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NATIONALISM, SECULARISM, BELONGING, AND IDENTITY IN PHILIP ROTH, SALMAN RUSHDIE, AND ORHAN PAMUK

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation examines nationalism, secularism, and identity issues in the works of three controversial writers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries: Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie, and Orhan Pamuk. Through a comparative analysis of the theory and literature on national, religious and secular belonging, this study aims to clarify the function of *metafiction* as a literary technique, the *novel* as a genre, *literature* as a medium that questions, shapes or endorses identities, and *Comparative Literature* as a discipline that creates a link between theory and literary works. This study challenges one-sided and uncritical accounts of nationalism, secularism, and identity. I argue that, in direct or indirect dialogue with theory, the novels of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk all question forms of *exclusivism* in national, religious, and secular forms of belonging. This is shown through their use of metafiction and other literary devices that serve to engage in self-reflexivity. The examination of this literary production leads me to make explicit ways in which the forms of the *novel* and *literature* not only help to question forms of *exclusion*, but also are instrumental in calling for new, alternative, and *non-exclusivist* forms, definitions and *possibilities* of co-existence.

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For a Comparative Literature "to Come" at Ege...

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Introduction

This dissertation examines nationalism, secularism, and identity issues in three highly controversial writers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries: Salman Rushdie (British, Indian, Pakistani identities), Philip Roth (American, Israeli, European, and generally, Jewish identities) and Orhan Pamuk (Ottoman and the modern Turkish Republican identities). All three authors write about societies in which the problem of belonging is extremely complicated due to the multicultural nature of their social groups, and particularly, their countries' long histories of imperialism, colonialism, and violence. Rushdie, Roth, and Pamuk are controversial for the way they address this complexity. The i*n betweenness* of the characters, the blurry boundaries between supposed-identity-categories, the continuous questioning of traditional forms of belonging, as well as the interrogative tone achieved via the literary technique of metafiction all make Pamuk, Roth, and Rushdie relevant choices for a study that explores the contributions of comparative literature to understanding the virtues and limits of nationalism, secularism and identity.

The novels of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk contribute to the discussion of nationalism, secularism, and identity debates. The works that I examine here are still relevant approximately a quarter of a century after they were published. In Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which is also a "collective history" and a "national history" of India (Kortenaar 64), the narrator and the protagonist Saleem Sinai provides a historical and literary account of the Indian Partition, as well as of the Indo-Pakistani War and of the conflict over Bangladesh. As readers, we witness several scenes of violence through Saleem's narrative, one of which is the following: "Students and lecturers came running

out of hostels; they were greeted by bullets . . . .[Shaheed witnessed] soldiers entering women's hostels without knocking; women, dragged into the street, were also entered, and again nobody troubled to knock. . . bare chests were seen, and the hollow pimples of bullet-holes" (*Midnight's Children* 410). This is a scene, viewed from Saleem's perspective, of 25 March 1971, Pakistan's military invasion of Dacca (Bangladesh).

In *The Counterlife* of Philip Roth, the fictitious author of the novel, Nathan Zuckerman, exchanges letters with the journalist character, Shuki Elchanan from Israel, who writes the following to Nathan about the continuing Israeli-Arab conflict, and why the U.S. should keep sending billions of dollars to Israel each year:

> What makes you a normal Jew, Nathan, is how you are riveted by Jewish abnormality. . . Nathan, this is serious business: we have enemies with whom we are continually at war, and though we're much stronger than they are, we are not invincible. These wars in which our kids' lives are at stake are filling us with a sense of death all the time. We live like a person who is being pinpricked so much that it's not our life that's in danger but our sanity. Our sanity and our sons. . . Virtually everything we have right now, we have to get from abroad. I'm thinking of those things that, if we didn't have them, the Arab countries wouldn't tolerate us for a minute (and I include plutonium). What keeps them at bay doesn't come from our resources but from somebody else's pocket; as I complained to you the other day, mostly it comes from what Carter appropriates and what his Congress wants to go along with. What we have comes out of the pocket of the fellow from Kansas—part of each of his tax dollars goes to arm Jews. And why should he pay for the Jews? The other side is always trying to undermine us, to erode this support, and their argument is getting better all the time; just a little more help from Begin in the way of stupid policy, and they can indeed foster a situation in which the reluctance to keep shelling out is going to grow until finally nobody in the U.S. feels obligated to fork over three billion a year to keep a lot of Yids in guns. In order to keep doling out the dollars, that American has to believe that the Israeli is more or less the same as himself, the same decent sort of guy after the same sort of decent things. And that is not Mordecai Lippman. (*The Counterlife* 158-160)

In the year 2016, when this dissertation is being written, daily newspaper reports show us that the conflicts mentioned in both of the above excerpts are still far from being

resolved. The Indo-Pakistani conflict Rushdie narrates is still going on (Le Miere),[1] the Arab-Israeli clash and the mutual violence depicted in Roth's work are still alive (Beaumont),[2] and the U.S. has finalized another multi-billion dollar military aid to Israel, as Roth points out they did in President Carter's time (Peter and Davis).[3] What is common in all of these seemingly unrelated events is the grammar of mutual exclusion based on various definitions of *identity*, which continues to dominate the language among nationally or religiously *imagined* communities.

Throughout the dissertation, I explore the similarities and differences among these novels in terms of their *literary* approach to the concepts of nationalism and secularism, as well as the issues of belonging. Similarly, I discuss how and to what extent *literature* questions, challenges, or endorses the theories of nationalism and secularism. I also consider if *literature* has any original contribution to make to the *theories* of nationalism, secularism, and identity. In the process, I examine how a specific use of metafiction as a literary technique helps shape the *politics* of the novel. I provide a comparative analysis of the metafictional structures of the novels, so that I can discuss each novel's specific approach toward nationalism and secularism, as well as its similarities and differences in relation to other novels and to *theory*.

Chapter one, **Nationalism and Secularism Theories** comprises two sections. The first section examines nationalism through a critical engagement with the work of

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[1] Le Miere, Jason. "India-Pakistan War Timeline: Recent Deadly Attacks Are Just the Latest Between Nuclear Neighbors." *International Business Times* 29 September 2016: N.p., Web. 26 November 2016. http://www.ibtimes.com/india-pakistan-war-timeline-recent-deadly-attacks-are-just-latest-between-nuclear-2423937

[2] Beaumont, Peter. "Israel-Palestine: Outlook Bleak as Wave of Violence Passes Six-Month Mark." *The Guardian* 31 March 2016: N.p., Web. 26 November 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/31/israel-palestine-violence-knife-attacks-west-bank-gaza.

[3] Baker, Peter and Julie Hirschfeld Davis. "U.S. Finalizes Deal to Give Israel $38 Billion in Military Aid." *The New York Times* 13 September 2016: N.p. Web. 26 November 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/world/middleeast/israel-benjamin-netanyahu-military-aid.html.

Benedict Anderson. Anderson, an influential scholar in nation-state theory, develops the idea that *nations*, *nationness,* or *nationality* are not natural or compulsory entities. Although Anderson effectively shows the constructedness and historical formation of nation-states, I find his view of national consciousness too limiting. Specifically, I argue that his concept of *unisonance,* which is described as "imagined sound . . . uniting citizens" (Anderson 145) has two significant *shortcomings*. First, he theorizes that citizens of a given nation act in concert with a common purpose or belief, an assumption that projects imaginary "totality" onto nations (Bhabha 309) and fails to account for the perspectives of minorities or individuals. Secondly, his predominantly top-to-bottom approach presupposes that nations have a strong sense of unity and firm common "sound" (hence the term unisonance). This view not only envisions a "horizonless past" (Anderson 132), but also significantly sidelines individuality, which is a focal point in the literary works of Roth, Pamuk and Rushdie.

Overall, Anderson over-emphasizes the significance of homogeneity. He uses his concept of "homogeneous-empty-time," a term borrowed from Walter Benjamin's "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" in *On the Concept of History*, to show how print and capitalism changed the formation of communities, from monarchies to nation-states. More specifically, Anderson explains how religion and history were historically intertwined under the rule of monarchs. However, as he sees it, print capitalism undermined the influence of religion, which eventually created a secular space separating the spaces of God and man, religion and time, divine ruler and subjects. The passage from non-linear (religious) time to homogeneous-empty-time, thus, primarily refers to the homogeneity of each moment. However, according to Anderson, the secular nation-state

achieves a unity in this way, and in this respect, it is not so "empty." In this section, I argue that Anderson's account of the nation-state presupposes a totality in nations, and ignores the complex structures, as well as the individual and minority perspectives. This, I assert, is also a major point that the works of Pamuk, Rushdie and Roth all harshly criticize.

I discuss Anderson's theories of unisonance and the notion of a unified national consciousness that it entails in the context of nation-state theory, explicitly juxtaposing them to the critical views of three prominent scholars: Eric Hobsbawm, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha. Methodologically, Hobsbawm agrees with Anderson that studying nations by studying national consciousness (that is, studying a nation from above) is helpful. However, Hobsbawm suggests that it is equally important to approach nations from "below," that is, at the level of the individual. The critical point in his argument is that ordinary individuals' desires, hopes, and interests are neither national nor nationalistic. Similarly, Homi Bhabha and Said underscore the necessity of analyzing nation-states and nationalism at the individual level. One reason for this, as Bhabha argues, is that nations are not something complete, as they are continuously shaped by citizens (*Location* 3). In a reciprocal process, a nation shapes its citizens, and it is equally shaped by them. Therefore, to understand a nation and nationalism, one must also look at "in-between spaces," where political authorities are incessantly questioned (*Location* 4). For Said, correspondingly, the task of an intellectual is to "show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components" (*Culture and Imperialism* 314), because identity in a nation-state is never stable or complete: in this respect, a nation is never a homogeneous entity.

In this chapter, I also show how Comparative Literature can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the nation and nationalism. More specifically, I assert that national consciousness in Anderson's sense cannot fully grasp the intricacies of human life. I argue that *citizenship*, *national consciousness*, or *unisonance* cannot account for the complexities of the human condition and that Anderson's unisonance is at least as *imaginary* as the structure of the nation-state itself.

This section contributes to the dissertation in two ways: first, the indirect debate between Anderson and his interlocutors, Hobsbawm, Bhabha and Said will provide a methodological path for my study. As Hobsbawm recommends, if nationalism should be studied from below as well as from above, Comparative Literature can provide an original perspective in the discussion of the issues of the nation-state structure by focusing on the details of human life across languages, regions and nations (*Death of a Discipline* 15-16).[4] The second contribution of this section will be through Edward Said's *contrapuntal reading,* which presupposes that there is a shift in the nation-state from "the settled, established, and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentered, and exilic energies..." (*Culture and Imperialism* 332). Comparative literature, then, as a discipline, and *contrapuntal reading* as a reading method, must both "extend our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded" (Ibid 67). In other words, contrapuntal reading requires reading not only what is in a (literary) work, but equally importantly, what is *excluded* from it. In this section, I provide the theoretical and methodological justification for my comparative literary approach: nation-states cannot

[4] Hobsbawm defines the concept of studying nations from below as "the nation as seen not by governments and the spokesmen and activists of nationalist (or non-nationalist) movements, but by the ordinary persons who are the objects of their action and propaganda" and according to Hobsbawm, studying nations from below is extremely difficult (11). It is at this point, I argue, that the discipline of Comparative Literature and my dissertation will contribute to the theory of the nation-state.

be understood solely by studying the grand-narratives, but should also be studied at an individual-human level, which is one of the tasks of Comparative Literature. This is also what Gayatri Spivak calls "permanent *from-below interruption* of a Comparative Literature to come" (*Death of a Discipline* 16).[5]

It is impossible to fully comprehend the structure of the nation-state, without having a thorough grasp of secularism. In the first part of this first chapter, I discuss the strong connection between the formation of nation-states and the secularization process, and the theories of Benedict Anderson. In the second section of the chapter, "Secularism and the Nation-State," I discuss two rival approaches in the scholarship of secularism through the context of the Talal Asad-José Casanova debate. This debate can be summarized as follows: secularism is generally perceived as a key trait of modernity that is intrinsic to European history and values. Not all religions are considered as "modern" in this view. Clearly influenced by the idea of Enlightenment, José Casanova is a prominent representative of this perspective, which defines secularism as a "knowledge regime" and he argues that European secularism is unique thanks to its triumph over religion ("Secularization Revisited: Reply to Asad" 17). In this approach, religions are acceptable and tolerable as long as they are *modern*, and hence, some religions (Christianity) are better than others (Islam), although all religions are subject to *modernity* (Ibid 29).

Talal Asad's view of secularism is different: although he agrees with Casanova that secularism is an epistemic regime, he finds violence in secularism, particularly in liberalism's secular myth (*Formations of the Secular* 26, 56) and its *universalizing reason*. In my discussion of Rushdie's, Roth's and Pamuk's views of secularism in the

[5] Emphasis mine.

following chapters, I argue that Casanova's interpretation of secularism can be traced in Salman Rushdie's works. In addition, I maintain that the secularist perspective of Casanova is harshly criticized in Pamuk's and Roth's fictions, whereas Rushdie's work endorses it. By analyzing the Casanova-Asad debate, I will also show the differences between strictly secularist perspectives (Casanova) on the one hand, and a more critical as well as non-Euro-centered interpretation of secularism (Asad) that rejects the myth of modern progress and liberalism, on the other.

The discussion between Casanova and Asad can be read in relation to recent academic debates on secularism. Like Asad, Nelson Maldonado-Torres and Gil Anidjar evaluate secularism in the colonial context. In "Secularism and Religion in the Modern/Colonial World-System: From Secular Postcoloniality To Postsecular Transmodernity," Maldonado-Torres explains how secularism came to be the religion of the modern world; how the public sphere has been restricted by the allegations that religious life is irrational (360); and how the imperial aspect of secularism operates on the concepts of civility and secularity (368-369). In "Secularism," Gil Anidjar draws the reader's attention to the historical origins of secularism —Western Christianity. Based on his harsh critique of Said's *Orientalism*, Anidjar formulates the evolution of secularism as *Orientalism is Secularism* (56) and *Secularism is Christianity* (62-63). Anidjar's reading of secularism is similar to Asad's theory in two ways. First, both Anidjar and Asad underline the significance of studying secularism *genealogically*. And second, by emphasizing its connection with Christianity, Anidjar and Asad claim that secularism has become an episteme, and hence, this knowledge regime is either violent or strictly exclusionary. Another theorist of modernity and secularism, Jürgen Habermas, questions

secularism by noting that the secular and the religious have to co-exist and interact with the religious. Habermas believes that neither party can cut off ties with the other, and emphasizes that religion is here to stay; therefore, *the political* should keep its association with religion in a "complementary relation" (27). Based on these critical and contrasting views of secularism, I argue that Pamuk's and Roth's fictions are critical of the Euro-centered, pro-Enlightenment and modernity-based secularism that is favored by Rushdie, and offer alternative and critical interpretations of secularism as theorized by Asad, Maldonado-Torres and Anidjar. Unlike Rushdie, Pamuk and Roth point to interpretations of secularism that are highly critical of the authoritarian secularist perspectives developed by Casanova. In subsequent chapters, I will show how metafiction becomes a literary tool that allows for the emergence of a new view of secularism, in which the genre of the novel questions all sorts of orthodoxies regarding identity and belonging.

This second section of the first chapter is directly connected to the following chapters where I discuss the works of Rushdie, Pamuk, and Roth, particularly in the context of religion, religious characters, and a literary work's approach to religiosity within the nation-state. In this respect, this section is of vital importance for the dissertation, as it contextualizes clashing views of secularism in theory, and this is where Comparative Literature can make an original contribution to the theory of secularism. Furthermore, I argue that Roth's and Pamuk's (meta)fictions both reject dichotomic perspectives of secularism, as well as the hierarchical relation expressed in the binary oppositions in Casanova's sense (*rationality* over *religiosity, modernity* over *backwardness* etc.). I contend that the subjects of my dissertation show that the human condition is too complicated to be categorized and explained away with these categories.

In chapter two, **Landscapes of Belonging: Roth's Metafiction, Jewish Identity, and the Secular Nation-State**, I argue that Roth's fiction calls the reader's attention to the implications of living in a language-based universe, and hence, to the constructedness of meta-narratives encompassing all forms of belonging, including the nation-state, religion and secularism. For Roth, textuality has two meanings. The first is the textuality of the act of writing. For example, through the witty use of metafiction, *The Counterlife* repeatedly undermines its own plot construction by subverting the narrative of each previous chapter of the book. In so doing, Roth's work underscores the second sort of textuality: the textuality of all identities and the endless alternative ways of existing. Roth, as I argue in this chapter, displays the near-impossibility of defining Jewishness, and therefore, Roth's novel resists the exclusivist grammar of nationally or religiously imagined communities. *The Counterlife* shows that there are several potential ways of being a Jew, and Roth exemplifies this through literature, the act of writing, and through fiction, via the manuscript and his fictional writer character/protagonist, Nathan Zuckerman.

Through such self-reflexive fiction, Roth successfully draws attention to the fictionality and constructedness of all forms of identities. It is at this very point that Roth's fiction connects to the literary works of Pamuk and Rushdie in terms of its interrogative scope that is suspicious of almost all sorts of belonging. Roth's novel also connects to the nation-state theory of Anderson (nation-state as *imagined entity)* as well as to that of Étienne Balibar, who claims that "only imaginary communities are real" ("The Nation Form" 346). According to Balibar, a group of people can become a nation, only "through a network of apparatuses and daily practices," and he adds that "the

individual is instituted as *homo nationalis* from cradle to grave, at the same time as he/she is instituted as homo economicus, politicos, religiosus" (346). For Balibar, all societies with functioning institutions are *imaginary* and they, by default, have *collective narratives*. Roth's fiction shows readers this original state of being imaginary: all these collective narratives are what constitute identities, and it becomes literature's task to remind readers that national, religious or any other forms of belonging are collective narratives. I argue that Roth underscores the textuality of the metanarratives by subverting conventions of the novel genre, eventually urging readers to re-consider the concept of belonging, as all forms of belonging in Roth's fiction become highly suspect concepts.

I assert that Philip Roth's fiction counters the so-called *immemorial past* in the nation-state. The concept of an immemorial past is a cornerstone of any given nation-state. As Bhabha states, the political dimensions in nation-states "always loom out of an immemorial past and ... glide into a limitless future" (*Location* 1). Similarly, Balibar writes that the nation-state "is based on the projection of individual existence into the weft of a collective narrative, on the recognition of a common name and on traditions lived as the trace of an immemorial past (even when they have been created and inculcated in the recent past)" ("The Nation Form" 346). These collective narratives coming from the immemorial past create the foundation of the nation. According to Anderson, it is *printed literature* that created this particular form of fraternity (*Imagined Communities* 18, 32, 33-36). I maintain that Philip Roth reverses this process: here, literature is no longer a tool that unites people over an identity based on an immemorial past. Instead, literature exposes the fictionality of these entities. In this respect, the past is

no longer an *immemorial past* upon which the nation-state or any ethnic or religious identity can be based. The fictionality of identities and literature's function in creating and questioning these narratives are some of the focal points of this dissertation, and Roth's work contributes to my study in this respect.

In chapter three, **Rushdie, Secularist Nationalism, and the Limits of Metafiction**, I assert that Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* selectively caricatures some religious characters to the point of making them ridiculous, while embracing others. That is to say, Rushdie exaggerates the flaws of Muslim characters to comic effect, while his fiction attributes a *relatively* significant role to the myths of India in the creation of national identity. On this basis, I identify a selective secularism in Rushdie's writing that is directly shaped by his interpretation of nationalism in India, no matter how fragmentary Rushdie's version of Indian national identity is. Rushdie's secularism, simply put, employs Hindu myths as one of several unifying elements in the construction of fragmentary Indian national identity, while Muslim characters barely go beyond the limits of the two-dimensional. Flat characters lacking complexity, they do not change or develop. In this regard, I assert that Rushdie's fiction has the Eurocentric secularist stance described by Asad, Maldonado-Torres, and Anidjar.

Several studies mentioned below state that the continuous plot twists and self-reflexive nature of Rushdie's fiction make it extremely hard to find flat, unchanging entities or stereotypical characters in his works. I aim to question the limits of his fiction in that respect. In *Making Subjects: Literature and the Emergence of National Identity*, Allen Carey-Webb writes that Rushdie successfully writes the "complexity and heterogeneity of the national identity," but that he equally "fails to investigate the

multiple social and institutional practices that produce/narrate this heterogeneity" (182). I find Carey-Webb's question relevant: "if a national agency is oppressive, what other agencies—what other forms of identity—are available?" (Ibid). My study builds on Carey-Webb's work in order to question secularism in Rushdie's fiction as well as the extent to which it is shaped by Rushdie's nationalism. Scholars like Justin Neuman and Bruce Robbins also inspire the critical perspective of this chapter, particularly with regards to problematizing the use of hybridity in Rushdie's fiction. Neuman, for instance, is critical of the politics of Rushdie's novel on the basis that, in his work, an "empowered narrator summoning cultural materials from diverse traditions replicates the characteristically imperial failings of a noticeably Euro-centric ideal of cosmopolitan universality" (Neuman 34).

Similar to Neuman's, my reading of Rushdie is critical of the politics of the novel, and the originality of my argument is that it juxtaposes Rushdie's celebrated and clever use of metafiction with his *secularist nationalism* perspective, in general, and his depiction of Muslim characters, in particular. Namely, depicting Mahound as a businessman in *The Satanic Verses*[6] or stereotyping several Muslim characters in *Midnight's Children* are some indicators of Rushdie's secularist perspective. The depiction of Shaheed Dar is one noteworthy example: Shaheed, meaning martyr in Arabic, is a flat character narrated by Rushdie. He is a son of a stereotypically poor Muslim family who continuously dreams about martyrdom. After half of his body is destroyed in an explosion in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War, he still wants to crawl up to the

[6] Methodologically, Rushdie's style never allows any reductionism of identities of characters, particularly in his *Midnight's Children*. However, the same Rushdie has a very different and reductionist attitude in *The Satanic Verses* and in his depiction of Mahound, particularly when he calls him "businessman." I call them *Muslim flat characters*.

minaret (tower in a mosque), and the scene Rushdie depicts is meant to create a contrast and funny effect. As Shaheed crawls up to the minaret, a mechanized muezzin reads the prayer, and ants eat him. In other words, there is no depth in the Muslim characters, nor do they have the life-like complicatedness of several other characters in Rushdie's novels. This, I argue, cannot be separated from Rushdie's understanding of secularism and nationalism, and this equally limits Rushdie's alleged hybridity.

As one of the three primary subjects in my dissertation, Rushdie's novel is important in three ways. First, as stated above, I argue that it provides an example of Casanova's secularist perspective. Second, in contrast with the other two primary writers, Rushdie's fiction is not equally critical of secularism. Third, I argue that even though Rushdie's fiction ingeniously undermines the possibility of monolithic views of nationalism, it still consciously leaves Muslim characters out of the intricate structure of India. As these characters are caricatured, they ultimately become *others* in the sense that Anderson describes.[7] This chapter connects to the final chapter and Rancière's and Spivak's ideas on literature's function in the construction of reality in the nation-state and the ideal of the *equality of all subjects in literature*.

In chapter four, **Pamuk, Irony, and the Shortcomings of Dichotomies**, I discuss Pamuk's *Benim Adım Kırmızı* (*My Name is Red* 1998). Orhan Pamuk is a prolific and controversial author whose novels delve into the issues of belonging, identity, nationalism, and religion in the overall agenda of Turkish modernity. Like Rushdie and Roth, Pamuk employs irony and metafiction as his principal literary devices. A highly popular author, Pamuk's works are misinterpreted in equal measure to his fame: while

[7] And this is why Said's contrapuntal reading is relevant to my dissertation, as it is one of the tasks of Comparative Literature to study what is included, as well as what is excluded.

Pamuk writes on the narratives of East-West, fundamentalism-secularism or unity-individual, his works undermine these dichotomies continuously, rather than endorsing them. I argue that, like Roth, Pamuk blurs the boundaries between fiction and fact and the aforementioned dualities through his self-reflexive and highly ironic plot construction. More particularly, Pamuk's work questions how fiction/imagination seeps into reality (Anderson 36) and how the reality or *the human condition* can never be explained away or compartmentalized through identity categories.

The dichotomies of *secular and religious*, *traditional and progressive* are other central themes in Pamuk's novel. However, I argue that, similar to the dichotomies mentioned above, these are not separate and conflicting entities in his novel, nor can they be clearly and easily defined. This chapter will show how Pamuk's work undermines the hierarchical and conflicting relationship between dichotomies, and how interpreting art and life according to mutually exclusive identity categories can drag individuals into the grammar of mutual denunciation.

I also explore the fictionality of metanarratives and the fragility of identity categories in the context of Turkish modernity. One important theme in Pamuk's novel is the dualistic *either/or worldview* in Turkish modernity: according to Pamuk, human life is too complex to be categorized through divisive and exclusionary perspectives. I argue that Pamuk's novel shreds all dichotomies (including *religious-secular*) and rigid structures related to identity in the national context. Critical of Turkish modernity, Pamuk's fiction is critical of Turkey's unique and problematic version of the nation-state as well as its secularist agenda in Casanova's sense. With this chapter, firstly I aim to show the limits of the nation-state, secularism and identity categories in the specific

context of Turkish modernity. Secondly, this chapter shows that *story-telling* and *literature* make and break nations in the sense of Bhabha, Balibar and Hobsbawm, particularly in the context that each nation is a *narrative performance* that not only shapes its citizens, but one that is equally shaped by its people (Bhabha 297). In this respect, metafiction is one major theme that connects this chapter to the central argument of the dissertation, as Pamuk's reflexivity enables readers to comprehend the textuality of their identities. Hence, *literature*, I maintain, equips readers with the ability to read the world as a text.

The concluding chapter will bring together all previous chapters. The main questions that this chapter aims to answer are as follows: First, what does *literature* have to say about the theories of nationalism and secularism? That is to say, what specific contribution does *literature* make to the theories of nationalism, secularism, belonging, and identity discussed in the first chapter? Second, *how* does *literature* make this contribution? What literary devices and techniques and what sorts of plot constructions do Pamuk, Rushdie and Roth employ to question the nation-state, secularism, and identity?

The common ground encompassing my discussion of the works of all three writers is their inventive use of metafiction: Pamuk's, for instance, endorses a multiplicity of voices, but also shows the existence of a multitude of perspectives in an *allegedly* religious and conservative community. Thus, the hierarchy of the narratives (of national, religious, regional, and professional identities) is recurrently undermined by a deliberately blurring of the borders between fiction and reality, as well as through the use of irony and reflexivity. This is exactly what Hobsbawm means when he argues that

nations should be studied from below: by focusing on the *minute details* and exploring all the intricacies of each character from different points of view, Pamuk does manage to portray the conflicts of the modern secular nation-state, exactly in the sense of Hobsbawm. I argue that these "small details" of everyday life are explored by literary works: the depiction of them allows for and forms the basis of Bhabha's *double time*, Said's *contamination*, Hobsbawm's *studying [the nation] from below*, which all contribute to Spivak's description of one of the tasks of Comparative Literature: "permanent from-below interruption" (*Death of a Discipline* 16).

One question still remains: in the critical analysis of all forms of belonging, what is the function of the *novel* as a genre, *literature* as a medium that connects writers with readers, and *Comparative Literature* as a discipline that creates a link between theory and literary works? This is the third question this chapter aims to answer. All three writers, Roth, Pamuk, and Roth place *writing* and *literature* at the very center of their critique of identities. In this respect, I argue that their novels are in close dialogue with each other, even though each author writes about different communities and different forms of belonging. All in all, Roth, Pamuk and Rushdie remind their readers of the language-based structure of the world, in which, individuality, community, history and identity are all entities similar to fiction.

In discussing the constructedness of identities and the role of Comparative Literature in this context, I benefit from the views of several prominent theorists, including Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said and Jacques Rancière, to name a few. Inspired by Spivak, my study is influenced by the hypothesis that *literary imagination* can impact

nationalism and specifically, help us to go beyond the transcendentalism of nationalism.[8] According to Spivak, the decentralization of nationalism is "the task of training the singular imagination, always in the interest of taking the 'nation' out of nation-state" (51). This, writes Spivak, could be achieved by continuously questioning the values of the nation-states, which is what Roth, Rushdie and Pamuk perform at a literary level. Spivak underscores the significance of the humanities in general and the discipline of Comparative Literature in particular: "It is this effortful task, of keeping the civic structure of the slate clear of nationalism and patriotism . . . rather than going the extra-state or nongovernment route alone, that the new comparative literature, with its alliances with the social sciences, can work at ceaselessly" (55). Methodologically, this is how my study is inspired by the transnational vision of Spivak. If nationalism is a product of collective imagination (Spivak 40), Comparative Literature is an effective means of questioning identities by studying literary texts in connection with theory. Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk, I argue, all partake in this specific comparative literary formation that explores not only the limits of the identity categories imposed by the nation-state structure, but also the alternative ways of *being* beyond these limits.[9]

A similar conception of nationalism and the function of Comparative Literature developed by Edward Said is *voyage-in*. This Saidian concept, which has been influential in my study, assumes that no matter how dominant or repressive a social system or

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[8] In *Nationalism and Imagination*, Spivak explains her concept of *decentralization of transcendentalism of nationalism* as follows: "When I say the literary imagination de-transcendentalizes, when you think of something as literature, you don't believe in it, and yet you're moved" (51). It is the same fictitious fiber and sentiments aroused by nationalism, according to Spivak, that moves individuals. Elsewhere, Spivak defines de-transcendentalization as "a deeply positive thing--to rid the mind of the narrowness of believing in one thing and not in other things" (72).

