead of what other critics assumed territory, power and resources as the comprehensible schema of the Wars.

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- [36] Baumgart-Ochse, Claudia. "Opposed or Intertwined? Religious and Secular Conceptions of National Identity in Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 15, no. 3 (2014): 401-20.
- [37] Newman's 2005 "From Hitnachalut to Hitnatkut: The Impact of Gush Emunim and the Settlement Movement on Israeli Politics and Society."
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- [63] Talal Asad's *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) This book talks about how secular nation states have formed based on modernity projects with a certain discussion of Christianity and Islam. Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). This monograph delineates the relationship between religion and nation-state with the transformation of secularization. Ashis Nandy's *The Return of the Sacred: The Language of Religion and Fear of Democracy in a Post-Secular World* (Kathmandu: The Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture, 2007) This monograph portrays how religion has returned and played an imperative role with the failure of secular nation states. John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). This book talks about how religion has been constructed through social interactions in distinct nation states. Jose Casanova's *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994). William E. Connolly's *Why I AM Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). Connolly describes that there is always a certain value, faith and norm that go beyond secularization theories. Jurgen Habermas & Joseph Ratzinger's *The Dialects of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007). Jurgen Habermas's *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008). Scott & Hirschkind's *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and his Interlocutor* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006). Commenting on Talal Asad, Scott and Hirschkind point out how nation states have become more powerful with its separation from church and how secular nation states have emerged. Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Bulter, and Sara Mahmood's *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
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- [73] Gorski, Kim, Torpey & VanAntwerpen adopted postmodern concepts to parallel the situation with that of postsecular theories in terms of value, faith and norms.
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- [87] The image of a kind of "New Man" is similar represented through the US Evangelical Christianity. The important US presidents known to be a kind of religious nationalistic "New Men" include: Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and Donald Trump. In India, Narendra Modi can also be seen as strong political leader, who grappled the majority of seats in 2014 Indian election against Indian Congress Party.
- [88] As for "religious nationalism," see other articles and monographs including: Gelner, Ernst. *Nations and Nationalisms*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006; Anderson Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1991; Peter Van Der Veer. 2015. "Nations, Politics, Religion," *Journal of Religious and Political Practice* 1, no. 1 (2015): 7-21.
- [89] M. Juergensmeyer. *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
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