[9] A good example of this literary challenge can be seen in the bold question of Nathan Zuckerman, the protagonist of Roth's *The Counterlife*: in chapter five, he asks what it means to be "[a] Jew without Jews, without Judaism, without Zionism, without Jewishness, without a temple or an army or even a pistol, a Jew clearly without a home, just the object itself, like a glass or an apple" (*The Counterlife* 324).

ideology is, a part of *social experience* will always avoid repression and control (*Culture and Imperialism* 240). Said maintains that "[f]rom these parts very frequently comes opposition, both self-conscious and dialectical" (*Culture and Imperialism* 240).[10] This quotation by Said relates to my reading of Rushdie, Pamuk and Roth, as my primary writers do *voyage-in* to the *centers* through the eyes of several characters. This plurality of perspectives enables Rushdie, Pamuk and Roth to cast doubt on the legitimacy and rightfulness of any dominant identity. Said's *voyage-in* is in a very close dialogue with Bhabha's *double writing,* in which any minority discourse emerges (*Nation and Narration* 305), and with Hobsbawm's *writing the nation from below*. In addition to Spivak's, Bhabha's and Said's views on nationalism and writing, I find Jacques Rancière's ideas on the *politics of literature* particularly fitting: Rancière argues that the term *politics of literature* implies that *literature*, as an "autonomous" entity (5) "intervenes as literature" (4). According to Rancière, the democracy of literature creates a new *regime* which "anyone can grab hold of, either to appropriate the life led by the heroes or heroines of novels for themselves, or to turn themselves into writers, or to insert themselves into the discussion of common affairs" (13). By removing the boundaries between real life and fiction, literature allows "the mute witnesses of common history to speak" (15), ensures the "equality of all subjects," and contributes to the "availability of all expressions" (21). In this respect, I maintain that the fictions of Roth, Rushdie, and

[10] I am well-aware that Said uses the concept of *voyage-in* primarily in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Even though not all of the three primary authors are writing in postcolonial contexts, I argue that Said's term is still relevant to my study: the idea of Third World thinkers writing about the metropolitan First World, the voyage-in, is a concept that dismantles a hierarchical relationship between the center and the periphery. The self-reflexive fictions of Rushdie, Pamuk, and Roth have the very same perspective: repeatedly, their complex plot constructions, their use of metafiction as a literary technique shake the foundations of everything we/readers know to be right about their respective communities. More specifically, by urging readers to view the alternative realities, Pamuk, Roth, and Rushdie take readers to the center through the eyes of those that reside at the periphery.

Pamuk all constitute a pluralist, inquisitive and critical literary formation that investigates the limits of identity categories in the context of the nation-state and secularism across languages, cultures, and literatures.

Chapter I Nationalism and Secularism Theories

1. The Secular Imagination and Unisonance in Nationalism and the Nation-State

I. Introduction

Benedict Anderson, one of the most influential critics of the nation-state theory, states that nations "have"[11] a unified national narrative, which he defines as *unisonance.* He describes unisonance as "the echoed physical realization of the imagined community" which "connects us all" and feels "selfless" (*Imagined Communities* 145). In this regard, unisonance is one way of "imagining . . . the national body" (Redfield 174). I argue that this theory is inadequate and that Anderson's interlocutors and critics of nationalism, including Edward Said and Eric Hobsbawm, more completely capture the complex structure of the nation-state. Correspondingly, I maintain, the late 20th-century literary works of Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie and Orhan Pamuk show that identities in nation-states cannot be reduced to a sum of *collective national narratives*.

This discussion informs the basis of the following chapters: the starting point of this section is an argument strongly supported by Orhan Pamuk, Salman Rushdie and Philip Roth: that nations are *not* uniform or univocal entities. The three writers share a transnational approach, although they have different scopes and perspectives regarding nationalism and secularism. This section will not only show how nation-states are multi-vocal entities that continuously question all aspects of the nation-state and nationalism, but will also form the basis for the following chapters.

Throughout this dissertation, I will challenge Anderson's core argument that there is a *modern simultaneity* and *unisonance* expressed in the form of the novel, which

[11] Nations may all aspire to "have" *unisonance*, but no nation attains it. *Unisonance* is never achieved, it is always a failed performative.

eventually contributes to establishing and maintaining the nation-state. Anderson sees a close relationship between print capitalism (specifically, the novel and the newspaper) and the nation-state formation. Based on this collective narrative enhanced through novels, newspapers and similar media, Anderson finds a spirit of *solidarity* and a "sociological landscape of a fixity" (*Imagined Communities* 30), which dismisses the perspectives of minorities in the nation-state.

As one of the leading theorists of nationalism and the nation-state, Anderson bases his theory on a particular understanding of time: homogeneous-empty-time. This shift from messianic time to homogeneous-empty-time is at the core of several social and political shifts. In this regard, I will first elucidate how Anderson understands and explains the nation-state structure via *dualities.* Secondly, I will explain how homogeneous-empty-time comes to construct and define the nation-state as well as the secular structure associated with it. Lastly, I will point out the shortcomings of Anderson's nation-state and novel/print theory in dialogue with Anderson's interlocutors, namely, Eric Hobsbawm and Edward Said.

II. Anderson's Dualities

Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory is based on several dualities, in which the second terms of the dualities replace the first in one way or another. The foremost of these dichotomies per Anderson's are *dynasty vs. nation-state*, *religious vs. secular, Latin vs. vernacular*, s*acred scriptures vs. newspapers and novels, divine law vs. secular source of power, pre-modern vs. modern* and lastly, the central duality of *messianic time*

vs. homogeneous-empty-time.[12] I contend that while dualism is helpful in understanding the socio-political shift that comes with the nation-state, it also creates some blind spots, particularly regarding the concept of *unisonance* and the function of the novel within the nation-state.

Anderson finds a clear opposition between dynasties and the nation-state just as George W. White finds these two political structures in direct rivalry and conflict. White writes that "it was antithetical to the nation-state ideal for these nation-states to have dynasties" (194). However, Anderson goes more in depth to explain the shift from dynasties to nation-states as two opposing systems, and he writes that "in fundamental ways serious monarchy lies transverse to all modern conceptions of political life" (*Imagined Communities* 19). A key difference between the two, according to Anderson, is that in the rule of dynasties, all life is organized around centres, and the source of legitimacy is divinity, whereas the modern nation-state derives its legitimacy from populations. At this point, Anderson's way of interpreting the nation-state becomes more visible and clear, particularly when he alleges that "in the modern conception, state sovereignty is *fully*, *flatly* and *evenly* operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory" (*Imagined Communities* 19).[13] It is true that there is a major difference between the sources of legitimacy in dynasties vs. nation-states, but I maintain that Anderson's theory overstresses the concept of sovereignty, almost to the point that the sovereign state possesses the sovereign-power over its citizens *fully*, *flatly*, and

[12] With respect to the *pre-modern* vs. *modern* dichotomy, Anderson does not advocate for a simple replacement process in which the modern replaces the pre-modern. Instead, Anderson shows that the modern contains some ancient and pre-modern elements in the nation-state, one of them being that nations are constructed as ancient forms (*Imagined Communities* 31). I will discuss this further in the later sections of this chapter.

[13] Emphasis mine.

evenly. He does not fully consider the critical perspectives of minorities in the nation-state, which I will discuss through the works of Roth, Pamuk, and Rushdie in the following chapters. As the next sections will show, this is one of the main controversial points that divide Anderson from Said and Hobsbawm.

Religious vs. secular is another critical dichotomy in Anderson's thought, a duality strictly connected to the dichotomy of *dynasty vs. nation-state*, as well as that of *pre-modern vs. modern*. According to Anderson, *divine law and secular sovereign power* came to clash, because the concepts of the nation-state and nationalism were "born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm" (*Imagined Communities* 7). Thus, the demand of young nations to be free of all "ontological claims and territorial stretch" (*Imagined Communities* 7) contributed to the appearance of *sovereign* nation-states. As Anderson clearly writes, this clash and the demand of nation-states to rule without any religious/divine interference created a new socio-political order, and hence, "the gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state" (*Imagined Communities* 7).

Historically and politically, Anderson's perspective on the duality of *religious vs. secular* may become clearer if we consider the complexity of his views on secularism. Historically, Anderson brings the two critical concepts together when he writes that it is eighteenth-century Western Europe that "marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought" (*Imagined Communities* 11). Yet, Anderson's dualities of *religion vs. sovereign state*, or *divine rule vs. secularism* are much more intricate than an "either/or" attitude, because he believes that the gradual replacement of religion resulted in the hopelessness produced by the "disintegration of

paradise" or the "absurdity of salvation," [14] and the only possible alternative to this despair, which could turn "fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning" was *a secular transformation* embodied in the structure of the "idea of the nation" (11).[15]

As Ernesto Laclau states in his reading of Anderson, nationalism for Anderson is not a simple ideology, but rather fills a critical gap in human history. Laclau writes, "with the decline of religion at the beginning of modern times, there was the need for some kind of existential belonging that occupied the void that religion had left" (22). What Laclau implies here is actually Anderson's formula that explains the relationship between religion and the nation-state, namely that it is nationalism and the nation-state that keep people together and give them a sense of community, as well as a meaning for their co-existence. Anderson's thesis assumes that nationalism replaces the function of "unselfconscious coherence" (*Imagined Communities* 15) provided by religion in pre-modern societies.

Anderson's nation-state theory is more complex than an "either/or" attitude, as can be seen in his approach to the duality of *religious imagination vs. national imagination*. As Jonathan Culler indicates, Anderson successfully shows the paradoxical structure of the nation-state: "nations are objectively recent but subjectively antique, even eternal; nations may be messianic, but no nation's citizens imagine that everyone should eventually join their nation" (30).[16] Specifically, nationalism in Anderson's theory is a break-away from religion, at least in terms of the source of legitimacy as explained above, but nothing much changes in terms of the sense of belonging. In other words, the

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[14] The receding of religion is a much debated subject both in theory and in literature. For a detailed discussion of religion in the nation-state, see Chapter 1- Section 2, and the respective chapters on Roth, Rushdie and Pamuk.

[15] Emphasis mine.

[16] See the next section on Messianic time and nationalism.

content, national belonging, replaces religious identity, but the form, *self-recognition* of an identity *religiously*, remains the same.

What does it mean to imagine *religiously?* How and why are different nationalisms across the world "objectively recent but subjectively antique?" (Culler 30). This expression, *imagining religiously* (or religious imagination, in Anderson's terminology), does not mean that nation-states somehow took over the social functions of religions. Rather, *imagining religiously* points to the curious structure of the nation-state and its *formal resemblance* to religion. Perhaps one of the most striking ideas put forth by Anderson in this respect, as explained by Culler, is the specific way nations evolve from *pre-modern* to *modern*: through "strange processes by which national communities are constructed as *ancient despite their modernity*, and are thus imagined and sustained in a way that forges links with both the dead and the yet unborn" (31).[17] This sort of modern imagination with pre-modern characteristics, according to Anderson, can partly explain why so many people are ready to fight and die for their country, a paradox that can be observed in several Unknown Soldier tombs and sculptures across various nation-states. These tombs evoke "ceremonial reverence," are "deliberately empty,"[18] they have "no true precedents in earlier times," they "are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls,"[19] but are "nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national imaginings*"[20] (*Imagined Communities* 9). Anderson thus connects the pre-modern to the modern, the religious imagination to the national imagination, religious legitimacy to secular sovereignty,

[17] Emphasis mine.
[18] That is, the tombs are anonymous. This "emptiness" or "anonymity" is connected to Anderson's "homogeneous-empty-time" and the "selfless" but "collective" narrative he sees in the spirit of the nation-state.
[19] Mortality vs. immortality is another dichotomy and paradox that Anderson observes in nation-states (*Imagined Communities* 9). It formally connects the pre-modern with modern as well as divine/religious rule with the sovereign nation-state.
[20] Emphasis is Anderson's.

messianic time to homogeneous time, and asks the common question that all nation-states indirectly suggest through Unknown Soldier tombs and sculptures: "What else could they be *but*[21] Germans, Americans, Argentineans...?"[22] Anderson's humorous tone successfully attracts reader's attention to the constructedness of all nationalisms, as well as to their relationship with social, cultural and historical predecessors.

The example of tombs of the Unknown Soldier also displays both the "limited" and "imagined" characteristics of nation-states. From a nation's "adversaries" to its "prophetic dreams," or through censuses, maps and museums, all aspects of a nation and its political space are well-imagined structures (*Imagined Communities* xiv). By imagining themselves antique, nations thus manage to connect people who have never met before through a kinship (6), but simultaneously build an antagonism towards other nation-states by this specific sort of identity politics based on both kinship and inherent hostility. Pivotal to this is Anderson's theory that underscores how nationalist imaginings have "a strong affinity with religious imaginings" (*Imagined Communities* 6). On the imagined and limited structure of the nation-state, Anderson writes the following frequently quoted passage:

> The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet (*Imagined Communities* 7).[23]

Michael Walzer defines this as "nationalism's acceptance of limits" (28), but what Anderson argues is much deeper than an *acceptance of limits.* As I will argue in the next

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[21] Emphasis is Anderson's.
[22] See the next section on the difference between and the significance of these two concepts.
[23] Emphasis is Anderson's.

section, this paradoxical duality, *a kinship based on exclusion,* is the main theoretical source of Anderson's *unisonance*. The following chapters of the dissertation will question this concept from the perspective of literature*,* which is the cornerstone of this kinship. First, however, I will address a main duality in Anderson's nation-state theory: messianic time vs. homogeneous-empty-time, which explains the gradual transformation from pre-modern to modern, religious to secular, divine legitimacy to national sovereignty, as well as the role of the novel in this process.

III. The Novel and Time: Messianic Time vs. Homogeneous-Empty-Time

A central concept in Anderson's nation-state theory, the understanding of time, is directly linked to several critical phenomena that help create nationalism and the nation-state, including the decline of sacred communities, the replacement of sacred scripts, and the gradual pervasive use of print media such as newspapers and novels. These are all significant and history-changing events or concepts according to Anderson, because they not only make it possible to conceive of the nation (*Imagined Communities* 22), but they also make the modern nation-state a more "secular" one (*Imagined Communities* 11, 24, 35, 37, 44, 169, 205). In light of these developments, Anderson defines nationalism as "the expression of a radically changed form of consciousness" (*Imagined Communities* xiv).

What makes this sharp transformation from pre-modern to modern, from divine legitimacy to sovereign nation-state, is one central dichotomy in Anderson's thought-process: the duality of *messianic time* vs. *homogeneous-empty-time*. This dichotomy is particularly important, because it is the very phenomenon that helps establish the core of the nation-state. Namely, this is how, according to Anderson, a "sociological fixity"

(*Imagined Communities 3*0) and *unisonance* (*Imagined Communities* 145) form nationalism, and are simultaneously formed by it. In this section, I first discuss Anderson's dualistic thinking in terms of his messianic time and homogeneous-empty-time debate. In the following chapters, I challenge the alleged *sociological fixity* and the idea of *unisonance* through the comparative literary discussion of the novels of Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie and Orhan Pamuk.

Benedict Anderson borrows the concepts of messianic time and homogeneous-empty-time from Walter Benjamin (*Imagined Communities* 24). Both terms point to a specific sort of consciousness (*Imagined Communities* 23). The former, messianic time, specifies a society and norms in which the past, present and future are imagined in a connected fashion. Erich Auerbach defines messianic time by describing the connection that is "established between two events which are linked neither temporally or causally — a connection which it is impossible to establish by reason in the horizontal dimension" (qtd. in *Imagined Communities* 24; *Mimesis* 64). Two events, such as the sacrifice of Isaac and the sacrifice of Christ, are connected in such a simultaneous way that the former "promises" the latter, whereas the latter "fulfills" the former (*Imagined Communities* 24). Then, simultaneity, a critical term in both Benjamin and Anderson, appears in modern times as a concept that is "wholly alien to our own" [time]. Messianic time, in Anderson's words, is "a simultaneity of past, present and future in an instantaneous past" (*Imagined Communities* 24).

In Anderson's dualistic perspective and nation-state theory, another dichotomy is that of *simultaneity* vs. *meanwhile.* In direct opposition to the *simultaneity* of messianic time, the *meanwhile* is not and "cannot be of real significance," according to Anderson

(*Imagined Communities* 24). At this point, Anderson underscores two ultimately important points that are critical for this study: specifically, there are two kinds of simultaneities. The first simultaneity belongs in religiously imagined communities and is marked by the presence of messianic time. The second, however, is one that is usually ignored by Anderson's critics, which is a "*simultaneity* of our own" and this sort of simultaneity, according to Anderson, "is certainly connected . . . with the secular sciences" (*Imagined Communities* 24). [24] While, on the one hand, there is a pre-modern and medieval sort of simultaneity, on the other hand, there is a modern simultaneity that is a constitutive element of the sovereign nation-state; this second form of simultaneity is directly a part of *the secular*.

If simultaneity of the medieval type is pre-modern and reflects a rather religiously imagined community, the opposite for Anderson is homogeneous-empty-time and the modern national imagination. The latter (homogeneous-empty-time) "takes [the] place" of the former, that is, the simultaneity of the messianic time in the medieval sense (24). The concept of homogeneous-empty-time, then, is "transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, measured by clock and calendar" (24). Benedict Anderson has defined this as total "emptiness," but I find Dirk

[24] The following is Anderson's passage in question, where he explains the simultaneity of our age, its secularity, as well as its significance to the nation-state and the modern: "Our own conception of simultaneity has been a long time in the making, and its emergence is certainly connected, in ways that have yet to be well studied, with the development of the secular sciences. But it is a conception of such fundamental importance that, without taking it fully into account, we will find it difficult to probe the obscure genesis of nationalism. What has come to take the place of the mediaeval conception of simultaneity-along-time is, to borrow again from Benjamin, an idea of 'homogeneous, empty time,' in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (*Imagined Communities* 24). Anderson argues that "every essential modern conception is based on a conception of meanwhile" (*Imagined Communities* 24).

Wiemann's reading to be more accurate. [25] According to Wiemann, homogeneous-empty-time "facilitates the very synchronicity that is indispensable for the act of imagining the political community of the nation. . . [and it] forms a crucial structural precondition for the modern nation to emerge as a coherent entity" (111). In other words, if the past, present and future are bound by religious/divine values in messianic time, this bond must be dissolved, so that *another coherent entity*, that is, the nation-state, can be imagined through homogeneous-empty-time.[26] In this respect, this is the very reason Anderson rightly argues that modern nation-states imagine themselves as "antique" (*Imagined Communities* xiv, 5, 44, 68, 174-175, 179, 193; Culler 31).

Even though Anderson thoroughly describes the transformation from *religiously imagined* to *nationally imagined* communities via some cultural products, I maintain that his emphasis on coherence and unity of/in the nation-state is over-stressed and misleading. We can observe this misdirected perspective in his approach to novels and newspapers. One of his principal arguments is that the novel and the nation are quite connected in many ways: it is the novel and newspaper in 18th-century Europe that *enabled* the imagination of the nation-state (*Imagined Communities* 24-25) and the nation-state itself. In this context, the novel becomes a "device for the representation of homogeneous-empty-time" and "the meanwhile" (*Imagined Communities* 25, 194, 204). In this regard, both are fictional (26).

It becomes clear that Anderson's main argument is that the novel and the nation are very similar and, thus, connected to each other. At a theoretical level, this assumption

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[25] Anderson, Benedict. "Peculiar, Bracing Cosmopolitanisms among the Colonized in the Twilight of Empire." Heyman Center for the Humanities, 1 October 2008. Columbia University, New York. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uXC-pVN1jc.

[26] Benedict Anderson defines religiously imagined communities as having "unselfconscious coherence" (*Imagined Communities* 16).

seems to be quite strong. However, the weak spot in his theory is his understanding of the novel. Anderson writes the following: "[T]he idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history" (*Imagined Communities* 26). Anderson's sense that there is a "solid community"[27] and that this solid nation(alism) can be observed in novels becomes apparent in his interpretation of José Rizal.[28] Anderson explains a quotation from Rizal's work: "a dinner party [is] being discussed by hundreds of unnamed people who do not know each other. . . in a particular month of a particular decade" (*Imagined Communities* 27). He believes this displays the connection between the novel and the nation-state: the dinner-party of unnamed people is a microcosm of the nation whose citizens have never met, yet are somehow connected to each other (*Imagined Communities* 27). The specific date shows how the imagined community in question depicts a "solid community moving steadily down (or up) history." (*Imagined Communities* 26) For Anderson, the novel "gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community" (*Imagined Communities* 27) and Rizal writes to his anonymous readers "with an ironical intimacy, as though their relationships with each other are not in the smallest degree problematic" (*Imagined Communities* 28). In short, Benedict Anderson makes a generalization and finds that Rizal's work conforms to his theory. As I argue in the following chapters, the world of the novel (here, I specifically mean the novels studied in this dissertation) is

[27] "An American will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 40,000,000-odd fellow Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity" (26). Here, Anderson points to the alleged uniform structure of the nation-state: even though the members of a nation may have never met and will likely never meet each other, they still share simultaneity.

[28] *Noli Me Tangere.*

polyphonous. The duality of polyphony vs. unisonance and to what extent the novel mirrors polyphony or unisonance in Anderson's nation-state theory, as well as how Anderson's interlocutors approach this issue, is the focal point of the next section.

IV. *Unisonance*, Unisonality, and Simultaneity

In the previous sections, I discussed the dualistic perspective of Anderson's nation-state theory: how it is based on several related dichotomies, and how the duality of *messianic time vs. homogeneous-empty-time* is at the center of his theory of nationalism, which is also closely linked to the concepts of *the secular* and *secularization*. In this section, I extend the discussion to Anderson's perspective on the novel and nationalism. More particularly, I argue that Anderson is quite selective in his examples and in his approach to the function of the novel in the nation-state. He primarily cites the qualities of coherence, unity and integrity in novels, while ignoring the complexities of multicultural societies and their reflections in the world of the novel. To borrow terms from the discipline of music, as Anderson himself did, I maintain that he overstresses the concept of *unisonance* (*Imagined Communities* 145), while ignoring the *polyphony* in the modern novel, even though at one point he describes this latter term as something that "decisively marks off the modern novel" (25). Lastly, this section furthers the conversation on Anderson's *unisonance* and the novel by questioning the concept of *unified national consciousness* via the critical views of Eric Hobsbawm and Edward Said.

Simultaneity is the key-term in understanding Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory, his approach to the novel genre, and his concept of *unisonance*. In the previous section, I explained how Anderson makes a distinction between two types of simultaneity. The first is the medieval type of simultaneity as an element of pre-modern

and religiously imagined communities; this binds the past, the present and the future through a religious idea, event or concept. Yet, there is a second simultaneity in Anderson's nation-state theory: *the modern simultaneity* of the nation-state (*Imagined Communities* 24; *The Spectre of Comparisons* 33, 334).

Anderson argues that novels are "historical" products with "sociological" settings (*Imagined Communities* 204) that appeared thanks to "homogeneous-empty-time" (*The Spectre of Comparisons* 26n, 33, 194).[29] This is how the nation-state becomes a "bounded intrahistorical entity" (*The Spectre of Comparisons* 334).[30] Anderson explains the connection between the novel and the nation, as follows:

> All this opened the way for human beings to imagine large, cross-generation, sharply-delimited communities, composed of people mostly unknown to one another; and to understand these communities as gliding endlessly towards a limitless future. The novelty of the novel as a literary form lay in its capacity to represent synchronically this bounded, intrahistorical society-with-a-future. (National history would supplement this *synchronicity* with a diachronic form of narrative.) (*The Spectre of Comparisons* 334) [31]

The key word in Anderson's passage is *synchronicity*, a synonym for his key-term *simultaneity*. This synchronicity or simultaneity in the nation-state is achieved through two transformative cultural products: the novel and the newspaper (*Imagined Communities* 25, 32-35, 63). For Anderson, the novel and the newspaper both have the power to transform, because these are influential "commodities" (*The Spectre of Comparisons* 34, 35, 37, 62) that "provided the means of community that is the nation"

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[29] "Serially published newspapers were by then a familiar part of urban civilization. So was the novel, with its spectacular possibilities for the representation of simultaneous actions in homogeneous empty time" (*Imagined Communities* 194).

[30] By intrahistorical, Anderson points to the function of the novel and newspapers. As nationalisms are paradoxically modern but also antique (as the starting point of their genealogies are deliberately antique and indefinite), they tend to assert their uniqueness (that is, let's say, how being a German, Italian or Frenchman was almost unavoidable). In addition to this, nations are limited, and their horizon is "clearly bounded" (*Imagined Communities* 30). In other words, intrahistorical means that a nation is modern but antique, unique, and limited by this set of principles and values.

[31] Emphasis mine.

(*The Spectre of Comparisons* 25). At this point, one can see that Anderson perceives these cultural products almost as an "analogue" of the nation-state (Culler 33) or as a "precondition for the nation" (qtd. in Parker 24), and even as "a formal condition of imagining the nation—a structural condition of possibility" (Culler 37; also qtd. in Parker 54). The newspaper and the novel, then, or "print-capitalism" in Anderson's terminology (*Imagined Communities* 18, 29n, 36, 39, 40, 43) slowly but surely contributed to some noteworthy historical changes. First, "the ontological truth" of the religious/divine script was undermined; second, the "high centers" and "monarchs" and thus, "hierarchies" were destabilized; and third and consequently, the "cosmology and history" got separated, dissolving certainties, to be replaced by *homogeneous-empty-time* (*Imagined Communities* 36). [32] All of these social, cultural and political transformations took place with the advent of print capitalism. In this respect, the dualities of *Latin vs. vernacular*, s*acred scriptures vs. newspapers and novels* gradually paved the way to nationalism, national consciousness and the nation-state as a political structure.

If the newspaper and the novel have a huge role in constituting simultaneity in nations, what are some of the most significant characteristics of these cultural products that could enable such noteworthy socio-political changes? Anderson's answer is loud and clear: "the fictiveness" of the newspaper and the novel is the "essential literary convention" that made the idea of the imagined-nation possible (*Imagined Communities* 33). Seemingly irrelevant news in newspapers is "juxtaposed," and thus, a new culture is shaped by print media (*Imagined Communities* 33). Still, it is important to identify the

[32] According to Anderson, "Christendom, the Islamic Ummah" are two of these religious systems (*Imagined Communities* 36).

social, cultural, and economical motive(s) that determine the direction of this influence.[33] In other words, what is it that really shapes the newspaper and the novel and enhances these cultural products to make such a considerable socio-political transformation possible, and how is the newspaper similar to the novel?

In response to these questions, Anderson's thinking resembles that of other theorists who discuss the appearance of nationalism in close connection to capitalism, including Étienne Balibar, who underscores the significance of the "development of the market structures and class relations specific to modern capitalism" in the historical process of the rise of nations (341-42); Ernest Gellner, who wrote that nation-states rose with capitalism that "required a common language" among low and high cultures (1); and Jürgen Habermas, who posits that there is a strong relationship between nation-state and "modern trade and commerce" (28). In this respect, Anderson agrees with the theorists mentioned above, particularly in his statement that a "source of imagined linkage lies in the relationship between the newspaper, as a form of book, and the market" (*Imagined Communities* 33). Anderson maintains that once the Gutenberg Bible was printed and mass print became available after the fifteenth century, books became "the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity" that transformed languages, cultures and all hierarchies (*Imagined Communities* 34). If capitalism turned books and newspapers into commodities with the potential to transform societies and create *simultaneity* in the modern sense, it is thanks to the fictive and metafictional traits of novels and newspapers that modern nation-states are shaped. For Anderson, the novel and the newspaper are

[33] "This imagined linkage derives from two obliquely related sources. The first is simply calendarical coincidence. The date at the top of the newspaper, the single most important emblem on it, provides the essential connection—the steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time" (*Imagined Communities* 33).

similar in terms of their function in the nation-state (that is, they create synchronicity or simultaneity), and in this regard, the newspaper has a "novelistic format" (*Imagined Communities* 33).

Although Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory offers an original and eye-opening perspective on nationalism, it equally has blind spots. The most important one, I argue, is his concept and account of *unisonance*. On language, patriotism, and *unisonance* in the nation-state, he writes:

> there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests - above all in the form of poetry and songs. Take national anthems, for example, sung on national holidays. No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. Singing the Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda, and Indonesia Raya provide occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community. (So does listening to [and maybe silently chiming in with] the recitation of ceremonial poetry, such as sections of *The Book of Common Prayer.)* How selfless this unisonance feels! If we are aware that others are singing these songs precisely when and as we are, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects us all but imagined sound. (*Imagined Communities* 145)

The starting point in developing his nation-state theory is language. Just like nations and nationalism, languages are primordial. They "[loom up] imperceptibly out of a horizonless past" even though they are modern (*Imagined Communities* 144). For this reason, Anderson analyzes many of the cultural products of language, such as songs and anthems as well as books and newspapers, in order to explore the roots of nationalism, the nation-state, and the idea of belonging. It is clear that, first and foremost, Anderson's unisonance resides in language.

The second characteristic of *unisonance* is that it has an active role in the production and maintenance of national synchronicity and modern simultaneity (*Imagined Communities* 144-45). As mentioned in the previous sections, synchronicity or

simultaneity, according to Anderson, is one of the core values of nationalism. In the following chapters, I challenge this assumption via the novels of Roth, Pamuk or Rushdie, which portray modern, cosmopolitan and multicultural societies as anything but synchronous.

The third trait of unisonance is that it both creates and resides in homogeneous-empty-time. In this respect, it is the element that physically, culturally, and socially embodies simultaneity in the modern sense. Unisonance is marked by "temporal coincidence, measured by clock and calendar" (*Imagined Communities* 24).[34] To a certain extent, I agree with Anderson that the modern nation-state is no longer noted for "prefiguring and fulfillment" (*Imagined Communities* 24), but it is not free from it either. As I discuss in the respective chapters on Roth, Rushdie and Pamuk, individual perspectives are so varied and colorful that one can hardly discern such a "unisonality" or a common "imagined sound" (*Imagined Communities* 145).

The fourth quality of *unisonance* is that it is a performance. In other words, nationals or members of a community perform certain acts, such as listening, singing national anthems, or reading newspapers or books. It is for this reason that Anderson gives an example from Hegel, who "observed" the paradox that "newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers" (*Imagined Communities* 35). This "silent" and "private" performance turns people into "communicants" and the act of reading into a "ceremony" (*Imagined Communities* 35). Through the daily and shared act of ceremonial reading, people become aware of a "secular, historically clocked imagined community" (*Imagined Communities* 145). This continuous replication, according to

[34] Books, newspapers, songs, social meetings and gatherings, etc., are some of the elements that create a bond among people.

Anderson, brings the masses together and creates confidence among individuals who have never met before (*Imagined Communities* 145). As a consequence of such "consumption" (*Imagined Communities* 35), synchronicity or modern simultaneity appears. [35]

The fifth is a consequence of this alleged unisonance, as follows: as a result of unisonality, unisonance, or modern simultaneity, what appears is "the echoed physical realization of the imagined community" (*Imagined Communities* 145). It should be noted that Anderson compares unisonance (both as a musical term and as a basic concept of his nation-state theory) to "the language of everyday life . . . typically experienced . . . as dialogue and exchange" (*Imagined Communities* 145n). My objection to Anderson throughout this dissertation is that his unisonance and the appearance of a nation as "a sociological landscape of a fixity" (*Imagined Communities* 30) is at least as imaginary as the nation itself.

The sixth trait of *unisonance* (and hence, my next objection) is related to the concepts of *belonging* and *anonymity*. Anderson asserts that unisonance itself makes people feel "selfless" (*Imagined Communities* 145). By either "chiming in with" ceremonial poetry, or reading everyday newspapers or novels, the more one becomes a part of these performances of *belonging*, the more *anonymous* s/he becomes. I argue in this study that late 20th-century and early 21st-century novels, as in the works of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk, do not allow uniformity, anonymity, or belonging of this sort.

Regarding the shortcomings of Anderson's concept of unisonance, nationalism

[35] One can clearly see the influence of capitalism on Anderson's thought process: first, the cultural aspects named above (such as books and newspapers) are named as commodities. Second, the members of the communities are grouped as passive consumers of these commodities. The consequence, for Anderson, is unisonance or unisonality.

theory and the function of the novel, the following points should be emphasized. First, as Culler observes, Anderson writes about a specific "narrative technique" (Culler 32) which depicts simultaneous events, creating "a world embedded in the minds of the omniscient readers" (*Imagined Communities 26*; qtd. in Culler 32). Then, Culler explains, the novel in Anderson's sense "represents a bounded community to readers" (32). Later, Culler argues that Anderson's novel (or his examples to explain the *unisonance* in nationalism) feature a specific sort of narrative, in which the narrative "is not filtered through the consciousness or position of a single observer" (33). What is excluded in this type of narrative is "the limited point of view that developed in the novel during the course of the nineteenth century" (*Imagined Communities* 33). Furthermore, Anderson is more interested in the (literary) fiction that "extend[s] beyond the experience of particular individuals" who are "geographically situated or bounded," than a representation of "a society conceived as national" (*Imagined Communities* 33). Culler takes his argument on Anderson one step further, and states that Anderson conceives the novel as "a representation of . . . [a] social space" (*Imagined Communities* 33). In other words, Anderson does not fully consider the perspectives of individuals in the novel.

Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory is based on one more duality: fiction vs. fact. He does an outstanding job uncovering the fictionality of not only novels and newspapers, but also of our lives as nationals in nation-states. This dichotomy is central to his well-known book, *Imagined Communities*. As he writes in a frequently quoted passage, "fiction seeps quietly into history, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations" (36). I find his approach rather too selective, however, as Anderson ignores the individual perspectives

that question the structure and components of the nation-state. Jonathan Culler underscores a similar perspective, remarking that the novel (in Anderson's theory) becomes “a force for imagining the communities that are nations" (Culler 37).

It must also be noted that in his later works Benedict Anderson acknowledges some of the shortcomings of his theory. In *The Spectre of Comparisons* he states that in the late 20th century the "older, rather unified world of the novel has been breaking down . . . through niche marketing" into several genres (such as gothic, crime, spy, pornographic, science-fiction, etc.). This eventually caused "affinities" to be "visibly strained" (335).[36] In other words, Anderson makes a distinction between 19th-and early 20th-century novels, on the one hand, and late 20th-century novels, on the other. In the earlier works, the novel and the nation-state are entities one within the other—that is, the novel both helps produce and maintain the nation as "a bounded, intrahistorical entity" (*The Spectre of Comparisons* 334). Anderson continues to describe the evolution with another quite interesting argument, when he writes that "nations with states—nation-states—have less and less need of [the] novel" and the job of representing cultures is carried out by two institutions that were unknown in the early days of nation-states: "ministries of information" and "ministries of culture" (*The Spectre of Comparisons* 335). Specifically, in his later work, Anderson implies that his theory of *unisonance* and *simultaneity* in the novel may not be a fully valid argument, particularly in the context of late 20th-century novels. This supports my perspective (based on the works of Rushdie, Roth, and Pamuk) on the shortcomings of Anderson's nation-state theory.

[36] Anderson once more explains the role and function of cultural products through the operations of capitalism and the market, which is a perspective he had in his previous work, *Imagined Communities*.

V. Anderson's Interlocutors and Method(s) of 'Reading' Nations

This section will explore the validity of the argument in a dialogue between Anderson and Edward Said and Eric Hobsbawm. In particular, Anderson's *unisonance* or *unisonality* will be challenged through the works of Said, who claims that cultures are never monolithic, and Hobsbawm, who argues that nations are imagined communities that should be viewed not only “from above” but also “from below," as ordinary people are neither *national* nor *nationalist*.

Such a dialogue is significant, because it not only helps evaluate Anderson's ideas in a larger context, but also formally connects the theory to the discipline of comparative literature. This section will show how nation-states are multi-vocal entities that continuously question all aspects of the theories of the nation-state and nationalism. It will also form the basis for my discussion of the works of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk. I will begin this section with Eric Hobsbawm, as his perspective offers a sound formal critique (that is, in terms of methodology, rather than content) of Anderson's theory, and I will continue with Said, whose works provide alternative approaches to nationalism.

One major difference between the theories of Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm is their approaches to homogeneity and unisonality. According to Hobsbawm, a homogeneous population in Anderson's sense is impossible. In his close analysis of allegedly seemingly homogeneous communities, Hobsbawm finds them to be the contrary to it. Even homogeneity in the philological sense is doubtful. [37] What Anderson fails to see or perhaps deliberately ignores, is the multiple ways humans define

[37] ". . . the ‘linguistic entity’ conceals the unquestionable fact that indigenous Tamils, immigrant Indians and Moors are—so far—a homogeneous population in no other than the philological sense, and, as we shall see, probably not even in this sense. As for the ‘separate historical past’, the phrase is almost certainly anachronistic, question-begging or so vague as to be meaningless" (Hobsbawm 7). Emphasis mine.

themselves, and redefine themselves over time, and the complexity of these processes. In my view, Anderson's theory of the nation-state and nationalism does not sufficiently explore multiculturalism and dissenting perspectives.

A similar criticism of Hobsbawm on the assumption of *unisonance* in the nation-state is that asserting or acknowledging the existence of a simultaneous and unisonant community is a matter of power relations, which ignores several other options. In this regard, Hobsbawm states that "to insist on consciousness or choice as the criterion of nationhood is insensibly to subordinate the complex and multiple ways in which human beings define and redefine themselves as members of groups, to a single option" and this choice is "belonging to a 'nation' or 'nationality" (8). Hobsbawm continues, today's societies are so complex in terms of belonging that one can never "reduce even nationality to a single dimension, whether political, cultural or otherwise (unless, of course, obliged to do so by *force-majeure* of states)" (Hobsbawm 8).[38] His ideas and examples on this matter are thought-provoking, and much more realistic compared to those of Anderson: Hobsbawm states that even somebody who does not have any religious, cultural, traditional, historical or blood-related ties with, for example, the Jewish state, may one day "identify" himself/herself as Jewish, and even this may not give any hint about the nature or the "definition" of the nation (Hobsbawm 8). Therefore, unlike Anderson's view, Hobsbawm's perspective on the nation-state and nationalism takes into account the complexities of modern nations by changing the methodological

[38] "Yet even today it is perfectly possible for a person living in Slough to think of himself, depending on circumstances, as - say - a British citizen, or (faced with other citizens of a different colour) as an Indian, or (faced with other Indians) as a Gujarati, or (faced with Hindus or Muslims) as a Jain, or as a member of a particular caste, or kinship connection, or as one who, at home, speaks Hindi rather than Gujarati, or doubtless in other ways" (Hobsbawm 8).

scale from the society to the individuals, and thus, considering individual choices and individuality.

Hobsbawm's unique formal contribution lies in his approach to the methodology of studying nationalism and the nation-state. According to his analysis, nations cannot be reduced to any "subjective" or "objective" definitions and it would be "misleading" to even attempt do so (8). For Hobsbawm, there is no "a priori definition of what constitutes nation" and nations, as a method, "can only be recognized *a posteriori*" (9). Thus, even some nationalistic novels or newspapers that allegedly constitute a sort of simultaneity cannot account for or formulate nationalism or the nation-state. Another aspect of his methodological principle is to accept that nations are evolving or changing entities, and he clearly states that he does *not* view nations as "a primary [n]or as an unchanging social entity" and he also finds it "pointless" to discuss the nation or nationality outside the context of the "modern territorial state" (9-10). In summary, unlike Anderson's nation-state theory, Hobsbawm maintains that one cannot find any solid, definite and specific core values in nationalism and the nation-state.

Hobsbawm's most significant formal contribution is the specific method he offers for studying the nation-state. He believes that it is not possible to understand nations and nationalism, unless they are studied "from below," and he defines this method as one in which the nation is *not* seen "by governments and the spokesmen and activists of nationalist (or non-nationalist) movements, but by the ordinary persons who are the objects of their action and propaganda, [which] is exceedingly difficult to discover" (11). Hobsbawm does not recommend totally dismissing the method of studying nations from-above, or hypothesizing about it. Rather, he strongly recommends exploring at a "sub-

literary level," as there is no other way to understand the inner-workings of people's minds, or to know an individual's "national identifications" (Hobsbawm 11). Hobsbawm's theory of studying nations from below is also one of the methodological components of this study.

Hobsbawm's "from below" method is based on three principles. First, official ideologies and their physical or non-physical social, cultural and political products (everything from newspapers to national anthems) can never determine what is inside people's minds at any given moment (10). Additionally, a "social being" is not a homogeneous entity in itself: usually an individual has (or may have) more than one single identity; that is, identities may be combined with other identities and this is a very complex structure (Hobsbawm 10). Moreover, national identity/identities do shift over time, and this change can be observed even in "short periods of time" (Hobsbawm 10). For these reasons, an analysis of the concepts of national identity and belonging requires a more multi-disciplinary and inquisitive approach.

If we are to consider how and where Anderson and Hobsbawm agree, two points will come up. First, both Anderson and Hobsbawm believe that the nation-state and nationalism are modern (Anderson 5, 9, 13, 19, 24, 36, 46, 47) and "connected to modernity" (Hobsbawm 14, 17-18). Secondly, both Hobsbawm and Anderson share the opinion that the nation-state and nations are "imagined" (Anderson 6, 7, 13, 14, 24, 25) or underscore the "element of artifact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making of nations" (Hobsbawm 9-10). But one main difference between them is that Hobsbawm, like Ernest Gellner, defines nationalism as "primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1; qtd. in Hobsbawm 9).

Both Gellner and Hobsbawm define nationalism and the nation-state with the principle of *congruency* between the nation and the state, which is deliberately defined as a concept without an immediate content (language, race, religion, a core value or identity), because they both assume that nations are exceedingly complex and changeable structures which historically resist all sorts of definitions.

Like Eric Hobsbawm's ideas, Edward Said presents several ideas on nationalism and the nation-state that undermine Anderson's *unisonance*. The first and foremost difference between the two critics of nationalism can be observed in their definitions of culture. Anderson prefers to define nationalism by tracing cultural products or artifacts (such as books, newspapers, anthems, tombs, etc.). He writes that a *synchronicity* or *modern simultaneity* can be observed in the *Unknown Soldier tombs* in the nation-state, as these tombs are anonymous expressions of patriotism and unity, for members of a community who have never met (*Imagined Communities* 9-11). To Anderson the traits of anonymity and unisonance are among the most basic values of nationalism. However, Said defends the idea that "cultures are never monolithic," and writes: "Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist. . . enterprise" and stresses that "new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of *identity*" (*Culture and Imperialism* xxiv-xxv). Then, what is common to Said and Hobsbawm is their insistence that culture can never be defined as an enclosed and definite system, nor is it possible to find a *unisonality* in Anderson's sense.

A major difference between Anderson and Said is in the political sense. On the one hand, Anderson's work shows that a critic may trace cultural products back and find a

type of *unisonality* or *simultaneity* in the nation-state (that is, the set of clues which displays the core values of a given nation). On the other hand, Said agrees that some cultural traditions or products may create a unisonant community, and he does not have strong positive views on nationalism on the basis that the assertion of an identity is "especially dangerous" (*Culture and Imperialism* 37).[39] Said, then, rejects all the common cultural products that may create a uniformity in Anderson's sense, such as "national feasts . . . founding fathers, basic texts, and so on" (*Culture and Imperialism* 37). Moreover, Said writes that "assertion to an identity is by no means a ceremonial matter," as it may dangerously "mobilize passions atavistically" (*Culture and Imperialism* 37). Therefore, Said does not accept the idea of *unisonance* in the nation-state, and he is in the same league with Hobsbawm in this respect.

In addition, Said posits that all cultural experience, "or indeed every cultural form is radically, quintessentially hybrid" (*Culture and Imperialism* 58) and *unisonality* in Anderson's sense is part of a larger political project. Said writes that "[e]ntities such as races and nations, *essences* such as Englishness or Orientalism . . . all of these . . . testify to an ideology whose cultural correlatives well precede the actual accumulation of imperial territories world-wide" (*Culture and Imperialism* 58).[40] Hence, he underscores what is missing from Anderson's theory: the complexity of multicultural societies and how the concept of *essences* fails to explain the modern nation-state. Here, what Anderson calls modern simultaneity, unisonance or unisonality is what Said terms *essence*. Considering Said's frequently quoted statement that "[n]o one today is purely one thing" (*Culture and Imperialism* 336) and cultures and identities are quite mixed,

[39] Anderson does not endorse nationality; rather, he describes it.
[40] Emphasis mine.

essences or unisonance must be inventions of the imagination, similar to the nation-state itself.

If cultural experience is hybrid, as Said puts it, and there is no unisonance (Anderson), what is the role of comparative literature (and specifically of novels) in the nation-state? As the contemporaries of Anderson, how Roth, Pamuk or Rushdie get involved in this discussion is significant, because their works not only provide a test of time for Anderson's ideas, but equally, their novels directly get into dialogue with his theories. In this regard, whether Said's methodology of reading/studying cultures and nations is any different from Anderson's is a relevant question. What I specifically argue here is that the way Anderson reads nationalism is quite different from the readings of Said, Roth, Pamuk, and to a certain extent, Rushdie.

According to Anderson, when Latin gave way to the vernacular, people started to read religious texts as merely ordinary texts. Another consequence of such a reading experience is the appearance of a common consciousness (that is, the modern simultaneity) that helped build a national consciousness. However, Said argues that literature has a much more complex function, and it does not create unisonance. Therefore, he recommends a totally different reading method, that is, contrapuntal reading.

As mentioned above, Said explains that nations or cultures are never monolithic or composed of essences. For this reason, he believes that we must read texts "not univocally but contrapuntally," a reading with "a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and

together with which) the dominating discourse acts" (*Culture and Imperialism* 51).[41] For example, Said suggest that English novels must be read in connection with the West Indies or India, as these nations or communities are in many ways linked to each other, and just like literary texts, cultures "are not bounded by their formal historic beginnings and endings" (*Culture and Imperialism* 66). At this point, Said differs from Anderson one more time, because Anderson states that the "horizon" of the nation-state "is clearly bounded" (*Imagined Communities* 30). Said certainly rejects the "sociological solidity" (*Imagined Communities* 30) Anderson sees in the nation-state.

Unlike Anderson, Said's contrapuntal reading requires the reader to take all sides or processes into account, and not yield to the idea of *unisonality*, as this is never possible. The reader must look for traces of "resistance" to the dominant culture (*Culture and Imperialism* 66). It must be noted that Said thinks and writes extensively on imperialism and multicultural societies, where individuals usually belong to more than one identity. Said's ideas on the nation-state cannot be dismissed on the basis that he writes about the nation-state and imperialism, because one must not forget Étienne Balibar's suggestion that "every modern nation is a product of colonization: it has always been to some degree colonized or colonizing, and sometimes both at the same time" (1991, 341). In addition to this, Said recommends the readers to take *temporality* into account. As "each cultural work is a vision of the moment," the reader has to be aware of and consider "both what went into it and what its author excluded" (*Culture and*

[41] Note how both Anderson and Said borrow their terminology from music to develop their theories on nationalism and the nation-state. Also, I emphasize that concepts like unisonance, unisonality (in Anderson), contrapuntal (reading), polyphony, interplay (Said) are the key terms of both critics. Even though borrowing musical terminology may look like a mere coincidence, I find it important for two reasons: first, it shows us that Anderson's and Said's texts are in dialogue with each other, albeit indirectly. Second, both theorists' choice of using the terminology from music cannot be a coincidence, because in doing so, both Said and Anderson deliberately underscore that belonging in a nation-state is a performance, just like the terminology shows.

Imperialism 67). This is one of the most significant methodological pieces of advice that Said offers on the act of *reading* nations.

Novels hold a noteworthy place in both Said's and Anderson's theories, although the two theories differ in their approaches regarding the role and function of the novel in the nation-state. As we have seen previously, Anderson believes that the novel is a "device for the representation of 'homogeneous-empty-time', or. . . 'meanwhile'" (*Imagined Communities* 25) and for "representation of simultaneous actions in homogeneous-empty-time" (*Imagined Communities* 194). Said disagrees, contending that novels "are not reducible to a sociological current and cannot be done justice to aesthetically, culturally, and politically as subsidiary forms of class, ideology, or interest" (*Culture and Imperialism* 73). Said considers novels to have much more complex structures, while Anderson supposes that they both shape and maintain simultaneity in the nation-state.

Like Hobsbawm, Said supports the idea that the methodology of reading and studying nations is of critical importance. On this matter, Said offers another key-concept: *the voyage-in.* The idea of the *voyage-in* is that regardless of how any given ideology or social system may seem to be complete and dominant, some dissenting or alternative views in the community always exist and with "these parts very frequently comes opposition, both self-conscious and dialectical" (*Culture and Imperialism* 240). Then, *voyage-in* is writing from the margins on/to the center, using the "imperial language" in order to "resist" (*Culture and Imperialism* 240). Salman Rushdie, according to Said, is such a writer.

To recap Said's views on literature and nationalism and to underline how they differ from Anderson's, the following points should be re-stated: just like nations, texts are not "finished objects," (*Culture and Imperialism* 240) Said comes close to Bhabha in this matter, who emphasizes that "the nation is a process" (3). The same is true for identities: Said writes that identity "does not necessarily imply ontologically given and eternally determined stability, or uniqueness, or irreducible character, or privileged status as something total and complete in and of itself" (*Culture and Imperialism* 315). Therefore, a reader must have an investigative attitude (*Culture and Imperialism* 316), performing *contrapuntal reading*, looking for "overlapping" literary experiences . . . despite national boundaries and coercively legislated national autonomies" (*Culture and Imperialism* 317). In this sense, the reader or the critic cannot have a *home* he feels he belongs to, nor can s/he have a "secure, stable, national. . . identity, class, gender, or profession" in his reading experience (*Culture and Imperialism* 317). In this process, one must be alert to official or semi-official narratives, which might be responsible for "preventing counter-narratives from emerging" (*Culture and Imperialism* 324).

The questions theory and literature are attempting to answer are common: what is a nation, and how should one read/study/write (on) it? The answers provided to these questions are quite different. For Anderson, *unisonance* is one key factor, whereas Said offers *contrapuntal reading*, while Roth's, Rushdie's, and Pamuk's answer is *metafiction*. The difference is here: through metafiction, Roth, Rushdie and Pamuk problematize the way one reads or studies the nation, just like Said. Hence, they question directly the theory and its methodology. Methodologically, Anderson is satisfied with studying the cultural products and historical changes in a selective way, which enables him to theorize

on the nation. However, according to Said, Roth, Rushdie, or Pamuk, I contend, Anderson's approach cannot suffice, because studying the nation "from above" (in Anderson's sense) cannot account for the complexity of the human factor and its complex relationship with the nation-state.

As stated above, theorists like Gellner and Hobsbawm are quite aware of this complexity and the difficulties in studying the nation. Hence, their theory of the nation-state offers significant methodological advice. First, they propose the concept of "congruency," that is, the nation and the state elements should be congruent; they explain in detail, how language, religion, or any derivation of unisonality cannot explain the nation-state. Second, they propose that theory methodologically fails to have a full grasp of nationalism, because it attempts to "explain" the nation-state "from above" (like Anderson), whereas it should also study the nation "from below," that is, at the individual level(s), just as Roth, Rushdie, and Roth attempt to do. Hence, the novelists' literary answer (to the question of how to study nation) is *metafiction*, although each of them has a quite different understanding of the self-reflexivity.

Benedict Anderson makes an important contribution to nation-state theory, particularly in terms of uncovering the connection between nationalism and *collective thinking*. Overall, one can claim that Anderson has a rather positive outlook on the nation-state, based on his statement that "[n]ationness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (*Imagined Communities* 3). However, the source of collective thinking and legitimacy in the nation-state (or the transformation from *pre-modern* to *modern*, *religiously-imagined* to *nationally-imagined* communities in Anderson's terminology) has always been a subject of heated discussion. One of these

conflict points is the concept of *secular* and *secularism*, which is the focal point of the next section.

Chapter I Section 2 Secularism and the Nation-State

I. Introduction

Based on the theories of Benedict Anderson, Edward Said, and Eric Hobsbawm that I discussed in the previous section, I debated how the collective imagination is incorporated in nationalism and in the nation-state and to what extent it is connected to capitalism. In addition, I explored various ways in which capitalism shaped this collective imaginary thinking, as well as how Benedict Anderson's *national imagination* was based on several dualities, such as *pre-modern - modern*, *messianic time - homogeneous-empty-time*, and *religious imagination - national imagination*. I then underscored that Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory is based on the concepts of *unisonance*, *unisonality,* and *modern simultaneity*. Through a comparative analysis of Anderson's theory, and Hobsbawm's and Said's methodology, I argued that Anderson's perspective is too limiting, as he over-emphasizes a strong uniformity as a principle in the nation-state. This, I maintained, is a perspective that does not take into account the multiplicity of views of any minority, or the dissenting perspectives in cosmopolitan societies and the 20th-century novel. For this reason, I focused on the differences in the methodologies for reading and studying the nation-state in the theories of Anderson, Hobsbawm and Said.

In this section, I extend the discussion by focusing on a quite heated debate: the perceptions of religion and the concepts of *secular* and *secularism* in the nation-state. It is not possible to have a full grasp of nationalism and the nation-state without understanding secularism, which is frequently referred to as a characteristic of modernity. My aim in this section is to analyze the conception of some key terms such as *the secular*, *the religious*, religion, modernity and the nation-state and to examine how these concepts

relate to *secularism* in the works of two controversial scholars: José Casanova and Talal Asad. As this paper shows, even though the aforementioned scholars write about a very similar set of terms and concepts, their perspectives, definitions and frameworks are quite different from each other.

The secularism debate between Casanova and Asad is of critical importance for my study, because it is directly connected to the identity issues and the metafictional plot constructions in the novels of Roth, Rushdie and Pamuk. The Asad-Casanova debate, I argue, shows the following: first, secularism is not a one-belief system, a set of principles, or a group of criteria. Rather, secularism has *tones* and *interpretations.* In this regard, secularism is not something singular, but rather, to the contrary, it is definitely plural, as one can historically trace back the cultural motives that shape each versions. In this example, for instance, Casanova's Euro-centric perception of secularism is quite different from Asad's critical view of secularism. Second, I maintain, secularism is strictly related to the concepts of the *modern*, *modernization* and the *nation-state*. For this very reason, no discussion on national identity and belonging can be meaningful without sufficiently considering the conflicts regarding secularism(s). Third, I argue, the afore-mentioned theoretical conflicts on secularism can similarly be observed in literature. That is, as I will discuss in the following chapters, the novels (and metafictions) of Roth, Rushdie and Pamuk all offer distinct interpretations of secularism in the nation-state. Roth's and Pamuk's secularism, for instance, is quite critical of secularism in Casanova's sense, while Rushdie's metafiction endorses it. Fourth, the debate on secularism in both theory and literature shows that religion[42] continues to be influential on the identities in the nation-state, which *undermines* the thesis that secularization in the nation-state has

[42] Here I use the terms to refer to a general category.

somehow replaced *religiously imagined* identities or communities. For this reason, the nation-state develops into a political plain where different interpretations of belonging collide with each other, as observed in the novels of Roth, Pamuk, and Rushdie.

II. Definitions

i. José Casanova: Secularism, *the secular*, Secularization and Religion

José Casanova is a sociologist of religion who is known for his work on the concepts of secularism and secularization. Generally, Casanova has a West-centered perspective, as he has declared in his works.[43] In "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms," he defines three basic concepts: *the secular*, for Casanova, is a "central modern epistemic category"; secularization, which is for him "an analytical conceptualization of modern world-historical processes"; and secularism, which represents for him "a worldview and ideology" (54). Casanova argues that the first of the three, *the secular*, has now turned into "a central modern category . . . to construct, codify, grasp, and experience a realm or reality differentiated from *the religious*" (*Secular* 54). [44]

Casanova contextualizes his theory of secularism and secularization within the social sciences and sociology. He explains that the theory of *the secular* was first conceptualized in and for Europe, but later, according to Casanova, secularism and secularization became a globalized[45] phenomenon that is both *progressive* and *teleological* (54-55). In this perspective, the dichotomies of modern/primitive and

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[43] *Public Religions of the Modern World* (10); "Public Religions Revisited" (102) in *Religion: Beyond the Concept*.

[44] "Secular" from now on.

[45] The definition of globe or global is problematic, as in *Public Religions of the Modern World*, Casanova's study is limited to Christianity (and more specifically Catholicism and Protestantism) in Spain, Brazil, Poland and the U.S. Casanova's use of the term global is directly connected to his definition of the secular as a modern epistemic category.

secular/religious are central and important in Casanova's theory of secularism and secularization. This is a critical moment in his secularism theory, because his dualist perspective is exactly what Roth's and Pamuk's metafiction criticizes, as I will argue in the following chapter.

If the first term is *the secular* and if it is a central epistemic category, the second significant term, according to Casanova, is *secularization*. This term denotes the empirical transformation and differentiation of *the religious*[46] and *the secular*[47] institutional spheres from early modernity to 20th- and 21st-century societies (*Secular* 54). There are four important points in Casanova's definition of secularization: first, secularization is a differentiation of *the secular* from *the religious.* Second, this change takes place in modern societies. Third, this change is not haphazard and it is a defining idea in the concept of modernization. Fourth, even though *the secularization* thesis has been reviewed considerably, Casanova claims, the idea of differentiation remains valid and strong in the social sciences (*Secular* 55).[48] The third concept is secularism, and Casanova explains that it could be defined as a modern secular set of ideologies and worldviews, which are constitutive parts of "normative-ideological state projects . . . of modernity and cultural programs," or secularism may be seen as a "taken-for granted normal structure of modern reality . . . a modern doxa or an unthought" (*Secular* 55). Even though Casanova provides this alternative definition, he clearly favors the former, similarly to Rushdie's fiction.

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[46] By religious institutions, Casanova generally means churches within Christianity. In this respect, his view is limited.

[47] The separation of religious institutions from the state, the economy, science, art, entertainment, health and welfare, etc.

[48] It is noteworthy to underline that Casanova has had the same perspective since his 1994 *Public Religions in the Modern World* (7, 14)

In Casanova's view, a recent and modern transformation occurred related to *the secular*: first, even though *the secular* was a residual category in relation to *the religious*, in *the secular* modern age, *the secular* became an "epistemic attitude" embodying the whole reality. In other words, now that the modern secular age set in and encompassed the whole reality, *the secular*, by default, came to be the only valid category, which was "naturally devoid of religion" ("Secular" 55).[49] The second transformation in the position of *the religious*, therefore, was that *the secular* now appeared as reality, as if it were the only viable way: *the secular* was no more a residual category; it was the reality itself; in this respect, *the religious* now became a residual category, a "superstructural and superfluous additive"; and this being the case, Casanova writes, *the religious* turned into a category that humans and societies no longer needed anymore ("Secular" 55).

Secularization theories, José Casanova writes, appear not only as a differentiation but also as a liberation process from *the religious*, which is also a "world-historical process,"[50] whereas secularist worldviews justify the transformation of *the secular* and the role-change between *the secular* and *the religious*. Put differently, secularist worldviews enforce the privileged position of *the secular* over *the religious* in modern societies, which presupposes not only the primacy of *the secular* over *the religious*, but also the total elimination of the latter ("Secular" 56). The novels of Roth and Pamuk clearly undermine Casanova's thesis, because religion and religious values are among the conflict-points among characters, which show that the liberation thesis is not that well-founded.

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[49] Casanova agrees with Charles Taylor's subtraction theory, in this respect ("Secular" 55).

[50] On the contrary, Asad does not believe such a differentiation really occurred and Bilgrami, Asad and Anidjar emphasize the locality (West European/Christian) characteristic of the secular and secularism. In other words, Casanova's claim that secularization or secularism are universal concepts is a highly debatable position.

There are two main ways of being secular, according to Casanova. The first option is the one that takes place within the Christian Church, connecting the Church with the outside world in order to promote Christian religious values and spirituality and to carry the values of the monasteries into the *saeculum*, outside the walls (56-57); whereas the other is *laicization*, which keeps clear and rigid boundaries between *the religious* and *the secular*. However, writes Casanova, *laicization* aims to marginalize religion all the time in order to privatize or exclude it from the public spheres (57). The former, for Casanova, aims to blur the boundaries between *the religious* and *the secular*, whereas the latter plans to create a social and political environment that is free from any traces of religion, its symbols or the clerical group ("Secular" 57). At this point, Casanova's theory of secularism gets close to Rushdie's fiction: in the Rushdie chapter, I will argue that Rushdie's novel has an exclusivist secularist tone that promotes a specific Indian identity over a religious Pakistani one. Here, Rushdie's fiction employs the grammar Casanova defines: the marginalization of (a specific) religion.

After defining *the religious*, *the secular*, and secularization, Casanova explains the two types of secularism: first, secularism as a *statecraft principle*, and second, as *secularist ideologies.*[51] The former, secularism as a statecraft principle, is based on the division between the political and religious authority in the form of state-neutrality towards any and all religions; or in the form of an entity that guarantees all citizens equal access to all democratic rights ("Secular" 66). Casanova also argues that secularism becomes an ideology the moment it takes a stance towards religion.

On the other hand, secularist ideologies have two types in Casanova's perspective:

[51] Casanova's definition of secularism is vaster, compared to that of Akeel Bilgrami. Casanova does not limit the scope of the term to state a state-regime, whereas Bilgrami claims that secularism is a polity (Bilgrami 3)

the first one is *secularist theories of religion* that flourished by means of "progressive stadial philosophies of history that relegate religion to a superseded stage"; and the second is *secularist political theories of religion* that define religion as "an irrational force or a non-rational form of discourse" that has no place within a democratic public sphere ("Secular" 66-67). Casanova names this second as *political secularism*.

Casanova separates political secularism from secularist ideologies. According to him, unlike secularist theories/ideologies, political secularism neither holds the idea of *stadial progress*, nor does it have any "negative assumptions" about religion ("Secular" 69); on the contrary, writes Casanova, political secularism could very well have a "positive view of religion as a moral good" ("Secular" 69). However, it is still the task of political secularism to keep the democratic public-sphere free from religion by confining it to its religious sphere ("Secular" 69). In the Rushdie chapter, I will argue that Rushdie's fiction always portrays Muslims as one-dimensional/flat characters, who are not only usually undereducated, violent, or lacking intelligence, but are also stuck in a fixed fictional time. At this point, I contend that Rushdie's metafiction is limited by his secular nationalism, which falls into the same category as Casanova's *political secularism.*

In general, José Casanova shows that there are various ways of defining and experiencing *the secular*. Depending on a specific interpretation of *the secular* and *the religious*, one may end up with a more or less pluralistic and tolerant version of secularism. In other words, the very stadial perspective that defines religion as backward, violent or as a source of conflicts, could itself be one of the motivators of conflicts, as in the case of Muslims in Europe ("Secular" 69).

II. Definitions

ii. Talal Asad: *The secular,*[52] Secularism and Religion

Talal Asad, in his *Formations of the Secular,* provides a study of secularism in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. He defines secularism as a political "enactment" (*Formations* 5), "a doctrine of war and peace" that is "closely connected with. . . capitalist nation-states" (7), a doctrine requiring a distinction between private and public reason and placing *the religious* in *the secular* (8), a principle as a compulsory part of the modernity project (13), a concept similar to religion that "releases and disables powers" (17), and a component of the modern liberal state pretending to be secular and rational, whereas it is "heavily invested in myth and violence" (56). Overall, Asad maintains, since the middle of the 19th century, secularism has appeared as a doctrine that regulates morality within the structure of the nation-state, which holds the idea that the state cannot be run on religious ideals (208).

Secularism, for Asad, is a political structure that aims to shape citizens within a certain political agenda: in this respect, it is not merely an intellectual activity that ponders about toleration or social peace. Secularism, in Asad's view, is an "enactment" functioning through a definition of citizenship that is able to transcend all other traits of citizenship, such as class, gender or religion. In other words, secularism has an immense transformative power (*Formations* 5). By this definition, Asad undermines the alleged neutrality of secularism while underscoring the political agenda of the doctrine.

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[52] Asad makes it clear that "the secular is neither singular in origin nor stable in its historical identity" (*Formations* 25). Therefore, as the title of Asad's work elucidates, the secular has various formations under different historical conditions with various trajectories. For this reason, this paper gives more space to Asad's account of the secular in the following "Genealogies" section. Asad's further theories on the secular and how it relates to modernity, the nation-state and liberal politics can be found in Section IV. "Key Points."

Asad explains that one should first identify *the secular* to be able to understand secularism, as it is a "political doctrine" that is connected to *the secular* as an "ontology and an epistemology" (*Formations* 21). In other words, secularism can be read in relation to a set of social, political and historical contexts: the colonial past of Europe, materiality over spirituality, alleged universality and rationality, the restraint of religious passion, controlling (so-called) dangerous passions of human vis-à-vis political unity, and progress and peace (21). In this context, secularism has an epistemic value.

More particularly, *the secular*, as "a concept that brings together certain behaviors, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life," has "epistemological assumptions" (*Formations* 25). These epistemes, Asad argues, are based on specific "origin narratives that provide a foundation for its political values and a coherent framework for its public and private morality" (56). *The secular* -and hence secularism- of Europe has an exclusionist dimension: as Asad states, "European history is the narration of an identity many still derive from European (or Western) civilization" -a narrative that seeks to represent homogeneous space and linear time" (167-68). This exclusive homogeneity, in short, has two consequences, among others. First, as stated above, it places *the religious* in *the secular (Formations* 8), and second, it leaves out non-Christian cultures. As Asad writes, Islam is thus excluded from European representation systems and narratives (*Formations* 172). This is the very reason that Asad is critical of Rushdie's fiction, his exclusivist language that depicts Muslim characters as morally, culturally and nationally misfits.

The essentialist discourses of religion (as in Geertz or Frazer), according to Asad, create "authorizing discourses" (37, 44), and these aim to "redefine religious spaces . . . in

the history of Western society" (*Genealogies* 37). These discourses recreate religion continuously, as in the example of rejecting some pagan practices, while authenticating other particular pagan practices and thus, "creating a model of Truth" (*Genealogies* 32-33). I find Asad's explanation important, because as I will discuss in the following chapters, Rushdie's fiction is deliberately selective in employing an *inclusive* language while writing about Hindu myths and religions, whereas his novel becomes exclusivist in tone in portraying the Pakistani/Muslim characters. In other words, I will argue, Rushdie's metafiction is limited by secular nationalism, as the novel has an "authorizing discourse" in Asad's sense.

Asad believes that the essentializing/universalist views of religion are the products of post-Enlightenment society, and these essentializing views aims to limit the space Christianity holds in society in order to curb its power over individuals (*Genealogies* 45). As a result of this, Asad continues, once this Post-Enlightenment perspective starts defining what religion is, it then becomes possible to categorize religion as something more primitive, "a less adult mode of coming to terms with the human condition" (*Genealogies* 46). All in all, this universalizing perspective marginalizes religion and implies that religion has no space in modern industrialized societies, which is an idea Rushdie theorized in his "Imaginary Homelands," as I will discuss in the Rushdie chapter. In this respect, the universalist/essentialist definition of religion diminishes religion to the exact opposite of "disciplined knowledge" that modern societies need (*Genealogies* 46).

The following two sections discuss the genealogies of conflicting views of secularism. The genealogies matter, because different approaches to secularism, as

expressed in the novels of Roth, Pamuk and Rushdie, are culturally and historically connected to these genealogies. To be able to understand why Asad blames Rushdie for having a *Euro-centric* secularist perspective, one should consider the histories of the different secularisms.

III. Genealogies of Secularism

i. José Casanova

In "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms," José Casanova states that *the secular* appeared "as a theological category of Western Christendom" ("Secular" 56).[53] Modern secularism, writes Casanova, has various historical forms as well as several "normative models of legal-constitutional separation of *the secular* state and religion" ("Secular" 55). To be able to understand secularism, he proposes that one consider the genealogies of secularization. Historically, there are two different secularizations. The first one is a secularization process that occurred in Christianity aiming to transmit the spirituality of the Church to laypeople in the *saeculum* ("Secular" 56). [54] This dynamic, writes Casanova, started in the Medieval Era, was furthered by the Protestant Reformation, and is still continuing. The first model blurs the separation between *the religious* and *the secular*, which is a process that was started by Christian reformations of the *saeculum* and that was later reshaped by the Protestant Reformation and Anglo-Saxon Calvinism in the 16th century (57).

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[53] Casanova provides a similar etymological explanation of the secular, and writes that s*aeculum* in Latin meant a period of time, but its meaning and use transformed and it came to denote one of the pairs in the binary of religious and secular in the Christian world. Here, the former is the "religious-spiritual-sacred world of salvation" whereas the latter is the "secular-temporal--profane world." The concepts of religious and laity come from this distinction: religious refers to the people in monasteries, secular is the clergy outside the monasteries, and laity is used for all non-clergy outside monasteries ("Secular" 55).

[54] For similar genealogies of the secular and secularism, see Asad and Anidjar.

The latter form of secularization, *laicization,* is based on the clash between the clerics and laics and is, therefore, both genealogically and politically quite different from the former *Protestant secularization path* explained above ("Secular" *57*). According to Casanova, laicization requires that *the religious* and *the secular* be kept strictly apart, but that this separation be performed so sharply that it comes to "contain, privatize, and marginalize" all aspects of religion, while banning it from *the secular* public sphere ("Secular" 57). He explains this process and the difference between these two types of secularization as follows: the secularization in Catholic monasteries following the 1789 French Revolution aimed to break the monastery walls in order to "laicize the religious places" by excluding all religious individuals ("Secular" 57). This is how laicization started, through cleaning a space of all religious symbols. This type of laicization, of French-Latin-Catholic origin, found many supporters in Europe ("Secular" 57). Casanova indicates that secularization has various forms, but these are the two main trajectories dominating *the secular* age, which "lead to an overcoming of the medieval Christian dualism through a positive affirmation and revaluation of the *saeculum*" (57).

Secularism, Casanova explains, as a *worldview* and *ideology*, has a stadial perspective: secularism establishes a superiority of the modern secular outlook over earlier and "primitive" religious perspectives. At this point, he offers the following formulation: "to be secular means to be modern, and therefore, by implication, to be religious means to be somehow not yet fully modern," which Casanova names as *modern historical stadial consciousness*" ("Secular" *59).* In this case, going back becomes unthinkable. This, too, is reflected in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*: most of the characters of a specific religious orientation are never allowed, in the literary world of

Rushdie's fiction, to become independent adults with common sense. In Rushdie's novel, the Muslim identities of characters keep them stuck in a specific fictional time and position. They can never change, develop, or mature. For this reason, as Asad writes, Pakistani Muslims in Rushdie's novel are not *modern*, and hence, they do not fit in Rushdie's fictional world, or into *his* India.

Another trait of secularism, according to Casanova, is the way a certain local worldview comes to be imposed on the rest of the world with the false impression of universality: "The function of secularism . . . is to turn the particular Western Christian historical process of secularization into a universal teleological process of human development from belief to unbelief, from primitive irrational or metaphysical religion to modern rational postmetaphysical secular consciousness" ("Secular" 59). In other words, secularism can be traced back to its source (Western Christianity), and this teleological ideology has a hierarchical perspective that either essentializes religion to categorize it as primitive, or transforms it into the medium of *secular consciousness* with a different structure.

Casanova reminds his readers that one has to consider the genealogy of secularism, while considering secularism within another context and geography: the origin of *the secular* is Western Christian theology, whereas *the religious* is a concept of Western secular modernity (*SSS* 61). For this reason, the categories of *the secular* and *the religious* are products of specific West European developments that have led to the differentiation of both categories and then the separation of *the religious* and *the secular* (61).

Casanova asks a central question: how are the boundaries between the religious

and the secular drawn? Depending on the answer to this question, he explains, multiple understandings of secularism emerge, such as *American, French, Turkish, and Indian secularisms*, which are all distinctive ways of treating the separation and differentiation of *the religious* and *the secular*; each model represents another way of approaching religion and *religious pluralism* (62-63).

III. Genealogies of Secularism

ii. Talal Asad

In *Formations of the secular*, Talal Asad does not provide a comprehensive history of *the secular* and *secularism*, but he traces the effects of secularism in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries to explore "*some of the ways the secular was constituted*" (23).[55] To be able to understand secularism, Asad writes, one should first specify *the secular*, as it is conceptually a preceding term for secularism (16), but it does not have only one origin and it is not a stable concept (25).

What constitutes secularism? Asad notes that various practices and concepts assemble in time to create *the secular*, and it is a part of modern human life; therefore, the *secular* "is best pursued through its shadows, as it were" (*Formations* 16). Still, Asad believes that *the secular* can be historically traced back to the 16th century and Reformation and post-Reformation Europe.

According to Asad, the change in the understanding of faith and religion in Christian Europe is what constitutes a *secular critique*, "out of a concern with the apparent unviability of Christian traditional practice" (*Formations* 43). A split between scientific history and imaginative literature (religion and the arts) appeared (*Formations* 43) to solidify a *secular history*, which eventually shaped "the modern understanding of

[55] Emphasis mine. Asad implies that the secular might have various trajectories.

myth, *sacred discourse* and *symbolism*" (*Formations* 43). In other words, a distinction appeared between the *imaginative* and the *real*, contributing to the creation of a secular critique within the Christian tradition in the post-Reformation period.

Asad also points out that secular history became an inseparable part of modern life in the nation-state, and linear temporality of secular history became central (*Formations* 43). Consequently, he outlines the evolution of *the secular* by illustrating that the reading of the scriptures with a secular perspective contributed to the further separation of the sacred from the secular, and, eventually, the secular epistemological domain appeared: Asad writes that history and anthropology developed from this tradition (*Formations* 43).

How *the secular* functions in the structure of the nation-state is one of the focal points of Asad. He notes that the secular uses a specific image of a human: on one hand, there is a pessimistic account of a human being portrayed with inertia and *incorrigibility*, and on the other hand, there is the optimistic project of attaining universality: what brings these two together is the violence of the secular and its desire to connect to the universal (*Formations* 62). In other words, there is a similarity between the Christian discourse of redemption and the promise of redemption of the secular. How do these two discourses of the secular differ? Asad explains, "if the world is a dark place that needs redemption, the human redeemer, as an inhabitant of *this world* must first redeem himself" (*Formations* 62). This is when and how the secular (myth) separates itself from the story of Christ's sacrifice. Hence, these two frameworks point to different subjectivities and models and require different social structures (*Formations* 62). Thus, *the secular* creates a new framework of moral agency and perspective in Christian Europe.

If *the secular* is a vast concept that arose in Western Europe within Christendom after the 16th-century, "secularism as political doctrine arose in modern Euro-America (*Formations* 1) and the term itself was coined in the 19th century (*Formations* 23). Secularism is linked to two main changes in Europe: the first is the appearance of the capitalist system and nation-states that are both mutually suspicious of each other and unequal to each other in power. In addition, each of these nation-states, writes Asad, had a collective identity (*Formations* 7). And the second change in Europe that opens the path to secularism is "modernity" as "a series of interlinked projects that certain people in power seek to achieve" (*Formations* 13). Modernity aims to institutionalize several principles, including "constitutionalism, moral autonomy, democracy, human rights, civil equality, industry, consumerism, freedom of the market—and secularism" (*Formations* 13).

Etymologically, Asad argues, the concepts of *secularism* and *secularist* entered the English language in the 19th century. Holyoake coined the term secularist in order to differentiate his position from that of an atheist and, consequently, to avoid the charge of lack of faith (23).[56] On the other hand, secularism, as a term that denotes a "political and governmental doctrine" also was born in the 19th century. Asad writes that both terms are "interdependent" (24) and he emphasizes that secularism is a concept of 19th-century Christian Europe.

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[56] In the following, Talal Asad explains how the term was coined: "The word secularism was coined by George Jacob Holyoake in 1851. Secularism was intended to differentiate Holyoake's anti-theistic position from Bradlaugh's atheistic pronouncements, and, although Bradlaugh, Charles Watts, G. W. Foote, and other atheists were identified with the secular movement, Holyoake always endeavored to make it possible that the social, political, and his ethical aims of secularism should not necessitate subscription to atheistic belief, in the hope that liberal-minded theists might, without prejudice to their theism, join in promoting these ends--an attitude to which he persisted in clinging, despite the small success which it achieved." Eric S. Waterhouse, "Secularism," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Belief*, vol. 11, ed. James Hastings, p. 348. (*Formations* 23-24)

Genealogically, Asad contextualizes secularism through three main concepts: Renaissance humanism, the Enlightenment concept of nature, and Hegel's philosophy of history (*Formations* 192). He then shows how *the secular* was originally born in a theological language, from the word *saeculum*. In this respect, secularization (*seacularisatio*) means "a legal transition from monastic life *(regularis)* to the life of canons (*seacularis*)"[57] . . . which later signifies "the transfer of ecclesiastical real property to laypersons" (192). According to Asad, the following changes that appeared with the discourse of modernity shaped secularism: *the secular* became a ground where theology came to be interpreted as "a false consciousness"; the idea of human agency appeared as "the self-conscious maker[s] of History," while "human[s] as agent[s]" established the desire for universal knowledge of nature and society (*Formations* 192-193). In this "disenchanted" worldview, even *chance* came to be seen as *tamable* (*Formations* 193).

Such a genealogical contextualization of secularism is significant, because it shows how secularism (as Asad criticizes it) may turn out to have an exclusivist grammar. Roth's, Rushdie's and Pamuk's fictions have different stances in this respect: Pamuk and Roth, I will argue, have a more pluralist view of secularism, while Rushdie's metafiction certainly treats Islam and Muslim characters as the ones with "false consciousness." In this regard, *individual consciousness vs. collective consciousness* is one basic problem for all three writers, but Rushdie's fiction does not have the *pluralist* perspective that appears in both Pamuk's and Roth's novels.

Endorsing Benedict Anderson's secularization thesis, Asad adds that the medieval Christian concepts such as "Creation, the Fall, Christ's life and death, Judgment Day and the hierarchy of spaces" such as "the heavens, the earth, purgatory, hell", are reduced to a

[57] Clergymen.

duality by secularism: *the secular* and *the religious* (*Formations* 194). In other words, *the religious world* can now only exist within the human imagination, which marks a significant change in human agency. This is how *the secular* or *secular critique* creates the basis for secularism. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* has a similar secularist perspective in his portrayal of several Muslim characters as the products of a collective identity of *submission* and *businessism*, and who have a limited relationship with reality. I will make this argument in the Rushdie chapter.

A central question for Asad is what happens when *the secular* becomes a state ideology, or secularism: he first writes that there are two options for religion from the point of view of secularism: the first option is to be confined to private belief, and the second option is being a part of public life, but having no demands on the flow of life. This, according to Asad, is the only choice, *an either-or option*, given to religion by secularism. And this situation gets more complicated when the ambition of the secular merges with the nation-state, which tries to regulate everything and everyone (*Formations* 199).

To summarize, a few ideas of Asad stand out here: first, secularism requires religion to retreat from the public sphere to the private sphere, and secondly, this "enactment" (*Formations* 5) "doctrine" (7) "principle" (13) "concept" (17) "a system of political governance" (57) functions as a *formation* that regulates all aspects of human life in the structure of the nation-state. [58] Secularism is a concept of 19th-century Western Europe (208) and the secular state is by no means indifferent to religion or political

[58] This is what informs the title of Asad's work on secularism, *Formations of the Secular*. By emphasizing the plurality of formations, Asad admits different forms of the secular and secularism. However, these "national differences," according to Asad, are "by and large family differences" (*Formations* 208).

toleration; it is, however, "a complex arrangement of legal reasoning, moral practice, and political authority" (*Formations* 255).

IV. Key Points

i. José Casanova: Secularization, Modernity, Enlightenment and Public Religions

Differentiation is a key term in Casanova: both in *Public Religions* (6) and in his later articles, Casanova defends that differentiation,[59] the core of the secularization theory, arguing that it is still valid ("Secularization Revisited: Reply to Asad" 12, 19).[60] [61] [62] What does public religion mean? Both in his early (*Public* 5, 6, 221) and later works ("Reply" 13), Casanova proposes that some religions may be more "desirable" compared to others, on the basis that desired religions are more compatible with differentiated modern structures, which can greatly contribute to creating a stronger and better public sphere and modern civil societies. Casanova's perspective explains a basic problem regarding the exclusivity of secularist nationalisms: Rushdie's fiction, in this regard, differs from those of Roth and Pamuk, because Pamuk's and Roth's fictions never have a "desired religion" attitude, while Rushdie certainly has it. In this sense, I argue, Roth and Pamuk have a much more pluralist approach to the issues of identity and belonging in the nation-state.

Casanova is clearly influenced by the idea of Enlightenment: he sees the continued existence and "reassertion" of religious traditions as the "sign of the failure of Enlightenment" ("Reply" 31; "Public Religions" 233-234). Interestingly, he favors the European model of secularization, which he sees as a "teleological process of modern

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[59] This differentiation is "emancipation of the secular spheres—primarily the modern state, the capitalist market economy, and modern science—from the religious sphere" ("Reply to Asad" 12).
[60] *Public* from now on.
[61] "Secularization Revisited: Reply to Talal Asad" (12) and "Public Religions Revisited" (104).
[62] "Reply" from now on.

social change"; and on top of this, European experience shows Casanova that "the more modern a society the more secular it becomes; and finally, that being secular is "*a sign of the times*" ("Public Religions " 81; "Reply" 17). In the next step, Casanova evaluates this as "the triumph of the knowledge regime of secularism" ("Reply" 17).

Another striking point in Casanova's view is that he explains the effects of secularism on religion with the concepts of development and progress: according to Casanova, the reason that the European experience of secularism has been so unique is "precisely the triumph of secularism as a teleological theory of religious development" ("Reply" 17). In this view, he does not consider the colonial effects of secularism, or its impact on religious minorities within any specific community. Rather, it seems to be the case that Casanova has a dichotomic view, and he sees religions as entities that need to be developed. His use of the following concepts (triumph, goal-oriented/teleological secularism, development of religions) supports this idea. Correspondingly, Casanova puts forward the critique that, since the 18th century, the understanding of religion provided by Enlightenment thinkers shaped the European secularization model, and, hence, this model turned into "normative-teleological theories of religious development that presupposed religious decline as the telos of history" (*"*Reply" 17). Casanova's pro-Enlightenment view and his Euro-centric, secularist, teleological and dichotomic perspectives take the concept of modernity as the basis. A similar view can also be observed in Rushdie's characterization in the Indo-Pakistani War scenes, or in the stereotype of businessman/Muslim, as I will discuss in the chapter on Rushdie.

Similar to Rushdie, Casanova's secularism finds specific religions to be more useful than others. Casanova also discusses to which religions the European/Western

Christendom model of secularism could be applied: religions like Confucianism or Taoism, being "lay" and "worldly" religions, maintains Casanova, do not need to undergo a secularization process as much as the others (″Reply" 19-20). [63] Casanova finds one religion quite useful in terms of the development of modernity: Christianity in general, and Protestant Christianity in particular, contributed a lot to secular modernity (″Reply" 23). In addition, Casanova discusses why it is very hard to homogenize Muslims (″Reply" 29), which shows that he has a modernity-based homogenizing view of secularism. In a parallel manner, he states that all religions are subject to modernity (″Reply" 29).

IV. Key Points

ii. Asad on Violence, the Nation-State and Colonialism

Talal Asad defends the idea that one should understand *the secular* to be able to understand secularism (*Formations* 16). Also, the *religious* and the *secular,* for Asad*,* are not essentially fixed categories. Similarly, it is not possible to define any universal essence that might define "sacred language" or "sacred experience" (*Formations* 25); in other words, religion cannot be defined. If it is defined, this is done within a political agenda whose roots go as far back as Enlightenment attempts to curb the influence of Christianity. The same language can be seen in the colonial rule of Europe, particularly through the language of humanizing the world (*Formations* 109, 111, 135).

Asad's theory has a reflection in literature. As I explained above, Asad is not monist in perspective, that is, his pluralist position does not have *the stadial* view of Casanova. Asad sees that the two entities (the secular and the religious) co-exist, not

[63] Casanova seems to be incoherent here: even though he writes that "it should be obvious that social science should not be in the business of authenticating authoritatively what true religion or true tradition might be" ("Reply" 23), he keeps proposing which religions should be secularized and in what ways.

necessarily excluding each other. A similar pluralist viewpoint, I argue, is to be found in the novels of Roth and Pamuk. These works employ metafiction in a pluralist way to criticize the dualistic views, *and/or perspectives*, and exclusivist politics of the nation-state. And this becomes possible via *interpreting* secularism in Asad's sense, but not in the *stadial* sense of Casanova.

Asad finds violence to be intrinsic to liberalism's secular myth (*Formations* 26; 56, 59); and this violence is *universalizing reason*. In order to create a space free from religion, that is, an enlightened space, "the liberal" feels the need to attack "the darkness of the outside world" which is an alleged threat (*Formations* 59). Here, the dichotomic perspective, as seen in Rushdie's works, prevails: enlightened/dark, progressive/backward, etc. Such a categorization and dichotomic perspective (religion being backward and childish) is the result of the European desire to create new human subjects (*Formations* 110-111).

According to Asad, religion has no place in modern secular liberal society. Based on the civilized/uncivilized dyad, belief can be held only lightly so that it can be changed when need be. Otherwise, secularism, being a political framework, cannot function effectively (*Formations* 115). Also, the structure of the nation-state is based on its ability to administer violence: every citizen of any structure of the nation-state might be exposed to the "institutional violence" of the state law, which might even lead to the death of the subject/citizen (143). How does that relate to colonialism? Asad believes that political liberalism, aimed at the idea of human progress, desires to rule worldwide. If liberal politics cannot prevail through reason and the dichotomic discourse mentioned above, it

will not refrain from using its force in order to dominate other lands and peoples (*Formations* 61).

According to Asad, Enlightenment politics (also called *secular redemptive politics*) has an agenda to repress *religious passion*; the discourse of *public reason* enables a group of elites to give shape to humans through education, which eventually aims to get religious passion under control. And this is performed in the name of public reason and the public good (*Formations* 61). Religious passion is a consistent theme among all the three writers: Pamuk, Roth, and Rushdie are keenly interested in it. Yet, what differs among them is their monist or plural perspectives revealed in their narration and characterization. For instance, Roth's *The Counterlife* rejects the reductionist idea of portraying Orthodox Jews in Israel (such as Henry Zuckerman) through stereotypes. Instead, Roth's novel shows these characters in *flux*, in continuous change. In other words, through continuous plot shifts, Roth's metafiction does not allow any characters to remain in the same life and/or in any ideological bubble. By doing so, Roth's self-reflexivity reminds its readers of the *temporality* of identities. Throughout this dissertation, I will argue that employing metafiction in this way is a pluralist and inclusive attitude, compared to the stereotyping of Muslim characters in Rushdie's fiction. Even though both writers deal with fundamentalist characters, one use of metafiction clearly undermines the stadial and secularist perspective (Roth and Pamuk), whereas another use of self-reflexivity (in Rushdie's fiction) endorses the stadial and secularist views, of which Asad is critical.

As stated above, secularism cannot be thought of apart from the nation-state: the nation-state has a clear jurisdiction over its citizens. And through education and the

media, the state also tries to create a national identity (*Formations* 137). Is there a possibility of escape from the nation-state? According to Asad, this is not possible, because now the nation-state has become the norm as a political framework all around the world (*Formations* 141; 143). In addition, the transformation from traditional culture into modern culture is never easy, painless or humane: people are "pushed, seduced, coerced, or persuaded" to be transformed, or, in Asad's language, "to be redeemed" (154). One striking example provided by Asad is how liberals' definition of the human being has historically been exclusive of slaves, competitors (British tyrants for America) or pagans (*Formations* 144-145). The nation-state has always had an *exclusive* perspective in the disguise of *bettering*, *humanizing* and making the world *flourish* through the jargon/dichotomy of *good vs. evil* (*Formations* 147). This dualist perspective is a fundamental issue for the fictions of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk. I will argue that all three writers are quite critical of this exclusivist grammar, with each having his own certain limitations.

V. Conclusions and Connections: How to Contextualize the Discussion between Casanova and Asad

Why does Asad sarcastically call Casanova "an enlightened intellectual"?[64] The answer to this question can be found in the similarities and differences between Casanova's and Asad's theories on secularism, and, more particularly, in the way that they perceive some key terms such as Enlightenment, *the secular*, religion, the nation-state, progress, etc. Therefore, this part of the study will focus on these similarities and differences, and will briefly contextualize the Asad-Casanova discussion overall, namely, in the recent academic debate on secularism theory.

[64] *Formations of the Secular* (183).

To begin with, Asad and Casanova agree on the definition of *the secular*, and they both define it as an *epistemic category*. The difference between them, however, lies in Casanova's view of *the secular* as a "*central* modern epistemic category" ("*The Secular and Secularisms*" 1049).[65] What are the implications or consequences of Casanova's proposed centrality of *the secular*? First, by placing *the secular* as the primary component of the dichotomy, Casanova takes on a language that privileges the relative terms of *rationality* over *religiosity*, *modernity* over *backwardness*.[66] The central epistemic category of Casanova is based on an image or an idea of *an ideal human* that has slight connections with religion, if not having totally abandoned it. On the other hand, Talal Asad has a very different account of *the secular*.[67] Asad's portrayal of *the secular*, being a "concept that brings together certain behaviors, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life" (*Formations* 25), is linked to political liberalism (26), and the nation-state (43) as well as the institutional violence (6, 8, 26, 56) that these structures force on people.

The second major difference between Casanova and Asad is the way they approach and define religion. Casanova claims that, in the last few decades, we are witnessing a *deprivatization of religions* (*Public Religions* 211).[68] He claims that religions that do not accept marginalization in modern life can go through a

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[65] Emphasis Mine.

[66] The dichotomy of the *secular/the religious*.

[67] This is a slightly more complicated matter, and may not do full justice to Casanova's account. What complicates this explanation is Casanova's selective view of religions: more specifically, his concept of *public religions*, as well as his approach to Christianity, and the way he presents it as a model to other religions. Casanova's makes a separation between *enlightened/reformed* religions, and those that need to be reformed. The concept of modernity, according to Casanova, makes *the secular* central category. In the final analysis, Casanova writes that "all established churches are incompatible with modern differentiated states and. . . with the modern principle of citizenship" (*Public Religions* 211); but still, in his later work, Casanova shows the "aggiornamento" (modernization) of the Catholic Church as a successful model for the modernization of religions. Casanova writes that this is how the Catholic Church contributed to human rights and this is how other religions should do their *aggiornamento* ("Reply to Asad" 25-29).

[68] That is, religions are conforming to modern life and taking up more space in the public sphere (*Public Religions* 41).

transformation; and therefore, get deprivatized.[69] This transformation can be possible through *secularization* (*Public Religions* 4-6). Furthermore, Casanova writes that some religions are (or can be) more "viable and desirable" on the basis that they are not "intrinsically incompatible with differentiated modem structures" and he names these desired and transformed religions as *public religions* (*Public Religions* 7). This is the very point where Casanova and Asad differ: in *Genealogies of Religion* (45-48), Asad writes that religion cannot be essentialized; the essentialization of religion (in Casanova's case, restricting and reshaping *religion* through a set of criteria which is shaped by *the secular*) results in classifying religions as backward. And this view is problematic, because it has served in a series of policies since the Enlightenment, namely, from the violence of the nation-state against its citizens to the colonial agenda of Europe.

The third difference between Casanova and Asad lies in their understanding of *modernity.* For Casanova, modernity is a "functional differentiation and emancipation of secular spheres. . . from the religious sphere" (*Public Religions* 19). Asad, as explained above, writes that modernity is a "project," and is interlinked to some other projects, such as "constitutionalism, moral autonomy, democracy, human rights, civil equality, industry, consumerism, freedom of the marker—and secularism" (*Formations* 13). But what unites all of these and modernity are *violence* and the hegemonic West (*Formations* 13), which continuously reproduce such a dichotomic discourse. To answer the question at the beginning of this section, Asad sees Casanova almost as a spokesperson for these projects; this is the exact reason he sarcastically calls Casanova an *enlightened intellectual* (*Formations* 183). By doing so, Asad underlines which discourse is being

[69] Note that Casanova's view is another example of dichotomic thinking, as in the example of public space vs. private space.

legitimized by Casanova, and reminds the reader of the consequences of this view at the individual, social, political, and international levels.[70]

The discussion between Casanova and Asad can be read in relation to the recent academic debates on secularism. In *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (2011), Jürgen Habermas questions secularism by noting that the secular and the religious have to co-exist in interaction, and, states Habermas, neither party can cut off ties with the other. Habermas emphasizes that religion is here to stay, and therefore, *the political* should keep its association with religion in a "complementary relation" (27). For this reason, Habermas updates his position on the discussion of public and private space by writing that the use of public and private spheres by both religious and non-religious citizens equally is of critical importance (27). Similarly, in ″Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?"[71] Saba Mahmood criticizes the polarization discourse between religious extremism and secular freedom, where the former is simply defined as violent and uncritical, and the latter is satirical, democratic, and tolerant.

Similar to Asad, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Gil Anidjar and Akeel Bilgrami evaluate secularism in the colonial context. In "Secularism and Religion in the Modern/ Colonial World-System: From Secular Postcoloniality to Postsecular Transmodernity," Maldonado-Torres explains how secularism came to be the religion of the modern world, how the public sphere has been constrained with the allegations that religious life is irrational (360), and how the imperial aspect of secularism operates through the notions of civility and secularity (368-369). On the other hand, in "Secularism," Gil Anidjar,

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[70] Some examples of Asad's views on European colonialism in the context of secular/liberal modernity and humanizing the world can be found in *Formations of the Secular*, on p. 109-111, 162, 170.
[71] In Asad's *Is Critique Secular?: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech.*

similar to Asad and Maldonado-Torres, calls the reader's attention to the historical origins of secularism, that is, Western Christianity. Based on his harsh critique of Said's *Orientalism*, Anidjar formulates the evolution of secularism as *Orientalism is Secularism* (56) and *Secularism is Christianity* (62-63). Akeel Bilgrami, similarly, puts forward that secularism is a stance taken about religion (4); it is an ideal in itself; it is a political doctrine among many others (6); secularism has a history, and we can't understand it outside its historical context (Western, European, Christian, Nation-State, Religious Conflicts); secularism may not be necessary/needed in all societies, as in the example of 1930's India (26-30). It is possible to see secularism in illiberal polities (Turkey, South Africa, and Communist Russia) (23).

On the other hand, even though all the names and critical works mentioned so far are highly critical of secularism (although they vary in content and scope), most of these works, similar to Asad's, question the origin and centrality of secularism and its problematic relationship with the concept of modernity. However, there is at least one scholar of secularism who seems to be close to Casanova in terms of privileging the secular: Stathis Gourgouris. In *Lessons in Secular Criticism,* he writes that even though it is clear that the secular is a product of Western Christianity and has a colonial past, it is naive to simply give up on *the secular*, as anti-Westernism and anti-secularism can very well be separated (33). Both Gourgouris and Casanova, unlike most other critics, see a positive, transformative power and potential that should be supported. All in all, the Casanova-Asad discussion relates to the works and scholars mentioned herein, in the context of the debates on the secular, the religious, the nation-state, colonialism, Eurocentrism, modernity, the Enlightenment, public/private space, and religion.

Two scholars, Étienne Balibar and Gayatri Spivak, recognize the shortcomings of traditional exclusionary secularism. Therefore, they call for alternative non-exclusionary definitions for the term. According to Balibar, new and critical secularism must be able to create a dialogue between the secular and the religious, not *exclude* the other party: because, writes Balibar, "identity conflicts, communitarian hatreds, or simple incommunicability" cannot be solved "by legal or statist means" (*Cosmopolitanism* 21-22). A new "element," according to Balibar "must be formulated as such in the first place—as an irreconcilable juxtaposition of choices about the human and the inhuman, the intrinsic divisions of the human, and so on" (*Cosmopolitanism* 22). The aim of this new element, for him, must be "to become mutually compatible in the same public space or enter into a *free* conversation" (*Cosmopolitanism* 21). What Balibar conceives of is the opposite of exclusive identity politics. He believes that the new secularism needs such "additional a-religious element" that may enhance dialogue between the parties (21-22) even though such an element, he writes, "does not really exist, except as a philosophical fiction" (23).

Similar to Balibar, Gayatri Spivak proposes that the definition of secularism must be more inclusive: she argues that "[s]ecularism is too rarefied, too existentially impoverished to take on the thickness of a language. It is a mechanism to avoid violence that must be learned as mere reasonableness. It is as thin as an ID card, not as thick as 'identity'" (*Terror* 106). Both Spivak and Balibar, then, are critical of the reduction of secularism only to its genealogy. In this regard, Spivak and Balibar (similar to Stathis Gourgouris) propose that the criticism of secularism needs to go beyond a genealogical reading. As an alternative locale, Balibar proposes "philosophical fiction" (*Cosmopolitan*

23), while Spivak's alternative secularism is "in the letter" (*Terror* 106-107). With such an expression, Spivak values education, universities, exchange, literature, and the humanities as a broad category.

The views of Asad and Balibar are compatible with those of Nilufer Göle, who warns us that "monocivilizational readings of both the secular and religious fail to account for the ongoing process of mutual transformation" (*Islam and Secularity* 102). All of these views revolve around the political dichotomy of *pluralism* vs. *exclusivism*. The same tension, I argue, is apparent in the novels of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk, and each novel provides a specific political and literary response to this central duality.

In this section, I have distinguished between the two main interpretations of secularism in the nation-state. On the one hand is secularism in Casanova's sense: European by origin, positioning and classifying religions and belief in relation to and in accordance with Enlightenment values in order to design and maintain *differentiated* modern structures.[72] In addition, secularism of this sort asserts a hierarchically high and regulating position in society, on the basis that secularism is an epistemology that has both the capacity and duty to *develop* and *modernize* society through secular values featuring *reason*. On the other end of the spectrum is the critique of Talal Asad who uncovers the socio-political forces that shaped secularism, its *universalizing reason*, as well as its *institutional violence*. Asad's main critique of the secularist politics represented by Casanova is that religion and religiosity are defined as a *passion* and that the secular politics in the nation-state is based on an ideal-human-type, and lastly, that there is no escape from the compulsory transformative politics implemented in the nation-state. In

[72] That is, leaving religion behind.

this respect, modernity, the nation-state and secularism all become both the source and the *locale of controversy*.

The Asad-Casanova debate on secularism sheds light on some basic conflicts with which Roth's, Rushdie's and Pamuk's works grapple. Interpretations of secularism help define identities, or the *forms* of belonging in the nation-state. To be more specific, secularism in Casanova's sense offers a quite different understanding of citizenship, compared to Asad's critical view of secularism. The difference in the perspective, in fact, originates from the concept of the *modern*, and the conflicting views of what *modern(ization)* really is. Theory and literature are certainly in dialogue: Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk's metafictional novels all have distinct views on citizenship, religion, secularism, identity, and the nation-state. In the following chapters, I will argue that Rushdie's fiction converges with the theory of Casanova, whereas Pamuk's and Roth's fictions are more critical of the secularist and exclusivist politics within the nation-state. The chapters of literary analysis will discuss alternative literary perspectives, with the first in line being Philip Roth and his metafictional tour-de-force novel on secularism, nationalism, and Jewishness across the world.

> "The burden isn't either/or, consciously choosing from possibilities equally difficult and regrettable—it's and/and/and/and/and as well. Life *is* and: the accidental and the immutable, the elusive and the graspable, the bizarre and the predictable, the actual and the potential, all the multiplying realities, entangled, overlapping, colliding, conjoined—plus the multiplying illusions! This times this times this times this ... Is an intelligent human being likely to be much more than a large-scale manufacturer of misunderstanding?" (*The Counterlife* 306)

Chapter II. Landscapes of Belonging:

Roth's Metafiction, Jewish Identity, and the Secular Nation-State

I. Introduction

Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* asks several challenging and deliberately disturbing questions regarding national and religious belonging(s) in the nation-state. His work is distinguished not only for raising these questions, but also for the specific ways he asks them, employing certain literary techniques to discuss identity issues. Roth's work opens a dialogue with and questions several theories of the nation-state in general, and Jewishness around the world in particular.

In this chapter, I address the connection between literature and identity issues in the nation-state in five sections. First, I demonstrate how *The Counterlife* shows that *writing* is at the very core not only of nation-making, but also of all constructions of identity. Roth's novel achieves this through a distinctive use of metafiction. I explain how the novel discusses issues of belonging through its *form*. Then, I turn to the problem of the fluidity or the solidity of the concept of *self* and identities in the nation-state. I

contend that *The Counterlife* has a particular emphasis on the fluidity of all collective identities; that is, the novel develops its argument for the plasticity of identities based on the specific concept of *performance*. I explore how Roth uses this term in opposition to Benedict Anderson's *unisonance* and *uniformity* in the nation-state.

Next, I demonstrate how *The Counterlife* deals with the exclusivist language shared by almost all of its characters. This, I propose, is also reflected in the *form* of the novel through shifts in the narrative techniques. Just like the nation-state has bounded and exclusivist structures, Roth shows that individuals, too, partake in the grammar of *us vs. them*. Such a common and destructive trait of identity politics makes it impossible to constitute an open membership without inherent hostilities within nations. This has previously been shown in Benedict Anderson's theory at the social level. However, I argue that Roth's novel switches the scale from the social to the individual level, thus showing his readers how all individual members suffer from such belligerent attitudes, frequently fueled by racism, and religious and ethnic hatred. I argue that this is one major difference between (Anderson's) theory and (Roth's) literary work, regarding the methodology of *studying* the nation and belonging.

In the fourth section, I compare the understanding of *time* in Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory to the perception and criticism of *nation-time* in *The Counterlife*. Such a comparison accounts for two issues: first, I illustrate how the past keeps coming back in Roth's novel to get hold of the present and the future. Second, and related to the first, I display how Roth's novel undermines Benedict Anderson's theory of *homogeneous-empty-time*. In the conclusion, I establish that *none* of the five fictional landscapes in Roth's novel points to an actually genuine secular *locus* or *topos*. I propose that *The*

Counterlife presents to its readers that nation-states are rather clash-zones of national and religious identity conflicts, and as such are anything but *secular*. In addition, I illustrate Philip Roth's unique way of criticizing all sorts of belonging/identity structures in the context of his literary constructions of Jewishness across the boundaries. Roth's novel, I contend, is thought-provoking, and has a pessimistic tone regarding the issues of ethnic and religious identities in the nation-state. This section also includes critiques of Roth's interlocutors, which can help elucidate the unique approach of *The Counterlife* to issues of belonging and identity politics in the nation-state.

II. Writing and Metafiction in *The Counterlife*

The relationship between *form* and *content* has been a matter of discussion not only in art, but also in the field of literature for a long time. This duality exists because how an idea is expressed is at least as influential as the idea itself. In other words, as Claudio Guillén explains, the form of a work is "the visible manifestation. . . of formation, making, *poïesis*." (36) In this regard, the *design* or the *form* of a literary work is a vital component of the meaning-making process, to a degree that the form becomes an element that equally creates the content, meaning, or idea. In some literary works, the clever use of form considerably contributes to the articulation of ideas, or to the *content* of the work of art. Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* is such a literary work. For this reason, I will analyze how Roth uses metafiction and hence brings writing to the very center of identity construction in the nation-state. I illustrate how through complex self-referentiality of the text, Roth's work shows the plasticity of identities that may appear to be rigid.

As a start, *The Counterlife* deliberately distorts the regular, usual or expected flow of events in a way to disturb the reader. Each chapter is an imaginary socio-political landscape: The first chapter, *Basel* is the story of Nathan's brother Henry, a well-off Jew living in the United States, who dreams of establishing a new life with a *Shiksa*[73] in Europe after heart surgery to cure his impotence, but dies during the surgery. The second chapter, Judea, turns the previous chapter upside down and the narrative begins again: Henry survives the operation, regains his sexual prowess,[74] moves to a West Bank settlement in Israel, where he starts learning Hebrew and lives with fundamentalist/Orthodox Jews like Mordecai Lippman. The third chapter, *Aloft*, is at mid-point in the narration, and depicts Nathan's disappointment in his failure to communicate with his brother in Israel and his return to the United States. On the plane returning to America, he meets half-crazy Jimmy, who attempts to hijack an Israeli commercial plane, and claims to have brought explosives on board wanting to convey his message to the world: Jews should no longer be captive of their past and they should "forget remembering"[75] (*CL* 181). The fourth chapter, *Gloucestershire* comes with another narrative twist: now, Nathan is the impotent brother who plans to move to England with his *shiksa* Maria. The fictitious author, Nathan Zuckerman, experiences British anti-Semitism, decides to have heart surgery to cure his impotence, but cannot survive. The last chapter is another political *topos*: *Christendom*. This chapter returns to

[73] Non-Jew woman in derogatory language. Henry dreams of escaping his Jewish life by marrying "Teutonic" and hence exotic Maria (*CL* 12).
[74] In Roth's fiction, there is a strong connection between sexual power/impotence and nationalism, which is discussed in the following sections.
[75] Forgetting is a central term in Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory.

the narratives of *Judea* and *Aloft*, in which Maria and Nathan review all the *counter-lives*, narratives and their counter-narratives both retrospectively and prospectively.[76]

That each chapter undoes the narrative of the previous chapters is one inventive way to address intricate issues of belonging. This metafictional narrative design is so complex that Alan Cooper defines it as "a story, within a story, and then as a story within a story within a story" (214). Overall, *The Counterlife* is a work and a statement on Jewishness and Jewish identities across the world. As Debra Shostak explains, the structure of the novel "consistently reinvent[s] the *being*[77] of central characters" (131). In so doing, Roth's novel continuously reminds its readers that there are always alternative ways of existing, and that seemingly solid ethnic or religious identities could very well transform into something else, even their opposites. Shostak also points out that there are at least two functions of Roth's metafiction in *The Counterlife*: the first is "multiplying meanings through accretion" and the second is the portrayal of a "future-directed gesture toward being" (212). One function, then, of Roth's self-reflexivity is to not allow any specific (Jewish) identities to be superior to any other. The other attribute is the assertion that all characters and hence all sorts of belonging are flexible and open to transformation, no matter how rigid, conventional, and Orthodox they may seem.

The fictitious author is another complex use of metafiction in *The Counterlife*. Nathan Zuckerman, the fictitious novelist from Newark, New Jersey, is a character in several Roth novels. As Charles Berryman reports, Zuckerman first appeared in an early work, *My Life as a Man* (1974), as a character created by another fictitious author, Peter

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[76] Nathan and Maria not only talk about the past, but also their future. Continuing the sexual imagery and its connection to identity politics in the nation-state, they cannot agree on the circumcision plans the unborn baby, and the novel ends with Nathan Zuckerman's rather pessimistic closing remarks. More on this in the following sections of this chapter.

[77] Author's emphasis.

Tarnopol. This was followed by his subsequent novels, *The Ghost Writer* (1979) and *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981) (178). In *Zuckerman Unbound*, Nathan Zuckerman has become a well-known fictitious author and the writer of a controversial and fictitious novel, *Carnovsky*,[78] which is also at the center of several conflicts in *The Counterlife* (*CL* 29, 74, 91, 99, 174, 206, 208-215, 218, 226, 227, 237, 279, and 313). Regarding the relationship between Nathan Zuckerman and Philip Roth, one could think that Nathan is just one of several colorful characters created by Roth. Yet, this would be a true, but not an entirely convincing statement: the character of Nathan has a special place in Roth's work, as Nathan's metafictional presence as a fictitious author makes a significant contribution to Roth's literary statement on several identity issues regarding secularism and the nation-state.

Why would an author interested in Jewishness, belonging, and identity politics pursue such an intricate narrative technique? One of the many consequences of using the literary device of metafiction in this way is to establish a distance between the actual author and his work. Such a literary buffer may seem to be reasonable, because *attack on the writer* and *writing*[79] is one of the strong themes in *The Counterlife*. For instance, Henry Zuckerman states that Nathan Zuckerman is an "unregenerate defiler . . . irritant in the Jewish bloodstream, making people uncomfortable and angry by looking with a

[78] In *Zuckerman Unbound*, the fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman defines his fictitious novel *Carnovsky* as "a book ostensibly about someone else attempting to break free from his accustomed restraints" and "a book about "onanism in Jewish New Jersey" (qtd. in Stade).

[79] As the following sections of this chapter show, Roth sees a very strong connection between *writing* and the creation of identities in the nation-state. In this regard, Roth seems to be very similar to Benedict Anderson, but politically, they are at two extreme ends. On the one hand is Anderson, who writes that *writing*, the novel or print-capitalism helped create a unisonant identity in a relatively secular nation-state. And on the other end of the spectrum is Philip Roth, who employs *writing* and the novel to show that identities are never uniform or unisonant, and that there is no real secular *topos* in the nation-state. In the following sections, I also show that Roth's fiction gets very close to the identity theory of Homi Bhabha, while moving further from Anderson.

mirror up his own asshole, really despised by a lot of smart people, offensive to every possible lobby" (*CL* 219). Roth makes sure that the hatred is not directed at Nathan on a personal level, but as a writer: "These writers are great—real fakes. Want it *all.*[80] Madly aggressive, shit on the page, shoot on the page, show off their every last fart on the page—and for that they expect medals. Shameless. You gotta love 'em" (*CL* 219). As this quotation shows, writers of identity politics such as Philip Roth (and Salman Rushdie and Orhan Pamuk) are harshly criticized for their controversial ideas on national identities.

The presence of such a hostile reaction in the novel corresponds to a connection discussed in Anderson's work: the relationship between *writing* and the *creation of identities*. In this respect, it is no surprise that the literary freedom enjoyed by the fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman takes a lot of heat. By having Zuckerman take control of creating all the characters and conflicts through his manuscript, and by letting him take all the heat in the novel, Philip Roth makes a literary statement about the following. First, he shows that he is fully aware of the theoretical discussion on the fictionality of all identities: all the characters created and depicted by Nathan Zuckerman in *The Counterlife* have the plasticity to start another life in another chapter of the book. Secondly, such a multiplicity of Jewish identities is a direct refutation of Anderson's theory and assumption that nationalism is a unisonant structure. Third, Roth's fiction shifts the center of creation: it is no longer the *state*[81] that holds the power over the nation, but now, as Roth puts it, it is the *writer* and his ability to create, question and challenge all sorts of belonging(s) in the nation-state.

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[80] Author's emphasis.

[81] The *state* here refers to the state analyzed in Benedict Anderson's work. To understand this, see Anderson's chapter on the census, map and the museum. In Anderson's words, the tools of the state are "...census's abstract quantification/serialization of persons, the map's eventual logoization of political space, and the museum's 'ecumenical,' profane genealogizing..." (*Imagined Communities* xiv).

It is not only the writers, then, who are targeted. *The Counterlife* shows that the act of writing (or having the freedom to shape and reshape identities through literature) is under attack, because individual perspectives are usually in conflict with national agendas. For instance, the following passage shows how fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman's metafiction is defined by Henry:

> In his words was our fate—*in our mouths were his words.*[82] Everyone buried and mummified in that verbal lava, including finally himself—nothing straightforward, unvarnished, directly alive, nothing faced up to as it actually is. In his mind it never mattered what *actually* happened or what anyone *actually* was—instead *everything important distorted, disguised, wrenched ridiculously out of proportion, determined by those endless, calculated illusions cunningly cooked up in this terrible solitude, everything self-calculation, deliberate deception, always this unremittingly dreadful conversion of the facts into something else*[83] (232)

Such attacks on the writer and the act of writing cannot be a coincidence, and are repeated in the novel. For instance, Nathan is described as a "cannibal" and a "Zulu" who "shrunk" heads, and "stuck [them] up on the post for everyone to gape at" (238) and is frequently blamed for being the "nicey" one (*CL* 114, 115, 121, 127, 133) and a naive writer. He is portrayed to be "unforgivably blind in [his] fiction" or as one who fails to understand "the consequences" of what he writes (*CL* 161).[84] One can claim that the novel, *The Counterlife,* provides ample material to justify the implication that writing and writers are seen as a threat, particularly regarding issues of identity formation.[85] The first function of having a fictitious author in the novel is to attract attention to the relationship among the writer, work, and reader. In doing so, Roth's metafiction attracts a lot of

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[82] Emphasis is Roth's.
[83] Emphasis is mine.
[84] What is implied here is that there are serious consequences to Nathan Zuckerman's critique of Jewishness, as Arabs and allegedly other anti-Semitic groups use this to their advantage, as stated repeatedly in *The Counterlife*. Roth's novel is seriously critical of this perspective, and this *us/them* grammar as the dominant form of interaction in the nation-state is the subject of the following sections in this chapter.
[85] For more on the relationship between literature and identity formation in the nation-state, see Chapter 1 and the discussion on Benedict Anderson.

criticism from both inside and outside the world of the novel, because the novel continuously reminds us of the fictionality of all the identities through its continuously shifting narrative structure. Alan Cooper defines this as "a risk of accusation of betrayal" and "a pain Roth has known," particularly "in distorting others to discover himself" (215).

Like Orhan Pamuk, Philip Roth deals with several dualities regarding identity issues in the nation-state.[86] If there is any common characteristic in these writers' approach to identity discussions, it is the unproductiveness of defining the self in terms of constricting identity patterns. In the example of Roth's *The Counterlife*, some of the problematic dichotomies as defined by Shostak are "normal versus abnormal," "Diaspora versus *aliyah*,"[87] "goy versus Jew," "force as an acknowledgement of difference versus the pastoral as a vision of unity" (132). These main conflicts among the Diaspora, homeland Jews and Europeans are articulated through the shifting narratives of each chapter and are represented by specific characters in the novel. This is exactly where the name of the novel originates: each character has an *ante* or an *other*, and the fictional writer, Nathan Zuckerman, keeps inventing and reinventing them. Like the *imagined* structure of the nation-state, the author keeps emphasizing (through the form of the novel, the metafiction) that all identities are plastic; that is, never solid. Through the fiction(s) of Nathan Zuckerman and his recovered notes that turned into the novel we are reading, lives, *counter-lives* and conflicting identities parade through the world of the novel. With each chapter, the stereotypes literally come and go, which also shows the *temporality* of these imagined, fictional identities. The concept of temporality of identity is an important

[86] The respective chapters on Rushdie and Pamuk provide an analysis of the dualities regarding identity and the nation-state, as well as how each writer approaches them.

[87] Jews that immigrate to Israel. This immigration is accepted as one of the principles of Zionism. Henry's travel to Agor/West Bank in the second chapter of The Counterlife is such a choice, and the novel has an ironic tone, on the basis that it is nourished by and nurtures exclusivist identity politics.

idea ignored in Anderson's theory, but cleverly emphasized in Roth's fiction.

What exactly does *the counterlife* mean? The title comes from a specific consequence of exclusivist identity politics in the nation-state, and the metafiction in the novel is at the very core of this issue. Through its metafictional form, *The Counterlife* asks a basic, but very challenging question. In his letter to his brother Henry (who is a fundamentalist Jew in this chapter), fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman asks: what is a Jew? What is *being* a Jew?

> Look at the place you now want to call home: a whole *country* imagining itself, asking itself, "What the hell is this business of being a Jew?" —people losing sons, losing limbs, losing this, losing that, in the act of answering. "What is a Jew in the first place?" It's a question that's always had to be answered: the sound "Jew" was not made like a rock in the world—some human voice once said "Djoo," pointed to somebody, and that was the beginning of what hasn't stopped since. (145)

The answer, once more, comes from both the *form* and the *content* of the novel. Roth's work emphasizes that being a Jew is not something constant, unchanging, timeless, or holy. On the contrary, for Roth, being a Jew is something *invented*. Like the arbitrariness of sounds, words and meaning in Saussure's language theory, Nathan Zuckerman maintains that Jewishness is an arbitrary, changeable entity based on *social conventions* that cannot be reduced to a set of rules or practices.[88] This is exactly what Roth's novel criticizes: the rules, conventions, traditions and all the elements that make Jewishness in Henry's or Lippman's sense, that is, anything solid and exclusivist. All are rejected by *The Counterlives* through the novel's metafiction. Nathan Zuckerman continues his letter to his brother Henry, by challenging the authenticity of an identity, and the idea of being an *authentic Jew*:

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[88] Philip Roth alludes to the work of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, whose theory claims that the relationship between the sound and the meaning, or the sign and the signified, is mostly arbitrary. To be more specific, what gives a specific meaning and content to a concept in Saussure's understanding is "social convention" (Elder-Vass 93).

> Your connection to Zionism seems to me to have little to do with feeling more profoundly Jewish or finding yourself endangered, enraged, or psychologically straitjacketed by anti-Semitism in New Jersey—which doesn't make the enterprise any less "authentic". It makes it absolutely classical. Zionism, as I understand it, originated not only in the deep Jewish dream of escaping the danger of insularity and the cruelties of social injustice and persecution but out of a highly conscious desire to be divested of virtually everything that had come to seem, to the Zionists as much as to the Christian Europeans, distinctively Jewish behavior—to reverse the very form of Jewish existence. The construction of a counterlife that is one's own antimyth was at its very core. It was a species of fabulous utopianism, a manifesto for human transformation as extreme—and, at the outset, as implausible—as any ever conceived. A Jew could be a new person if he wanted to. In the early days of the state[89] the idea appealed to almost everyone except the Arabs. All over the world, people were rooting for the Jews to go ahead and un-Jew themselves in their own little homeland. I think that's why the place was once universally so popular—no more Jewy Jews, great! (*The Counterlife* 147)

In this regard, the title of the book, *the counterlife,* comes from this passage, as does the idea that Jewishness is not something stable, but is a principle of re-inventing one's self. According to Nathan Zuckerman, this principle was formerly ingrained in Jewishness, when Jews escaped the danger of the "insularity" in Europe to create a counterlife for themselves, a new reality away from anti-Semitism. Nathan maintains that socio-political conditions forced Jewish communities to *reverse the very form of Jewish existence*. This is the *counterlife*, and there was an "antimyth" attitude at its core. According to Nathan, this is why that utopian attitude, the desire to redefine Jewishness in Israel, looked like a promising idea to almost everyone in the world. Yet, this is not the case anymore in Roth's novel. Nathan Zuckerman implies that Jewishness in Israel fell prey to itself, to a sort of fundamentalism and exclusivist identity politics. Metafiction in Roth's work becomes a means of debunking this myth and the assumption that being Jewish is comprised of a historically defined set of rules and principles. In other words, the name of the novel *counterlife* accounts for what Cooper calls "man's fictive power to create" and to question "any imaged and reified alternative to one's seeming life" (217).

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[89] The state of Israel.

In addition to the use of a fictitious author, *The Counterlife* has other uses of metafiction. One of the most important examples of this self-reflexivity appears in the *formation process* of the text/novel we read. In the first chapter, we learn that Nathan Zuckerman had written a volume about his brother Henry and his Swiss mistress. This text becomes the backbone of the first chapter, *Basel*, as well as the eulogy that Nathan writes for his brother, and refuses to read[90] during the funeral (*CL* 42). In chapter four, *Gloucestershire*, (after the death of Nathan), Henry Zuckerman finds a manuscript which is a draft of the novel we are now reading as actual writers, because each chapter, the titles of the places in each chapter, or the first chapter named "Basel" all correspond to the actual novel, *The Counterlife*. Interestingly, the manuscript Henry reads on page 230 of the novel is *word-for-word* the same as on pages 155-156 in the *Aloft* chapter. Similarly, Nathan's eulogy on page 211 is repeated on page 231, while Henry reads the manuscript he finds (*Cambridge Companion to Philip Roth* 29). After so many layers of metafiction that remind the reader of a literary labyrinth, we may be ready to accept that the manuscript Henry finds in the fourth chapter is indeed the novel we are reading. Nevertheless, nothing is that simple and straightforward in Roth's novel, and the same goes for his use of metafiction. With another plot-twist, Henry feels ashamed, and steals all except the fourth chapter, because this is the only chapter that Nathan did not write about him (Henry). He also looks for copies of Draft 2 and Draft 1 of the manuscript (*CL* 231).

Considering these examples, it is clear that the metafiction of *The Counterlife*

[90] Nathan Zuckerman's justification for refusing to read his eulogy of Henry stems from his doubt. Nathan simply cannot decide whether it is the real Henry in the eulogy, or another Henry he made up as a writer. This distinction is very important, as Nathan starts his "what if" style metafictional-writing right after this point. This chapter includes related quotations and discussion on this topic in the following pages.

deliberately complicates the narrative. Another way of achieving this effect is intertextuality. The intertextuality in *The Counterlife* is based on a fictitious novel, *Carnovsky*, written by the fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman. This imaginary novel is at least as *influential* and *real* as any other real novel. *Carnovsky* appears in several other of Roth's works, such as *The Anatomy Lesson*, *Zuckerman Unbound* and *Portnoy's Complaint* (Cooper 138). In *The Counterlife*, *Carnovsky* is at the very core of not only the narrative, but also Roth's views on the secular nation-state.

The following points exemplify some of the critical *Carnovsky* passages in *The Counterlife*. Henry[91] feels obsessed with the idea that his whole life could be a "sequel to *Carnovsky*" (*CL* 10). Later, *Carnovsky* is mentioned as a novel where the Jewish Zuckerman family is "depicted so farcically" (29). In the fourth chapter, *Carnovsky* appears one more time, as a "comic hyperbole insidiously undermining everything it chose to touch" (*CL* 205), and this fictitious novel with "underhanded attack, deviously legitimizing itself as 'literature,'" ridicules the Jewish Zuckerman family one more time. This imaginary novel is the main source of conflict "designed to destroy our[92] family . . . no matter how much they say about art" (*CL* 206). Nathan Zuckerman, the author of *Carnovsky* has "profane vision"[93] (*CL* 208). It is "diabolically funny" and "emotionally exhausting" (*CL* 208). In other words, *Carnovsky* is portrayed as a work that challenges

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[91] One of the many Henrys: this is the Henry in the fictitious author Nathan's fictitious book. In short, his life is one of the many *fictions*. This is how Roth's novel emphasizes the constructedness and temporality of identities.

[92] The allusion to the Jewish family, and hence to Jewishness is clear. Through the fictitious novel, Philip Roth brings the act of writing and identity-making processes under the spotlight. Another theme that Roth repeats here is the theme of attack on the writer and writing, as explained in this chapter. As Benedict Anderson explains, the role of writing (novels, newspapers) in the process of nation-making is critical. In this regard, *Carnovsky* is another metafictional trick of Roth to bring this issue forward. Roth's literary views are discussed in this chapter, in the following pages.

[93] The secularity or secularism of Jewish Nathan Zuckerman is one of the themes in the novel (*CL* 41, 89, 112, 124, 143, 218). As the title of the novel suggests, the definition of Jewishness, where and how to live in the nation states are some of the main clash points.

identity frameworks, and hence, is a dangerous and threatening tool.

Carnovsky also blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction,[94] pushing the readers to ask the following question: "is it fiction?" (*CL* 208). According to Henry Zuckerman, while "some novelists use style to define the distance" among the reader, writer and the work, *Carnovsky* uses style in order to "collapse the distance" (*CL* 208). This shows how the fictitious novel is another self-aware literary work *thinking on the ways of thinking* about identity and belonging. Here, collapsing the distance refers to the novel's potential and capacity to ridicule all aspects of solid interpretations of belonging and identity. What is more, as in the other literary works mentioned above, the fictitious literary work *Carnovsky*, and its author Nathan Zuckerman, are accused of "us[ing] his life as if it belonged to somebody else," "plundering history" and using "verbal memory like a vicious thief" (*CL* 209). *Carnovsky*, then, is "betrayal of mother love" (*CL* 209), implying that the literary work has no respect for any orthodoxies or *filial relationships* in the Saidian sense.[95] The metafictional agenda of the fictitious novel is once again emphasized: it "is so clear on the various forms it can take" and "so accurate about the caveman mentality of those urban peasant Jews" "partaking the omnipotence" of 'Gods' "through the conviction of Jewish superiority"[96] (*CL* 209). In the *Gloucestershire* chapter, Carnovsky is defined as a "good anthropologist" who "lets the experience of the little

[94] The duality of *fact and fiction* and how the borders get vague through metafiction in identity issues within nation-states are common themes in all three writers, Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk. All three authors bring writing to the very center of the debate, and Roth's fictitious novel is another striking example of this sort.

[95] In his "*Secular Criticism*" in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Edward Said makes a distinction between "filiation" and "affiliation," stating that the secular critic should be alert to all sources of legitimacy (24). "Birth, nationality, profession" are filial ties, whereas "social and political conviction, economic and historical circumstances, voluntary effort and willed deliberation" are ties of affiliation (25). The secular critic's role, for Said, is to keep a distance, to "stand between the culture and the system," (26) never fully belonging in either. This is what Nathan Zuckerman is *literally* doing.

[96] At this point, Roth's *The Counterlife* ironically touches on all sorts of fundamentalist definitions of Jewishness, as personified by Henry Zuckerman in the second chapter, as well as characters like Mordecai Lippman.

tribe,[97] the suffering, isolated, primitive but warmhearted savages that he is studying, emerge in the description of their rituals and their artifacts and their conversations, and he[98] manages, "to put his own 'civilization,' his own bias as a reporter—and his readers' —into relief against them" (*CL* 209). Expressly, *Carnovsky* understands its own community very well, and it is blind to all hierarchical categories of belonging that reduce identity to a set of practices and traditions, which is its own *bias*.

In the description of the fictitious work and its author, the disturbing and inquisitive nature of *Carnovsky* is emphasized by articulating that the work "breaks fresh ground in the territory of transgression by writing so explicitly about the sexuality of family life"[99] (*CL* 209-210). The "fact" that *Carnovsky* was elevated to the "status of a *classic*" drives Henry mad, because Henry hates the work in question for ridiculing his *new but Orthodox* identity (*CL* 213). The *new* and the *orthodox* is an oxymoron: here, the shifting narrative makes the Orthodox Jewish identity something new, a great example of Roth's ironic literary approach to belonging.[100] At one point, self-reflexivity and hatred of the fictitious literary work *Carnovsky* merge, and Henry utters the following: "Carnovsky wasn't fiction, it was never fiction —the fiction and the man were one! Calling it fiction was the biggest fiction of all!" (*CL* 227). It is worth noting that here the novel urges readers to ask the same question asked by the fictitious readers of Carnovsky: 'is it fiction?' Philip Roth's metafiction makes the distinction between fact and fiction

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[97] Allusion is to all the Jews in the world, no matter whether they are Diaspora or nor, or what nation-state they live in.
[98] Nathan Zuckerman, as the fictitious author of *Carnovsky*.
[99] Roth's novel, *The Counterlife* establishes a parallel among formation, power, and sexuality. This is the exact reason of having the theme of sexual impotence. Both Henry and Nathan suffer from impotence, and the theme is a metafictional trick of the novel to discuss the religious and ethnic belonging and identity issues in the nation state. More will be discussed on this, in the following pages.
[100] Roth's allusion here is to Zionism, as a relatively recent national movement since the 19th century. What is implied here is that Zionism is a nationalist idea relatively new in the long Jewish history, but characters like Lippman suppose that it is the only and true way of being a Jew.

deliberately quite unclear, as do the fictions of Pamuk and to a certain extent, of Rushdie. By continuously pushing their readers to feel doubtful and skeptical about the fictionality of identities in their works, Roth, Pamuk, and Rushdie all incorporate this distinctive function of metafiction into their novels.

Sexuality and impotence are central themes in both *The Counterlife* and *Carnovsky*. This is not a coincidence, because Philip Roth sees a strong connection between power and identity in the nation-state, and he discusses this via sexual prowess and impotence. The novel begins and ends with the tropes of sexual power, impotence and circumcision. In his letter to Nathan, Henry asks: "Why did you have to ruin everything with this anti-Semitic outburst against which you now must rage like a zealot from Agor? New York you made into a horror by perversely playing Carnovsky out in reverse with that ghastly experiment in impotence" (*CL* 313). But what exactly is the relationship between impotence and identities in the nation-state? In addition, how are these connected to fiction and metafiction? As we have seen, Henry and Nathan Zuckerman, brothers and literary doubles, experience impotence and risk their lives to gain back their sexual power, and in the end, both die. Still, what does Roth's fiction imply through impotence and these deaths?

According to Shostak, this is Roth's "test of the limits of sexuality" motivating "his speculative fiction-making" (206). In the first chapter, Henry wants to be able to have sexual intercourse with his Swiss mistress, and to start a new life in Europe. He dreams of a "single, small, harmless transgression," that is, "to be *remade* in Europe with a European wife, to become in Basel an unfettered, robust, fully grown-up American expatriate dentist" (*CL* 15). In Henry's case, then, having a new identity in Europe is

something that could only be possible provided he regains and proves his sexual prowess. Henry defines this as a "terrific victory, if [he] could pull it off" (*CL* 39). Nevertheless, at the end of the first chapter Henry dies, and this (sexual) power and identity duality collapses, but not for the last time. It is interesting to note that Henry regains his sexual prowess when he goes to Israel and becomes a fundamentalist Jew. This is when the narrative restarts in the second chapter. In this regard, Roth's fiction almost equates (religious or nationalistic) exclusivist identity politics with the theme of dominant, male sexual power. Here, a destructive characteristic of such a power is implied. This kind of identity politics portrayed through sexuality is penetrating, rapacious and almost always unsatisfied.

A similar pattern (in a different plot) can be observed in the *Gloucestershire* chapter with Nathan Zuckerman, who is impotent. His plan is to undergo heart surgery, to cure his impotence, gain back his sexual prowess, marry Maria (from England), move to England and live as a Jew married to a *shiksa*. Like Henry's plan in the "Basel" chapter, this fails. Both characters die. What is the logic of this narrative pattern and what is Roth's work testing through it? How is this related to the issues of identity and belonging in the nation-state? According to Shostak, Henry Zuckerman, like Nathan, is "testing the proposition that Israel might provide a cure" to his impotence (130). Implied here is the assumption that there may be core values of an identity, and that returning to these core values, beliefs and practices may lead to a physically, sexually, morally and ethically healthy and strong life. In other words, what Roth's novel is testing is the idea that there is a connection between *performance* and *identity*.[101] In Shostak's words, the question is

[101] This is one of the central dualities in Roth's novel, therefore the next section provides an analysis of the connection between the performance and identity.

as follows: "is there a supportive *bedrock*[102] that is irreducibly Jewish, and thus redemptive?" (131). The formal answer of the novel in this part[103] is definitely negative, as both Henry and Nathan die, and they can never recover from their illness through a search for power or by claiming an identity.

If there are no *irreducible core values* of an identity, what else does one have? What is Roth's perspective concerning claim(s) to an identity? Once more, the answer of this question is provided by the formal/metafictional capacity of Roth's work. For Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's novel, or Roth as a writer, there is no irreducible or irreplaceable norm, standard, or element. Instead, there is always a factor of self-questioning, or "doubt", as Cooper puts it (216). Roth's work provides this answer in the following way: in the first chapter, Nathan Zuckerman has an important task: he has to write a eulogy for his brother, who has just died after heart surgery. The task at hand is to create and present an identity, and the undertaker is a writer.[104] Nathan first goes through his notes/manuscript on Henry (*CL* 22), and reads the following lines: "'*Here the ending began,*[105] with as commonplace and unoriginal an adventure as this—with the ancient experience of carnal revelation'" (*CL* 23). The foreshadowing in the manuscript implies that all the subsequent chapters, all of the alternative narratives are born out of the imagination of the fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman. After going through the notes

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[102] Emphasis not mine.

[103] At the end of the novel, Nathan Zuckerman presents a different answer to this question. In the conclusion, Nathan states that he will have his boy circumcised, so he will continue to repeat the tradition, as he defines the practice "quintessentially Jewish and the mark of their reality" (*CL* 323). Note the irony of Roth: the Jewishness is expressed in the practice of manhood, and it is equally ironical that the child is not born yet. So Nathan Zuckerman is speculating on the baby whose sex is not known. But he is sure that the baby will be born as a boy and will be circumcised. This is important, as it shows how nationalism might be conceived through the image of (male, sexual) power.

[104] Note the connection between writing and identity-making, as discussed in the context of Benedict Anderson's nation-state theory in the first chapter.

[105] Emphasis mine.

accumulated over the years, Nathan decides that this text does not fit the expectations of a formal funeral eulogy (*CL* 13-14), as the text is "imposing Nathan's values and assumptions about that life" (Cooper 216). Expressly, Nathan cannot decide to what extent it is the real Henry, or whether it is some other Henry of the writer's imagination.[106]

This is where the fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman decides to play the game of metafiction: all of the following chapters are the product of a complicated mind-game, in which alternate selves, other identities, and disparate personifications of the fictitious author's imagination appear. Such a self-reflexive text serves three purposes: first, as discussed above, the complex metafiction distorts the distinction between fact and fiction. Second, the novel emphasizes the textuality or fictionality of all identities. Like *imagined communities*, individuals and their multiple belongings are fictitious. Third, *The Counterlife* rejects any understanding that reduces Jewishness or any other identity to a set of performances. For this reason, the next section of this chapter will discuss Roth's approach to the relationship between performance and identity.

III. A Duality in Identity-making: Imagination vs. Performance

Performance in Benedict Anderson's nationalism theory is the sum of all thoughts, decisions, choices, and acts that bring people together. In this regard, the collective imagination creates the collective performance. This collective performance eventually becomes unisonality, which is the core value of all nationalisms. One example from Anderson's theory is the act of reading. He explains that a group of people who have never met before or are not even aware of each other's existence is connected through the

[106] The following passage is directly related to this theme in *The Counterlife*: "We are all the invention of each other, everybody a conjuration conjuring up everyone else. We are all each other's authors." (146) The tropes of writing and writer are analyzed in the following sections in this chapter.

act of reading. As long as individuals are "embedded in societies" (*Imagined Communities* 25), there will be a connection between all individual members, no matter how far they are from each other physically, socially or politically. The second step in the Anderson nation-state theory regarding performance concerns the activity of reading. He writes that individuals are

> embedded in the minds of the omniscient readers. Only they, like God, watch A telephoning C, B shopping, and D playing pool all at once. That all these acts are *performed*[107] at the same clocked, calendrical time, but by actors who may be largely unaware of one another, shows the novelty of this imagined world conjured up by the author in his readers' minds. (*Imagined Communities* 25)

As one can see, the performance of the activity of reading is one factor that unites people who are unaware of each other's existence. For Anderson, this is not a far-fetched or loose connection. On the contrary, the activities of writing (newspapers, novels) and reading are the bonds that make up unisonance and build the foundation of nationalism. This is why Anderson continues to articulate that nations are "sociological organisms moving calendarically through homogeneous empty time . . . which is also conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history" (*Imagined Communities* 25-26). In this respect, Anderson's theory supposes that performance, as in writing and reading, is the founding element of a nation-state.

Anderson addresses a theme of Roth's fiction: the connection between the fictionality of all writing and the uniformity in the nation-state. For Anderson, the newspaper, which he defines as a "one day best-seller," is like a novel (*Imagined Communities* 35). The *performative* trait of newspapers and novels (or the act of reading) becomes apparent when Anderson writes that the newspaper "creates this *extraordinary*

[107] Emphasis mine.

mass ceremony:[108] the almost precisely simultaneous consumption ('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction" (*Imagined Communities* 35). The "consumption" becomes an act of imagination. Nevertheless, the imagination is not merely an exercise of thought; rather, it is an *extraordinary mass ceremony*. In this regard, on the one hand "it is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull" but on the other hand, "each *communicant*[109] is well aware that the ceremony he *performs*[110] is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion" (*Imagined Communities* 35). In Anderson's perspective, nations are no longer imagined spatially (Abercrombie and Longhurst 116). Like the various characters in Roth's novel, such an imagination enables individuals of various communities across the world to define themselves as nationals, in Roth's novel for instance, as Jewish. Belonging is not spatial, but still, it is based on a common performance or performativity.[111]

What has *this sort of performance* got to do with the *secular* nation-state? For Anderson, there is a strong connection between religiously or nationally imagined communities and writing-reading activities as a form of mass communication. Anderson expresses the idea that "[in] a pre-print age, the reality of the imagined religious community depended profoundly on countless, ceaseless travels" and "regional centers" determined the standards and the content of learning, which was, at the end of the day,

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[108] Right at this point, the act of reading is no more a mental or individual chore. Instead, it becomes ceremonial or collective (not individual), or a performance (not some simple mental activity) shared by all or most of the members of a given community. Emphasis is mine.
[109] Note how Anderson defines the mental activity of reading into a mass performance. Emphasis mine.
[110] Emphasis mine.
[111] I borrow this term from Judith Butler, who writes that "the act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that's been going on before one arrived on the scene" (526). Butler conceives of identity and performativity in the context of gender: but what Butler, Anderson, and Roth have in common is that they all see social norms as constructed and based on tangible performances.

sacred (*Imagined Communities* 54). Anderson sees the imagined communities formed by the novel and the newspapers as replacing the imagined communities formed by religion. According to him, print enabled the socio-political transformation from dynasty to nation-state, from pre-modern to modern, and from religious to secular. The political change from dynasty to nation-state is clear, but in the example of Roth's novel, other examples of transformation based on a specific understanding of performance, are questionable. In other words, Roth's *The Counterlife* defines performance in a completely new and critical way, and his fiction disagrees with Anderson's nation-state theory, as we will see in the following section.

The next step is to analyze how Roth's metafiction defines *performance* and how his work makes use of the concept to challenge not only uniformity in Anderson's sense, but also exclusivist identity politics. In *The Counterlife*, Philip Roth assigns a very specific role and function to writing and the novel. He writes:

> 'What people envy in the novelist aren't the things that the novelists think are so enviable but the performing selves that the author indulges, the slipping irresponsibly in and out of his skin, the reveling not in 'I' but in escaping 'I,' even if it involves— *especially*[112] if it involves—piling imaginary afflictions upon himself. What's envied is the gift for theatrical self-transformation, the way they are able to loosen and make ambiguous their connection to a real life through the imposition of talent. The exhibitionism of the superior artist is connected to his imagination; fiction is for him at once playful hypothesis and serious supposition, an imaginative form of inquiry—everything that exhibitionism is not. It is, if anything, closet exhibitionism, exhibitionism in hiding. Isn't it true that, contrary to the general belief, it is the *distance* between the writer's life and his novel that is the most intriguing aspect of his imagination? (*CL* 210)

Looking at this quotation in terms of form, one sees that Roth has a crystal clear theory of the novel in relation to identity and the nation-state. What makes this quotation even more interesting is the way it is presented, as Roth makes his fictitious author ponder the

[112] Author's emphasis.

role and function of fiction with regard to identity and belonging. Like the imaginary/fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman, Roth plays with the *distance* among the literary work, writer, and reader once more. At this point, when the borders between fact and fiction collapse or become blurry through Roth's metafiction,[113] two quite important consequences emerge. First, the writer takes possession of *poetic license*[114] to re-invent identities as he pleases. In this respect, the matter is no longer simple "indeterminacy of the narrative" (Parrish, *Walking Blues* 150). Rather, Roth's understanding of *performance* and the literary authority he claims through his fictitious author directly challenges Anderson's sense of belonging and identity. Then, the second consequence is that Roth's novel emphasizes the multiplicity and plasticity (or changeability) of all identities. In comparison to Roth's perspective, unisonality and the collectivity are Anderson's blind spots.

According to Roth, one might not mistake metafiction for a simple literary technique, because fiction of this sort has *de facto* social and political consequences. In this regard, (meta)fiction is at least as real and influential as Anderson's *print media* (novel and newspaper) in establishing nationalism and the nation-state. While Maria leaves Nathan for good, she states the following in her letter to him:

> When I think about literary surgery *being performed experimentally*[115] upon those I love, I understand what drives the antivivisectionists nuts. You had no right to make Sarah,[116] in that crypt, say words she would never have spoken if it weren't for your Jewish hang-up. Not only was it unnecessary, it was cruelly provocative. Since I had already confided to you that Jews seem to me too quick finding fault with Gentiles, condemning things as horrendously anti-Semitic, or even mildly so, when they aren't,

[113] One example is how Henry becomes Hanoch in the *Judea* chapter. As Jane Statlander explains, the shift is very disturbing, and it urges readers to think about the fictionality of everything. Interestingly, Statlander shows how the spatiality/locality of identities is also challenged (72-74).
[114] From Greek 'poïesis', that is, an artist's self-proclaimed license to break away from a tradition or perspective.
[115] Italics mine.
[116] Maria's anti-Semitic, British sister.

> you made sure to provide me with a sister who is anti-Semitic in spades. And then that creature at the restaurant, planted there by you, and just when everything was so perfect, the loveliest evening I'd had in years. . . Why did you have to ruin everything with this anti-Semitic outburst against which you now must rage like a zealot from Agor? (*CL* 313)

Regarding Maria's rant about Nathan's literary experiments, one main difference that occurs between Anderson and Roth is that Anderson makes use of fiction to explain the *formation process* of the nation-state, while Roth uses fiction to challenge it.[117] For Anderson, the core of the nation-state is unisonality, whereas Roth's complex fiction shows that even the most fundamentalist forms of identities do not allow such uniformity to appear or continue to exist. In other words, Roth's metafiction uses the text to elucidate the textuality of all sorts of belonging. It is this self-awareness, and poetic license, which make the writer a target. As the previous section argued, the *attack on the writer* is a theme in Roth's novel, and the above passage shows that Roth's fiction assumes a literary agenda to deconstruct or undermine all supposed uniformities through fiction. The modern novel, for Roth, questions and confronts the supposed solidity of belonging by formally underscoring the plasticity and multiplicity of identities. In this regard, Roth's fiction gets very close to that of Salman Rushdie and Orhan Pamuk, as I will discuss in the following chapters.

Reading, to Anderson (a means of communication and mass ceremony or collective performance), is the opposite of what writing is to Roth (an individual performance, the opposite of one's own self). In the following passage, Nathan Zuckerman replies to Maria with another letter: "I suppose it can be said that I do sometimes desire, or even require, a certain role to be rather clearly played that other

[117] That is, Roth uses fiction to raise doubts about the supposed unisonality of the nation-state and all sorts of belonging.

people aren't always interested enough to want to perform. . . . Being Zuckerman is *one long performance*[118] and the very opposite of what is thought of as *being oneself*."[119] (*CL* 319) This passage reveals two things. The first is the intertextuality of Roth's metafiction. By incorporating other fictional literary works into the novel (*Carnovsky*, as the previous section discussed), Roth makes use of Nathan Zuckerman in those works. In terms of form, Roth shows his readers how reality and identities are created, deformed and reformed. Secondly, Nathan's letter confirms that Maria is right in her anger, because it is impossible to be *one's own self* in the presence of fiction or a writer. This is so because modern writing/modern writer is now aware of the textuality of identities. This shows how Roth's understanding of literature differs from that of Anderson. In the very next sentence, Nathan states that "those who most seem to be themselves appear to me people impersonating what they think they might like to be, believe they ought to be, or wish to be taken to be by whoever is setting standards" (*CL 319*). According to Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Roth's perspective affirms "fragmented or masked selves" (*CL* 225), and this viewpoint clearly rejects all sorts of exclusivist nationalist identity politics.

So what? What are the socio-political implications of Roth's specific and distinctive literary stance, or his use of metafiction? How does Philip Roth's fiction relate to the politics of Jewish identity? According to Ezrahi, the self-reflexivity of Roth's work is a self-aware confrontation with Zionism. She writes: "[s]uch an affirmation of fragmented or masked selves is also an assault on the modernist creation of a new Jewish subjectivity. The Zionist dream of transforming the Jewish self into something utterly

[118] Emphasis mine.
[119] Emphasis Roth's.

other[120] may have been the greatest act of impersonation in modern Jewish history." (225) What Ezrahi implies, in plain language, is that Zionism, being one of the recent[121] identity politics with a nationalist perspective, *imposes* certain *irreducible core values* on Jewishness. This is what she calls *impersonation*, and it is exactly what Roth rejects through his fiction. Ezrahi pursues this idea by stating, "[n]onetheless, it is predicated on the return of *ontology*[122] as Jewish reference, on the ultimate valorization of a place and time that signals the end of exile and alienation" (*CL* 225). The clash between Zionist identity politics and Roth's fiction becomes quite visible in Roth's passage quoted above, on *impersonation* and (identity) *standards*. For Roth, such an imposition on Jewishness or any identity is clearly unacceptable.

At this point, two questions related to performance, identity and metafiction arise. First, which Jewish identity model is juxtaposed in relation to Zionism; and second, do we have enough textual evidence to support the idea that Roth's metafiction is highly critical of Zionist/nationalist identity politics? The answer to the first question is provided by Shostak, who shows us that Roth's fiction touches on very important, controversial issues. She explains that at least two different models of Jewishness are juxtaposed. On one hand, there is "the image of the man in the Talmudic hat . . .—the Jew who is weak, silenced, a dispossessed victim" (*CL* 130). On the other hand is "a new Israeli Jew [that] reverses this image. . . [to] negotiate an identity in relation to the power that comes from self-determination" (*CL* 130). Roth is very critical of the latter, but again, the question is whether there is enough textual evidence to support the idea that Roth is critical of Zionism.

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[120] Emphasis of Ezrahi.
[121] Here, the word recent refers to the 19th century and later, the age of nationalisms and nation-states.
[122] Emphasis of Ezrahi.

There are two main ways in which Roth's novel is critical of the nationalist, exclusivist identity politics, in general, and an *orthodox interpretation of Zionism*, in particular. First is the continuously shifting narrative, which has already been discussed in the previous section. Second is the way Mordecai Lippman is portrayed in the second chapter, *Judea*. Mordecai Lippman is defined as an "avid Zionist" (Safer 30). In *The Counterlife*, Lippman is a character that "drives into Hebron with his pistol, and tells the Arabs in the market how the Jews and Arabs can live happily side by side as long as Jews are on top" (*CL* 75).[123] Lippman also "smell[s of] fascism," he "plays upon Jewish insecurity," he is a "butcher," and "deals with fear" (*CL* 76). He has not only "a Jewish gun," but also a "Jewish mouth" (*CL* 75). Lippman is known for his "craziness and dangerousness" (*CL* 77). His nickname is "shlayger," meaning "the whipper" (*CL* 76).[124] Through the disturbing and perhaps exaggerated figure of Lippman, Roth's fiction rejects such an *impersonation* or offering of new standards to Jewishness. In addition, Nathan Zuckerman never feels an attachment to Agor during his short stay when he goes to the West Bank to find his brother Henry. In short, Roth's fictional author Nathan Zuckerman keeps a deliberate distance from the idea of Zionism, and he calls this a "detached" position and a "Diaspora abnormality" (*CL* 73). Moreover, Roth's fiction does not accept

[123] Note the sexual implication in the quotation. This is not an accident and Roth's fiction is consistent in using sexuality and particularly the trope of sexual impotence to discuss issues of belonging and (Jewish) identity. If the Zionist Lippman is the personification of power and claims an identity through such power, Henry and Nathan Zuckerman are the exact opposites. Both Nathan and Henry Zuckerman suffer from sexual impotence, and die during heart surgery. Their plans to marry a Shiksa (non-Jewish woman) and to have a new life abroad fail.

[124] At this point, one might ask whether Roth's criticism is one-sided and if it misses the complexity of the problem of exclusionary politics in general. Roth's novel answers this question indirectly, through a correspondence between Nathan Zuckerman and the Israeli journalist Shuki, who warns Nathan that he shouldn't "be misled by Lippman's odiousness—his Arab counterpart is as bad if not worse" (*CL* 161).

any norms, standards, or performances that may determine Jewishness.[125] Later in the novel, Roth's work rejects the same idea by naming one of the many sources of identity conflicts: "the Zionist laboratory in Jewish self-experiment that calls itself 'Israel'" and "[t]he power of will to remake reality [that] is embodied . . . in Mordecai Lippman" (*CL* 147-148). At this point, Roth makes sure that the novel provides a direct reference to Theodor Herzl[126] in the *Judea* chapter and shows how Herzl's idea of "saving Jewish people from destruction by founding a homeland in the remote corner of the Ottoman Empire" (*CL* 53) turned into the story of Mordecai Lippman.

What does Mordecai Lippman represent, and how does the metafiction of Roth's fiction differ from it? What does this have to do with performance? Like Benedict Anderson, Philip Roth is well aware that identities are created through language, and all variations of performativities, performances, or simply, acts. It is for this very reason that Roth asks the frequently quoted and challenging question: what does it mean to be "[a] Jew without Jews, without Judaism, without Zionism, without Jewishness, without a temple or an army or even a pistol, a Jew clearly without a home, just the object itself, like a glass or an apple" (*CL* 324). Roth provides few satisfactory answers, but many difficult but inspiring questions. This question of Roth is a good example of the clash

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[125] One exception to this is Mordecai Lippman, who does not change throughout the chapter he appears in. But I underline that Roth's metafiction does not allow the novel to equate the fundamentalist Lippman with the nation of Israel. Rather, the narrative separates the character (Lippman) and the country (Israel) through Shuki's letter (quoted below) addressed to the fictitious author Nathan Zuckerman. This is a pluralist attitude that Rushdie's fiction does not have, as *Midnight's Children* stereotypes the whole of Pakistan with purity, and Muslims with businessism and submission. Here is the excerpt from Roth's novel: "But what worries me isn't that you'll affront my national pride; it's that if and when you write about your visit to Agor, the average reader of Nathan Zuckerman is going to identify Israel with Lippman. No matter what you write, Lippman will come out stronger than anyone else, and the average reader will remember him better than anyone else and think he is Israel. Lippman is ugly, Lippman is extreme, equals Israel is ugly, the Israeli is extreme— this fanatical voice stands for the state. And this could do much harm" (*The Counterlife* 159).

[126] Jewish leader (1860-1904) who is accepted as the founder of Zionism, which is a nationalist idea/policy stating that Jews should establish a national homeland in the Israel-Palestine geographical area.

between collective imagination and individual imagination. If the collective imagination can be defined as definitions, standards, or norms of Jewishness with a religio-nationalist perspective, Roth represents the writer who sets out to question and confront them through fiction. In doing so, Roth pays particular attention to the exclusivist *us* vs. *them language*, which is the focal point of the next section.

IV. The Mutually Exclusive Grammar in/of the Nation-State: The Duality of Us vs. Them

The previous chapter explained how belonging in any nation or group comes with a set of definitions, values, and performances. In this section, I discuss the exclusionary nature of the nation-state and the literary perspective of *The Counterlife.* Roth's work draws attention to a significant problem: how modern nation-states and their dominant identities are based on the principle of exclusion or exclusivity. By their nature, all of the dominant groups formed in the nation-state lead the community to the inevitable consequence of labeling, limiting, and/or finally excluding the ones who do not fit. Roth's novel specifically focuses on this characteristic of the nation-state, as individuals and groups continuously lay claim to the identity while excluding others. This process reaches a point in which all communication comes to a halt. All of the characters live in their own worlds, stick to their own values, and try to force a specific, defined, and exclusionary identity onto the others. In the end, all the parties end up living in their own bubble of ideology. The exclusivist politics of the nation-state and the lack of meaningful communication among involved parties are not only expressed through inter-character conflicts (the content), but also revealed through the form of the novel, its metafiction. In

summary, in this section, I will first briefly discuss the politics of exclusivism, and analyze Roth's perspective on it.

Political exclusivism frequently appears as one of the core values of nationalism. Exclusive politics or exclusivism is the *opposite* of political *accomodationism*. As Ilan Peleg explains, this dichotomy of exclusivism and accomodationism[127] depends on other "tensions" or "dichotomies," such as "*nationalism and democracy*[128] as political forces in deeply divided societies" and "the relationships that exist between the dominant majority and a dominated minority" (45). Peleg explains that the existence of deep conflicts can be observed when "hegemonic regimes [are] dedicated to the promotion of the interests of one and only one ethnic group . . . which exasperates the tensions" between nationalism and democracy (45). Peleg's focus here is on deeply divided societies with historical conflicts. Note how he directly compares democracy to nationalism: Peleg shows that nationalisms are frequently based on certain values that keep citizens together. Nevertheless, each definition innately rules out many other options, identities, and differences. Peleg argues that nationalism usually is opposed to inclusive and egalitarian democratic structures. This connection becomes more apparent later in the same chapter, when he writes, "there is an intimate link between accommodation and democracy, just as there is a link between exclusivist hegemonic conditions or non-democracy" (47). One of the prominent reasons for this common political clash is shown to be ethnocentrism (Peleg 46) in multicultural and multi-ethnic communities. Mila Dragojević similarly explains that the concept of *homeland*, being a version of ethnocentricism, often creates "tight-knit networks" leading not only to the exclusion of other forms of identities, but

[127] Peleg definitely sees an opposition between nationalism and democracy, as he defines class as a "dilemma," in addition to a "dichotomy" (39).
[128] Emphasis mine.

also to certain "political instability" (22) in the long run. In short, the matter is a problem of homogeneity vs. diversity in nationalisms.

Peleg's and Dragojević's perspectives are equally echoed in Benedict Anderson's nationalism and nation-state theory. Anderson puts the exclusionary politics in historical context and shows, for instance, how Catholics were excluded from public posts in 19th-century England, which arguably contributed to Irish nationalism (*Imagined Communities* 56). Similarly, Anderson writes, it was "nearly unheard" for a Créole to hold an important official position in 19th-century Spain (*Imagined Communities* 57). The reason for such a political exclusion is explained in terms of differences in geographical and racial origins: one could not be born in the Americas and be an authentic Spaniard (*Imagined Communities* 58). Anderson, very interestingly, touches on the political and psychological justification of religio-nationalist exclusivism since the 19th century. He states that the concepts of "biological and ecological contamination" merge with European expansionism since the 16th century, and a result, postulates that "American Créoles, with their ever-growing numbers and increasing local rootedness with each succeeding generation, presented a historically unique political problem" (*Imagined Communities* 58). Similar examples can be found in Anderson's theory of nationalism (*Imagined Communities* 101, 172) regarding how one dominant group suppresses other groups that do not fit into the dominant ideology.

All these theoretical examples demonstrate the nature of *official nationalism* in Anderson's terminology. As Peleg and Dragojević argue, what is at play here is the ethnocentric perspective of official nationalism. Anderson defines this as "an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or

exclusion from an emerging nationally imagined community" (*Imagined Communities* 101). In this regard, the exclusion and marginalization of identities other than the dominant one are frequent in imagined communities (*Imagined Communities* 109-110).

How does exclusionary identity politics relate to Philip Roth's fiction? It is no coincidence that *The Counterlife* pays particular attention to mutually exclusive dialogues, in which the homeland clashes with the Diaspora, the American Jew is insulted by the Israeli Jew, and a politically hawkish Orthodox Jew looks down on a politically dove Jew. As Yarir Wallach writes, mutually exclusivist politics, and their divisive language have been extensively influential in Arab-Israeli relations (345). The characters in *The Counterlife* all suffer from this divisive grammar, and there is no meaningful communication among them. In the five chapters and with the shifting narrative structure, with a new story starting in each chapter, none of the characters sincerely listens to the others, agrees, learns something new, or changes his/her life accordingly. On the contrary, each character lives in his/her own private world, as everyone's priority is to impose his/her values on the other. Therefore, nothing productive is born of these frequent and unproductive conflicts. There are continuously heated dialogues, but in the end, all the characters continue to *survive* in their own ways, and do not change.

The Henry Zuckerman of the first chapter is a well-off Jewish dentist who goes through a mid-life crisis with sexual impotence. When he survives the operation and the narrative restarts in chapter two, Henry makes *aliyah*,[129] leaving his family in Newark, New Jersey, beginning a new life as an Orthodox Jew, because he is resolved to be an "authentic Jew" (*CL* 74). Henry starts studying Hebrew and takes Mordecai Lippman as

[129] Return to Israel.

his mentor, who advocates violence to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Shuki, the "nicey" journalist, defines Lippman as a "psychopath alienated profoundly from the country's common sense and wholly marginal to its ordinary everyday life" (*CL* 116). The differences between Newark in the US and Agor in Israel, and, the profound change in the political climate, are nicely illustrated in the following passage, by Shuki:

> The American Jews get a big thrill from the guns. They see Jews walking around with guns and they think they're in paradise. Reasonable people with a civilized repugnance for violence and blood, they come on tour from America, and they see the guns and they see the beards, and they take leave of their senses. The beards remind them of saintly Yiddish weakness and the guns to reassure them of heroic Hebrew force. Jews ignorant of history, Hebrew, Bible, ignorant of Islam and the Middle East, they see the guns and they see the beards, and out of them flows every sentimental emotion that wish fulfillment can produce. A regular pudding of emotions. The fantasies about this place make me sick. And what about the beards? Is your brother as thrilled by the religion as by the explosives? (*CL* 75)

This passage touches on several significant issues related to religio-national exclusivism. First is the ethnocentricism mentioned at the beginning of this section. The American Jews who come to Agor in Israel take on a violent life based on identity, and Shuki's description shows that, given the choice between civilization and violence, they choose the latter. Second, the tone, the repetition of certain words, and the speed of this speech successfully reveal the exuberance of the Jews coming to Israel: the excitement of claiming an ancient identity definitely *moves* many people. Furthermore, belonging and being a part of such an *ancient* community in the modern world provides a deeper and more influential meaning to individuals' lives. In this regard, people are influenced by their emotions, rather than their minds, as they become *ignorant of* their history, themselves, and their *counterparts*. This, of course, is one main source of conflict. Third, this passage is one of the many examples of the connection between identity and

performance discussed in the previous chapter. The beard and the gun[130] become the performative symbols of assertion of identity, and thus are the representative signs of a more important position in the hierarchical structure. Having the gun and the beard becomes one and the same, as being a better and authentic Jew compared to a Diaspora Jew, and a much better human being than the counterpart, an Arab. This brings us to the fourth step in the exclusivist religio-national language: power is the one and the main way to claim identity. This is why the gun is so central to the discourse of Lippman and his followers. What is more, this is also the reason that Philip Roth uses the trope of *impotence* in *The Counterlife*. In so doing, Roth locates the alternative ways of looking at the exclusivist identity politics and their impasse. Fifth, the regressive claim[131] to an ancient identity (from being a modern American Jew, to an ancient and authentic Judean Jew)[132] resembles to Anderson's theory on nationalism, as the Israeli Jews like Lippman or Henry all claim a *timeless* or *ancient* identity. This ancient and timeless identity is somehow much more attractive than Nathan's loose and *secular* understanding of American Jewishness. Lastly, the ancient identity Lippman and Henry claim is paradoxically a modern and national one. In addition, following Anderson, the identity Henry claims is at least as *imaginary* and *real* as the narratives of Philip Roth. The identity is imagined, but the consequences of its politics and its exclusivism are real.

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[130] These images add up to the novel's connection between manhood and nationalism.

[131] Regressive nationalism is a term widely discussed. According to Richard Kearney, it usually appears when the progress of a nation is *allegedly* interrupted by some other hegemony. In this case, the nation creates a scapegoat, very harsh exclusionary politics and an ancient identity to claim. According to Kearney, regressive nationalism is also "depressive nationalism" (184). Roth clearly alludes to this concept in *The Counterlife*. For instance, Lippman defines Israel as an ". . . unfinished, other-terrestrial landscape, attesting theatrically at sunset to Timeless Significance, [where] one might well imagine self-renewal on the grandest scale of all, the legendary scale, the scale of mythic heroism" (*CL* 113).

[132] The name of the second chapter is *Judea*. Roth is well aware of the conflict between modern and ancient forms of Jewish identities, and the general interest in the latter. This is why he does not name the chapter as 'Agor' or 'The West Bank.'

The Counterlife explores and harshly criticizes the exclusivist language of the nation-state not only through its characters, but also through its *form*. The novel's metafiction achieves this in two *additional*[133] ways. The first is through the frequent use of letters in the novel. For instance, one correspondence takes place in Chapter Two, between Shuki and Nathan. Another letter by Nathan is addressed to Henry in Chapter Three. And later, in the last chapter, there is an exchange of letters between Jewish Nathan Zuckerman and British Maria. The common element in all these letters is that they function as the novel's formal expressions of the impossibility of meaningful conversations between two parties in conflict. In one sense, the letters are *formally* the exact opposites of the heated conversations shown above. Instead, they are but one-sided soliloquies. This is what *us/them grammar* in the title of this section refers to. The letters are not always answered, and some of them are written, but may not have even been sent. The narrative leaves all these in suspense, in a *formal* expression of lack of communication.

Another piece of textual evidence showing the plight of exclusivism and its divisive structure is the representation of Arabs in the *Judea* chapter. In a literary work, the absence (of a character or idea) is at least as important as its presence. Not only in this chapter but in the whole book, Arabs are just mentioned, but no Arab character participates in dialogue. When Arabs are mentioned, let us say, regarding Israel's foreign politics, it is in hostile language. Shimmy recommends to "Bomb 'em," and to "bomb the Arab bastards till they cry uncle" (*CL* 38). Elsewhere, an Arab is mentioned only as "a threat posed to the State of Israel" (*CL* 103), or as the source of some local "disturbances" (*CL* 105). Henry claims that Arabs "don't respect niceness" and "what an Arab respects is

[133] The first is the shifting narrative structure, but it is not mentioned again to avoid repetition.

power" (*CL* 106). According to him, Arabs laugh at Jews "[i]n winter, because [Jews] are exposed to the wind and cold, in the summer to heat and the sun," while Arabs are, "protected from the worst of the weather" (*CL* 114). It is possible to find more of these similar examples in *The Counterlife*.

What Roth's novel is doing is *not* arguing that all the Jews are intolerant and the victims of regressive nationalist politics, in the sense explained by Kearney. Such a claim would be a serious misreading and misunderstanding of Roth's clever use of metafiction. On the contrary, his self-reflexivity manages to look into one's culture from the outside and show the shortcomings of the religio-nationalist structure. Roth's work cannot be considered as an attack on Jewishness,[134] but his fiction *does* attack the divisive, exclusivist grammar of nationalism. This is one specific reason why Roth's fiction places individual identity over collective identity through the narrative shifts.

This section provided an analysis of how Roth's metafiction deals with the problem of exclusivism. Through self-reflexivity, Roth's literary perspective shows that Jewish identity is not a uniform entity. In addition to the function of performance and exclusivity, Roth's work is also critical of Benedict Anderson's understanding of *time* in the nation-state, which will be the focal point of the next section.

V. Time in the Nation-State: Anderson's Unisonance, Homogeneous-Empty-Time vs. the Double-Writing of Bhabha

As relatively recent political structures, nation-states have brought about a specific conception of time and history, which accompanies a set of socio-cultural

[134] Roth's fiction is usually a few steps beyond the reader. He knows that his fiction will be criticized with such misguided attacks. For instance, in one letter exchange between Shuki and Nathan (both are writers), Shuki blames Nathan for not understanding the consequences of his writing. He says: "the consequences of what *you* write are real" (*CL* 162). Nathan's replies to this letter with another, ironically stating that he does not think that his fiction would "alter Jewish history" (*CL* 163).

transformations. The modern nation-state's break-away from its predecessor, the pre-modern dynasty, has been extensively discussed by Benedict Anderson. In line with that discussion of *time* in the first chapter of this study, this section tests Anderson's nationalism theory and the validity of his idea of time in the nation-state. Specifically, this section compares Benedict Anderson's understanding of time with Homi Bhabha's conception of doubleness. Such a comparison helps to understand Roth's criticism of time in the nation-state, as well as how his metafiction constructs an alternative conception of individual time, as opposed to the collective time described by Anderson. In light of the debate on the understanding of time in the nation-state, I argue that Roth's *The Counterlife* rejects Anderson's assumption that the nation-state and its citizens form a *unisonant* entity. On the contrary, Roth's novel is not only openly critical of nationalism in Anderson's sense, but the novel formally *cracks* any expectations of unity, uniformity or unisonality. This literary stance has an important consequence. Roth, quite ironically and self-consciously, assigns a new role and function to the novel. Unlike in Anderson's theory, literature is no longer a key constituent in the formation and maintenance of the nation-state structure. Instead, Roth reverses the role of the novel, and places it in a position to confront *unisonance* and to promote multiplicity and multivocality in the nation-state.

Anderson's conception of time is the core of his nation-state theory. To summarize it briefly, Anderson defines the nation-state as an *imagined* structure, and a "sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous empty time" (*Imagined Communities* 26). According to Dirk Wiemann, such an understanding of *time* "facilitates the very synchronicity that is indispensable for the act of imagining the

political community of the nation, [and] homogeneous empty time forms a crucial structural precondition for the modern nation to emerge as a coherent entity" (111). In other words, as I discussed in the first chapter of this study, Benedict Anderson focuses on the nation-state at the social level (that is, not at the individual level), and he implies that nations resemble *organisms*, which assume a sort of corporeal, intellectual or spiritual unity that creates a coherent structure.

According to Anderson, nations no longer live in the "divine" and "simultaneous" time of religious communities (*Imagined Communities* 24). In his explanation, Anderson quotes Erich Auerbach, who defines divine and simultaneous time as a "connection [that] is established between two events which are linked neither temporally nor causally—a connection which is impossible to establish by reason in the horizontal dimension... It can be established only if both occurrences are vertically linked to Divine Providence" (*Imagined Communities* 24). This idea, according to Anderson, is what Walter Benjamin names "Messianic time" (Auerbach 64; qtd. in *Imagined Communities* 24). In short, homogeneous-empty time no longer unites two causally irrelevant events under the umbrella of Divine Providence. Instead, modern communities always focus on *the meanwhile*, which is accepted as insignificant in religious communities (Auerbach 64; qtd. in *Imagined Communities* 24). In this way, the modern nation-state *advances* in the "temporality" (Auerbach 64; qtd. in *Imagined Communities* 24), in which all the moments are both empty and identical: this is what homogeneity means in his theory. Similarly, this assumption is the cornerstone of Anderson's *secularization of the nation-state* theory.

Capitalism holds an important place in Anderson's theory of nationalism and secularization. Like Gellner and Hobsbawm[135] Anderson rightfully sees the relationship between the capitalist means of production and the nation-state. As Allen Carey-Webb writes, the need for "temporal homogeneity" arose in the 19th century, due to "capitalist modes of production and the bureaucratic activities of the modern states" (8). This is why Anderson devotes a chapter of his book to the significance of census, map, and museums. All of these policies and institutions function to create *homogeneity*, which is directly related to capitalist production. This is one understanding of time, which self-consciously excludes what Thomas M. Allen defines as "alternate temporalities" (8). In this perspective, *temporalities* (or we can read this as the minority view that shakes the grounds of nationalism) are ignored, ruled out, or suppressed. This suppression is achieved via state policies, and educational systems and museums are physical expressions of these. In this way, what will be remembered and what should be forgotten can be equally controlled.[136]

Then, Benedict Anderson explains the complex social transformation from pre-modern and religious societies, to relatively more secular and modern societies through the change in the way we experience time. And modern time suppresses the *temporalities* that do not fit into the official, unisonant and national perspectives. Two questions come up at this point: can Anderson's theory explain the complex multi-cultural nations that Roth, Rushdie, or Pamuk write about? Secondly, what does Roth's novel, *The Counterlife,* have to say about Anderson's assumption that *time* is homogeneous and *empty* in the modern nation-state?

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[135] See Chapter 1 Section 1.

[136] Anderson devotes another chapter to this, entitled "Remembering and Forgetting," as these are some of the most important elements in *imagined* communities.

To answer these questions, I will first turn to Homi Bhabha's and Anthony Smith's critique of Anderson. In his *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, Smith does not accept the idea that the nation-state has a monolithic perspective, or an essentialist identity. He explains that national identities always reinterpret themselves, and nations have never had certainties (137). In addition, Smith claims that very few fanatical ethnic nationalists desire homogeneity. He writes that multi-ethnicities in post-modern societies develop different forms of bonds to/in the nation (Smith 141). Thus, the *temporalities* that are ignored in Anderson's theory do not cease to exist, but survive in a different form. This is what Smith underlines, like Bhabha.

Both Smith and Bhabha have put particular emphasis on the concept of *temporality*. What does temporality mean? A good answer is provided by Sarah Sharma, in her *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics*:

> Temporalities are not times; like continually broken clocks, they must be reset again and again. They are expected to recalibrate and fit into a larger temporal order. Temporalities do not experience a uniform time but rather a time particular to the labor that produces them. Their experience of time depends on where they are positioned within a larger economy of temporal worth. The temporal subject's living day, as part of its livelihood, includes technologies of the self contrived for synchronizing to the time of others or having others synchronize to them. The meaning of these subjects' own times and experiences of time is in large part structured and controlled by both the institutional arrangements they inhabit and the time of others —other temporalities. (8)

In comparison to Anderson's theory of time, Sharma's is arguably more complex, at least at the individual level. The first trait of *temporality* is its temporariness: there is nothing perpetual about it. Temporalities make it impossible to label people with anything permanent, or with any identity categories, because belonging is not something consistent and permanent. Second, unlike Anderson's theory, there is no *uniformity* or *unisonality* in temporality. There are endless ways to experience, feel, or simply, to exist as a human

being. It may sound paradoxical, but in this view, there is no permanent value other than the temporality itself. In other words, there is no encapsulating identity category or class that encompasses everyone. Instead, there is a continuous *process* of diverse *synchronizations* among individuals. Third, temporalities are plural, and individual options to *synchronize* or *desynchronize* are almost endless.

Homi Bhabha's theory of temporality is very similar to that of Sharma or Smith, (and it is important to comprehend this concept in order to understand Bhabha's or Roth's view of nationalism). Bhabha mentions four significant points regarding the nation-state, its conception of time, and the function of writing and literature. Bhabha's theory directly relates to the complex and multi-cultural nations of the late 20th- and early 21st-centuries, about which Pamuk, Rushdie and Roth write. Bhabha's first critique of nationalism and *time* can be observed in his emphasis on the *cultural temporality* of nations. According to Bhabha, "the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality" compared to the imagined historical origins of nations (*Location of Culture* 1). Unlike Anderson, Bhabha does not see the nation as a unitary or solid being.

The second critique of Bhabha regarding time and the nation-state is on the locality of culture. The location of culture or locality, for Bhabha, is related to temporality: he writes that locality is "a form of living that is more complex than ‘community’; more symbolic than ‘society’. . . less patriotic than patrie; more rhetorical than the reason of State; . . . less homogeneous than hegemony; less centred than the citizen..." (*Nation and Narration* 292). It is the comparative thought process of Bhabha that shows us that the main conflict here is between the collective and the individual

identities. Anderson approaches the progress of nationalism from the point of view of the whole nation, whereas Bhabha starts with individuals and individuality.

Bhabha's third argument regarding temporality and identities in the nation-state is that the people of nation-states are both *objects* and *subjects*. He states that the "temporal dimension in the inscription of these political entities—that are also potent symbolic and affective sources of cultural identity—serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force" (*Nation and Narration* 292). Let us compare this perspective to Anderson's. He portrays a rather passive community shaped by capitalism, print media, and similar grand social forces. By contrast, Bhabha's definition works at the individual level, but this time Bhabha adds one more step: this individual perspective openly clashes with the structure of the nation-state. This structure, as Bhabha states in the above quotation, is a form of *domination*.

What does this have to do with *time* in the nation-state? One must consider Bhabha's emphasis that a nation can never have a unitary structure. On the contrary, he sees "*a continual slippage of categories*,[137] like sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia, or *'cultural difference'* in the act of writing the nation" (*Nation and Narration* 292). For this reason, imagining people as an organism[138] is quite misleading, because people are both "historical objects of nationalist pedagogy," as well as "the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people" (*Nation and Narration* 297). If individuals are both objects and subjects, according to Bhabha, the people of nations, then, must be conceived "in the double time" (*Nation and Narration* 297). Bhabha, then, openly disagrees with Anderson on two

[137] Emphasis of Bhabha.
[138] Bhabha's allusion to and criticism of Anderson's famous definition of nation: "a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous empty time" (*Imagined Communities* 26).

points. First, for Bhabha, the time of the nation can never be *empty*,[139] because individual agency (in the plural sense) is quite important, and individuality is always in conflict with the *national agenda*. There is a multiplicity of individual ideas, choices, practices, and acts that undermine the alleged unity of the nation-state. Second, Bhabha takes his theory one step further, and defines the nation as both "pedagogical and performative" (*Nation and Narration* 297). Roth's fiction and Bhabha's theory both agree on performativity[140] in the nation-state as a major force or constitutive element, with the exception that Roth's fiction approaches performativity in a critical way.

Bhabha presents the fourth theory based on these three ideas of his conception of the nation with regard to time and space. *Time* and identity in the nation-state, is to define the nation as "a space that is internally marked by cultural difference and the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities, and tense cultural locations" (*Nation and Narration* 299). The primary characteristic of the modern and multicultural nation-state in terms of space, then, lies in its complexity: Bhabha claims that "the space of the modern nation-people is never simply horizontal" (*Nation and Narration* 293). What is conceived here is not the solid structure of the nation, but rather, the nation is defined as an aggregation of "cultural formations and social processes without a centred logic," which "disperse the homogeneous, visual time of the horizontal society" (*Nation and Narration* 293). Through such a different definition of the nation in space and time, Bhabha not only rejects an understanding of the nation based on solid identity categories, but simultaneously claims that the temporalities and subjectivities must have "narrative authority" (*Nation and Narration* 293). At this particular point,

[139] Allusion to Anderson's definition of nation as *homogeneous* and *empty*.
[140] See the section on Roth's *performativity* in this chapter.

Bhabha's theory gets very close to what Roth's metafiction does literally: continuous shifts in the narrative and literary perspective do not let any dominant religious or national identity thrive for long.

Bhabha's theory clearly rejects the idea of *containing* people in the "...national discourse of the teleology of progress; the anonymity of individuals; the spatial horizontality of community; the homogeneous time of social narratives..." (*Nation and Narration* 302). This statement rejects an important element of Anderson's theories: unisonance. Bhabha writes that Anderson "abandons the 'meanwhile'" in the last chapters of his work, and also explains that *unisonance* is completely different from another concept of Anderson, *meanwhile*, in the sense that the *unisonance* creates a sort of *collective identification*, while *meanwhile* enables "instantaneous and subaltern voices" (*Nation and Narration* 309).

To summarize, this section provided a comparative analysis of two different conceptions of time in the nation-state: on the one hand is Benedict Anderson, who proposes that the nation is a unisonant structure with homogeneous and empty time. On the other hand, Homi Bhabha, who challenges Anderson, maintains that the nation is never a unitary and solid being, that individual identities always clash with collective identities, that people are both objects and subjects, and lastly, that there is no single dominant authority in the nation-state that can possibly establish a unisonant structure. The two views are openly in conflict. But what does Roth's fiction have to say about this conflict? In the next section, I answer this question.

VI. Conclusion: Metafiction, Identity, and the Nation-State in *The Counterlife*

Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* asks bold questions about Jewishness, secularism, identity, and belonging in the nation-state. What does it mean to be "a Jew without Jews?" (324) How can one be a Jew "without Judaism, without Zionism, without Jewishness, without a temple or an army or even a pistol"? (*CL* 324). Is it ever possible to be a Jew without a home, just the object itself"? (*CL* 324). In addition to these direct questions, Roth also asks indirect questions through, for instance, an unexpected decision of his fictional writer: What does it mean for the "secular" (*CL* 41, 89, 112, 124, 143, 218) Nathan Zuckerman to decide to have his unborn child circumcised?[141] (*CL* 324). What does this decision have to do with identity?

These are all quite challenging and relevant questions, (for both the late 20th century when the novel was published, as well as the early 21st century, when this study is being written). Roth provides several answers in a way that fits the pluralist spirit of the novel. He answers them both formally, that is, the answers are implicit in the metafictional structure of the novel, and he also answers them through the heated dialogues among his colorful Jewish characters from various socio-political backgrounds and opinions. It must also be noted that Philip Roth's fiction does not shy away from getting into dialogue with the themes of nationalism and secularism. This makes *The*

[141] See the related passage of Nathan Zuckerman, when he decides to have his child circumcised. Note how he changes his mind: "Only a few hours ago, I went so far as to tell Shuki Elchanan that the custom of circumcision was probably irrelevant to my "'I." Well, it turns out to be easier to take that line on Dizengoff Street than sitting here beside the Thames. A Jew among Gentiles and a Gentile among Jews. Here it turns out, by my emotional logic, to be the number-one priority. Aided by your sister, your mother, and even by you, I find myself in a situation that has reactivated the strong sense of difference that had all but atrophied in New York, and, what's more, that has drained the domestic idyll of its few remaining drops of fantasy. *Circumcision confirms that there is an us, and an us that isn't solely him and me*" (*CL* 324). Emphasis mine.

Counterlife a novel that contributes to the theory of belonging through a literary perspective.

The Counterlife confronts theories of nationalism that define the nation as unitary, unisonant or uniform, expressly refuting Benedict Anderson's theory of nationalism through a literary perspective. What does it mean to refute a theory from a literary perspective? To answer this question, I will break down the principal definition of nationalism by Anderson, and analyze how Roth's fiction perceives and portrays it.

Anderson defines the nation as "a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous time" (*Imagined Communities* 26). His first assumption is that the nation is an organism, a living thing. O*ne*, unified and coherent thing. Like Homi Bhabha, who writes that culture can be understood only through its *temporality* (*Nation and Narration* 2), Roth's fiction rejects Anderson's view. Through metafiction, that is, the shifting narrative, and by pushing the reader to experience the same or similar events through diverse perspectives and disturbingly different conclusions, *The Counterlife* shows that it can only be naive to expect any sort of uniformity in today's complex and multicultural communities.

There is a major difference between the way that theory and literature approach problems of identity and belonging in the nation-state. Foremost is their *scale*. Theorists like Benedict Anderson study the nation at a larger, societal level. Such a perspective pursues the development of the nation based on communities, not on individuals. However, *The Counterlife* formally shows that the novel is interested in the individual perspective, as opposed to the collective one. As evidence for this thesis, each chapter presents a different individual perspective in conflict with the collective identity and/or

the *national agenda*.[142] It seems safe to assert that Philip Roth's fiction provides a response to one *need* of theory: as the first chapter of this study explains, Eric Hobsbawm calls for different methods for studying and understanding the nation. He writes that one cannot understand the nation "unless [the nation is] also analysed *from below*,[143] that is, in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist" (10). This is exactly what Roth's novel is doing: *The Counterlife* is both a response to Hobsbawm's call, and a meaningful contribution to the theory of identity and the nation-state.

Another clash point in the dialogue between Anderson's theory and Roth's fiction is over the idea of *homogeneous-empty-time*. Roth's fiction clearly refutes the theory that the *time* of the nation-state is homogeneous and empty. First, there is not just one single time, as Bhabha explains. Instead, there is a multiplicity of time(s), at least as many as the number of people who experience, shape, and re-shape them. This idea is formally expressed in *The Counterlife* by resetting the clock (or the novel's time) at the beginning of each chapter, and presenting the reader with a new situation, climax, and resolution each time. Second, Anderson's idea of homogeneous-empty-time is built on the strong assumption that religion has been mostly, if not totally, replaced by the *secular* structure of the nation-state. As stated in the first paragraph of this section, the secularity or secularism of the fictional writer Nathan Zuckerman is emphasized repeatedly throughout the novel. However, in all of the chapters, he is somehow in conflict with other characters, and this conflict is always related to religion or the application of religious

[142] I borrow the term from Homi Bhabha. See the previous section.
[143] Emphasis mine.

ideals to everyday life.[144] All these confrontations strongly demonstrate two things: first, time in the nation-state is not "empty." Instead, it is full of both religious and secular views, as represented by angry dialogues particularly in the *Judea* chapter. Secondly, the nation-state is not a secular entity; it is rather a space of conflict for *the religious* and *the secular*.

Roth's metafiction serves the purpose of blurring the distinction between *fact* and *fiction*. This distortion is performed through writing, and fiction itself calls attention to the relationship between writing and the nation. This relationship has been discussed by Anderson[145] and Bhabha[146] in different contexts, but Roth's literary perspective is unique in its claim that the identity categories in the nation are both *imagined* and *written* by the people themselves.[147] In other words, between Anderson and Bhabha, Roth gets quite close to Bhabha's idea of *double writing*, but his uniqueness comes from the novel's literary success in showing this through its metafictionality.

Lastly, what does it mean for Roth to have his fictional author Nathan Zuckerman, as a *secular* Jew, decide to have his unborn baby circumcised at birth? How does Nathan Zuckerman relate the removal of his child's *foreskin* to the discussion of belonging? On the one hand, the act of circumcision is "quintessentially Jewish, and the

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[144] The clash between Henry and Nathan, Henry's *aliyah* to Agor, conversations between Lippman and Nathan, crazy Jimmy's plane incident, British racism against Jewish Nathan in England, or the clash between Maria and Nathan on circumcising the baby are some of the many examples of this sort. In all of these, religion or religious beliefs play a significant role.

[145] Anderson writes extensively on the significant influence of writing in the nation-state, particularly the writing of the novel and the newspaper.

[146] Bhabha underscores the significance of writing, too. But unlike Anderson, Bhabha believes that people of nations are both objects and subjects, and the minorities are *interventionists*. Bhabha frequently expresses this idea through the trope of *writing* in the nation-state (*Nation and Narration* 292, 293, 297, 299, 302).

[147] Nathan says that "[t]he treacherous imagination is everybody's maker—we are all the invention of each other, everybody a conjuration conjuring up everyone else. We are all each other's authors" (*CL* 145).

mark of *their*[148] reality" (*CL* 323), and on the other hand, it is Nathan's clear expression that it was not "his intention" to have the circumcision performed on his child, as it was "irrelevant to [his] 'I'" (*CL* 324). The *religious* and the *secular* choices make themselves more visible and pressing through the demands and expectations of other characters,[149] too.

Before explaining Nathan's decision, I would like to underline two things. First, such a decision is made for the unborn baby. This adds another layer to the metafiction, and Philip Roth shows in this way that the collective identities of the nation-state start shaping us even before we are born into this world. Additionally, the identity continues (or is continued) on maleness, on a specific performance on the penis. Second, a *fin-de-siècle* Roth completes his novel with the same sexual imagery: the impotence of both Henry and Nathan provide Roth the means to discuss belonging and identity as a matter of power. Now the novel finishes with Nathan's decision to have the baby circumcised, and Nathan says he finds it "fitting to conclude with . . . the circumcised erection of the Jewish father" (*CL* 324). Circumcision, sexuality, power, and identity: they are all forms of performativity determining identity. Still, what is Roth's point?

Philip Roth has a reasonably negative view of nationalism. What pushed Nathan to take the decision to have his baby circumcised is the *mutually exclusive language* and racism in the nation-state, as observed in his statement that "England's made a Jew of me in only eight weeks"[150] (*CL* 324). Nathan, who had been accused of parricide several

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[148] Emphasis mine. 'Their' refers to Jews. 'Nathan Zuckerman does not define himself as a member of a Jewish group in this statement. At least, it can be stated that he is looking at Jewishness from the outside.

[149] Nathan's prospective wife Maria and her British family are against this Jewish custom, and they object to the circumcision.

[150] Nathan refers to Chapter 4, *Gloucestershire*, where he met different forms of British racism against Jews.

times in the novel (in the sense of disrespecting the traditions of the previous generation), now fails to do the same thing as a secular Jew, when it comes to choosing against circumcision. On the contrary, Nathan simply re-asserts the power and the Jewish identity he had lost at the beginning of the novel. Ironically, the book is dedicated to his father. In short, neither Nathan Zuckerman, nor Philip Roth has a positive view of the nation-state. Yet, if there is one point on which Nathan Zuckerman and Philip Roth agree with Benedict Anderson, it would be that the nation-state is here to stay, in spite of all of its conflicts, exclusivity and power-based identity politics.

It would be an injustice to over-emphasize the negative tone of *The Counterlife*, as the novel has a very playful, ironical, and entertaining tone in its discussion of secularism, identity, Jewishness and the nation-state. In spite of the intrinsic pessimism, there is also a fresh and hopeful perspective in the novel, which is clearly articulated by Nathan Zuckerman. He says that "[A]ll I can tell you with certainty that I, for one, have no self, and that I am unwilling or unable to perpetrate upon myself the joke of a self. It certainly does strike me as a joke about my self" (*CL* 320-321). In *Up Society's Ass*, Mark Shechner comments on this short but striking passage that "Roth has not settled with Jewishness yet, and it is likely he never will" (119). This is exactly what makes Roth's fiction hopeful in tone: its indeterminacy on identities, its skepticism in regard to uniformality, its openness to alternative selves, its ability to look at itself from the outside, and its awareness of temporalities. All in all, Roth's *The Counterlife* offers a distinct literary perspective on identity and belonging in the nation-state in general, and from a Jewish context in particular.

> "...in a country where the truth is what it is instructed to be, reality quite literally ceases to exist, so that everything becomes possible except what we are told is the case; and maybe this was the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence—that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disorientated, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies."
>
> (*Midnight's Children* 373)

Chapter III: Rushdie, Secularist Nationalism, and the Limits of Metafiction

I. Introduction

In the first chapter, I discussed the shortcomings of *unisonance* and nationalism in Anderson's sense. I then analyzed the two conflicting interpretations of secularism by Asad and Casanova. A focal point of the first chapter was the discussion of *national* and *secular* elements, which contribute to the appearance of *exclusivism* in the nation-state. In other words, I probed into the *limitedness* of the nation-state (as discussed by Anderson) by focusing on the theoretical factors that render it *sovereign.* In the first section, I argued, Anderson's *unisonance* overlooks the individual and the minority perspectives by over-focusing on the collective identity of the nation. In the second section on secularism, I maintained that the definition of secularism is always plural, and I discussed how Casanova's approach has a rather strict, exclusivist, and a *stadial*[151] tone.

In Chapter 2 on Roth's *The Counterlife*, I brought theory and literature together: I put forward that metafiction in *The Counterlife* (and hence, its secularism and nationalism) *is* inherently and structurally plural. I also argued that Roth's understanding

[151] For the definition of *stadial* perspective, see chapter 1 section 2.

of secularism is indirectly critical of *secularist secularism* in Casanova's sense. By stressing how Roth's fiction undermines any fixed identity through its metafiction, I proposed that *literature* can provide an original contribution to theory, as Roth's metafiction shows that secularism and nationalism do not have to be based on singular, monist and exclusivist perspectives. Roth's metafiction, I maintained, repeatedly rejects the dualist "either/or" attitude by showing how humans are always "and/and." Furthermore, Roth's inclusive and eclectic view of identity, I argued, offers an original contribution to the theory of belonging in the nation-state.

In this third chapter, I build my argument on the previous chapters that I explained above, and I juxtapose Roth's metafiction to that of Salman Rushdie. Even though several Rushdie critics have justifiably praised his work for its inclusive identity politics based on *hybridity*, in this chapter I discuss the limits of Rushdie's metafiction in *Midnight's Children*: I argue that Rushdie's *secularist nationalism* in Casanova's sense defines the limits of his metafiction, which is clearly *exclusive* of Muslims, Islam and Pakistan.

Methodologically, I will first discuss Rushdie's distinctive way of using metafiction in order to discuss how *Midnight's Children* is based on the concept of *hybridity.* In this first section, I will also show how critics of Rushdie approach his metafiction and define *hybridity*. Next, I will argue how Rushdie's *hybridity* is limited by his views of *secular*(*ist*) *nationalism* and the stereotyping of Muslim characters. The following section connects Rushdie's novel to his theory: through my analysis of his *Imaginary Homelands* and a 2011 interview, I will trace the novel's secularist nationalism as shown in Rushdie's theory. In the conclusion of this chapter, I will provide a

comparative analysis of Roth's work to that of Rushdie's in terms of the differences in their approaches to metafiction, secularism, nationalism, identity, and belonging.

II. Rushdie's Metafiction and Hybridity

In this section, I discuss Rushdie's inventive way of employing the literary technique of metafiction in dialogue with Rushdie's critics. While doing so, I will specifically analyze how *Midnight's Children* narrates *memory*, *body, and sexuality* and lastly, *time*. Through this analysis, I will discuss Bhabha's concept of *hybridity*, so that I can show the limits of Rushdie's *hybridity* and its *exclusivity* in the following sections of this chapter.

According to Bhabha, hybridity "entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (*Location* 4), and it occupies "a liminal space, a pathway between the upper and lower areas, each of which was annotated with plaques referring to blackness and whiteness" (*Location* 3). Thus, the hybrid is a cultural and political agent that is 'in-between [in terms of] history and sexuality" (*Location* 14), and it is "a difference within'" (*Location* 13). Bhabha underlines that the hybrid is "a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics" (25). He also writes that collective national identities are not compatible with hybridity (or vice versa), as hybridity is "transnational and translational" (*Location* 5).

The concept of *hybridity* originally refers to a biological process and, hence, comes from the discipline of biology: Brian Stross writes: "in Latin the *hibrida* was the offspring of a (female) domestic sow and a (male) wild boar. The semantic range of the word *hybrid* has expanded in more recent times to include the offspring of a mating by

any two unlike animals or plants" (254). Regarding this quotation and the term hybridity as defined by Bhabha, there are three significant points I would like to highlight. First, as Ten Kortenaar notes, Rushdie's fiction has been frequently read as "the literary expression of cultural hybridity" (17) based on Bhabha's definition of the term. For instance, Theo D'Haen writes that Rushdie's midnight children "literally give voice to an entire subcontinent" (198) through the hybridity of the novel. Similarly, Eva Aldea writes that Rushdie's novel is "considered culturally hybrid, in the sense of syncretizing cultures, and that coexistence of the magical and the real was seen as the expression of this hybridity," and therefore, she continues, "*Midnight's Children* is indeed a novel about the search for individual and collective identity" (159). These critics read the novel through the concept of plurality, in-betweenness, or hybridity. I will challenge this reading.

The second significant issue is that the term *hybridity* in Rushdie's criticism actually refers to *cultural hybridity* (Stross 254), which is defined as "engender[ing] new fertile and creative contexts in which new things can come into being . . . by virtue of modifying the environment" (Stross 264). The term *cultural hybridity* is not limited to the conception of nationalism and the nation-state, because the concept is used in many related fields, "from anthropology to literature, from geography to art history, and from musicology to religious studies," according to Peter Burke (5).

Another significant point is that *cultural hybridity* is the opposite of *cultural homogeneity* (Kraidy 75). "Cultural pluralism" and the acceptance of "cultural difference" are the core values inherent in cultural hybridity. I argue that there are some limitations in the "hybridity" of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Specifically, I maintain that the duality of *homogeneity vs. hybridity* is a central theme in Rushdie's novel, and his work does not

always and fully accept *cultural hybridity* due to its selectively *secularist* perspective. Before challenging the traditional Rushdie criticism that praises the novel for its *hybrid* scope, and prior to discussing the *exclusivism* buried in the grammar of Rushdie's metafiction, I will first provide my analysis of Rushdie's clever use of *metafiction*. I will furthermore explain why Rushdie's critics frequently champion *Midnight's Children* as an outstanding example of *hybridity*.

When Bhabha calls Rushdie a "hybridizing" author (*Nation and Narration* 6), he refers to the complex literary structure that Rushdie employs. As a start, the storytelling in *Midnight's Children* is multifarious: the autobiography of the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is historically and physically attached to India. Saleem is born in Bombay, "at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence," "mysteriously handcuffed to history," his "destinies indissolubly chained to those of [his] country" (3). From the very beginning, Saleem makes sure that readers understand that they are not only reading Saleem's story, but also the story of all of India. He states that "[c]onsumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me" (4). In terms of Rushdie's use of metafiction, such a narrative is consequential: Rushdie is literally playing with the dualities of and the distinctions between "story and history," "microcosm and microcosm" (Frank 164). Similar to the fictions of Roth and Pamuk, Rushdie does the same to blur the boundaries between *fact* and *fiction*.

For this reason, the genre of the novel is classified as "historiographic metafiction" (Lee 36). Vilashini Cooppan writes that the genre "problematizes the truth-claims of national history through processes of narrativization such as unreliable narration, intertextual allusions and embeddings, parody, and falsification, and a general

ideology of plurality" (48). Furthermore, just like Roth's *The Counterlife* and Pamuk's *My Name is Red*, Rushdie's *Midnight Children* is a novel on modernity, national identity, and multilayered belonging, all of which are discussed through self-reflexive narration. Using metafiction in such a way accounts for the noteworthy similarity in all three novels: they all have the grand desire to narrate the complexity of modern national belonging through *writing*. When Nathan Zuckerman, the protagonist and fictitious author of *The Counterlife*, narrates the multiplicity and temporality of Jewish identities, he does so through a lost and partly recovered manuscript, a fictional writer, continuously shifting perspectives and re-structuring the plot in every chapter. Similarly, *My Name is Red* never trusts a single narrator. The novel is narrated by several abstract characters,[152] and how the calligraphy artists *paint* and *write* the world forms the main conflict in the novel.

Correspondingly, Saleem Sinai, the narrator of *Midnight's Children*, attempts to remember and write everything, that is, all the history and stories of India. However, he can never do it in a satisfactory way: either Padma interrupts him (20), or he fails to concentrate and write, similar to when he fails to have sexual intercourse with her (*Midnight's Children* 38). Therefore, writing (or the inability to write) to depict the nation is one common trait Rushdie's metafiction shares with that of Roth and Pamuk. All three writers turn the act of writing about the nation into a *messy* business. Through this *messiness* of metafiction, the novels imply that identities and belonging in the nation-state are always complicated, multilayered, but never *unisonant*. Such a formal construction of the novel is an indirect response to the uniform or unisonant nationalism depicted by Anderson. Therefore, the first and foremost element that makes *Midnight's Children* hybrid is this narrative technique.

[152] Like the color red, death or Satan.

Memory and remembering are the other factors that make the novel hybrid, because neither memory nor remembering is homogeneous or linear.[153] Saleem expresses that the narration is "guided only by the memory of a large white bedsheet with a roughly circular hole" (*Midnight's Children* 4), which is never reliable and is frequently "going" (*Midnight's Children* 11, 485), "com[ing] back" (138), exposed to "the corruption of clocks," and which is also the source of "morality, judgement and character" (*Midnight's Children* 241), as well as that of "the truth" (*Midnight's Children* 242). Saleem explains why memory (and hence, identity) is never homogeneous, as memory "selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events" (*Midnight's Children* 242). When Saleem loses his memory and becomes "memoryless," he also loses his identity, and becomes a soldier in the army of Pakistan (*Midnight's Children* 397). This chapter, called "The Buddha" is no longer narrated by Saleem but rather the novel shifts to third-person narration (Kortenaar 157). Thus, Rushdie's metafiction regarding memory implies that the individual and collective identities in *Midnight's Children* are formed through memory and remembering: when there is no memory, there is no *self* or *identity*. For instance, in the following chapters Saleem is reduced to a dog in the Pakistani army, which shows the conflict between the two national-religious identities of India and Pakistan.[154] [155] Accordingly, another element that makes Rushdie's fiction hybrid, then, is its resistance to homogeneity through

[153] Maria Sabina-Draga Alexandru states that the linear narrative implies a "development" or "progress," both of which are "Western import" (123) and Saleem "wrestles with a chronological view of history" (Srivastava 66).
[154] "How Saleem Achieved Purity," "The Buddha," and "In the Sundarbans."
[155] This conflict is strictly related to Rushdie's secular(ist) perspective and draws the limits of his novel's hybridity, as I will discuss in the next section of this chapter.

memory and remembering: Saleem's memory (and also the lack of it) gives him identities, or takes them back.

The storytelling and the storyteller(s) are the additional factors contributing to the so-called *hybridity*. The metafictions of Roth, Pamuk, and Rushdie have a common question regarding the storytellers, because all three works strongly ask this same question in quite different ways: who are we? In Roth's work, the novel makes its fictitious author shift the plot in every chapter, which opens a debate on both the temporality and the constructedness of various Jewish identities. In Pamuk's novel, the various narrators imply that neither the characters in the novel nor the readers can be simply classified as a member of a religious or national identity. There are several moments in both Roth's and Pamuk's novels that make the reader think how irrelevant these categorizations can be. Saleem of *Midnight's Children* asks the same question of *who we are* through the literary construction of the narrator: Saleem Sinai is structurally a mixture of the religious, cultural and historical identities of India.

Before I proceed with an explanation of how Saleem is both a mixture and a representative of India, I must make a distinction between the structural representational capacity of the protagonist Saleem Sinai (that is, how he *embodies all* the historically and culturally constituent elements of India) and *the extent and the way in which he represents them*. The distinction is this: it is true that the novel's metafiction is structurally *inclusive* of most of the class- and culture-based identities, but, as I will argue in the next section, Rushdie's metafiction is still *exclusive* in the way the novel "elects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies" identities (*Midnight's Children* 242). To state this in the language of the novel, "in the end it creates its own

reality," which is an identity *limited* by the secularist nationalism that posits noteworthy limitations on the alleged *hybridity* of the work.

Saleem Sinai starts narrating the novel giving the impression that he is the son of a well-off couple, Mumtaz (later, Amina) and Ahmed Sinai (*Midnight's Children* 68). However, the plot takes a sharp turn when we learn that the nurse Mary Pereira "change[s] the name-tags on the two huge infants" in the hospital, "giving the poor baby a life of privilege and condemning the rich-born child to accordions and poverty" (*Midnight's Children* 130). By doing so, Mary Pereira swaps the baby-tag of Saleem with that of Shiva, but the parents of the babies make the plot much more complicated than a simple change of characters from different social classes of India. At this point, the plot construction makes the readers assume that the real parent of Saleem is the poor street-artist Wee Willie Winkie and his undereducated wife Vanita. In another plot twist, we learn that the Britisher Methwold sends Wee Willie away and seduces his wife (*Midnight's Children* 113-114), which makes the Britisher Methwold and poor Indian Vanita the biological parents of Saleem through this extra-marital affair.

Saleem's surrogate parents are also significant in terms of the narrator/protagonist's resistance to homogeneity. He states that "Ahmed Sinai, Hanif Aziz, Sharpsticker Sahib, General Zulfikar have all been pressed into service in the absence of William Methwold; Picture Singh was the last of this noble line" (*Midnight's Children* 490). In addition to the biological mother Vanita, Amina and Mary are Saleem's mothers that raise him together (*Midnight's Children* 144). Saleem Sinai is proud of his "gift," which is "the gift of inventing new parents for [him]self whenever necessary, [t]he power of giving birth to fathers and mothers" (*Midnight's Children* 120). These

unexpected shifts in the plot are some of the factors that make Saleem Sinai a *hybrid* character and representative of India, according to several Rushdie critics.

Saleem's storytelling and his connections to other stories and storytellers reveal the novel's approach to the homogeneity of identities: Saleem Sinai is not a simple observer/narrator. On the contrary, he both narrates and shapes what he has in his memory. As a storyteller, Kortenaar explains, Saleem builds his narrative on the stories of Tai and Mary, and his sources are "the Bible, the Mahabharata. . . and the Arabian Nights" (21), and he compares himself to Moses, Ganesh, and Scheherazade (21-22). In spite of this seemingly inclusivity and despite the Muslim background of the Sinai family, the "Quran" is not among the sources of Saleem's stories.[156]

So far, I have discussed the protagonist's relationship to the whole nation of India, as well as some aspects of the storytelling, such as the use of memory and its connection to other *relevant* sources/storytellers. All of these contribute to the emphasis that the novel places on the structural homogeneity of the nation and identity. Another factor is Saleem's depiction of his body and sexuality. Similar to Roth's *The Counterlife*, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* uses the tropes of impotence and writing to discuss identity in the nation-state. In the previous chapter, I argued that Roth's novel uses the tropes of manly sexual power and the lack of it, that is, impotence, to criticize the orthodox and exclusivist identities in the nation-state. Such a criticism, I maintained, is along the same lines as Edward Said's statement that "the assertion of identity is by no means a mere ceremonial matter" (*Culture and Imperialism* 37).

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[156] This is related to the secularism of Rushdie's fiction, and I will discuss it in the next section of this chapter.

Similarly, Rushdie's novel uses *impotence* to show the opposition between the collective identity and individuality in the nation-state. In the following self-reflexive address to the readers, Saleem clearly articulates this distinction: "Did children of less than four thousand days discuss identity, and the inherent conflicts of capitalism? Having got through fewer than one hundred thousand hours, did they contrast Gandhi and Marxlenin, power and impotence? Was collectivity opposed to singularity?" (*Midnight's Children* 293). Thus, Rushdie's metafiction and the use of the trope of impotence does not provide Saleem with the sort of power to claim a *unisonant* or *uniform* national identity of the kind that is described by Anderson, criticized by Said, and mocked by Roth.

In other words, the internal, external, cultural and historical influences are so varied and multiple that they make it impossible for Saleem to claim one unique national or religious identity. On top of this, these influences are so contradictory to each other (that is, in conflict with each other, such as class, religion, ethnicity, language, and geography-related issues) that it cracks Saleem's body up (*Midnight's Children* 35). Saleem, therefore, is "physically falling apart," because his body is "buffeted by too much history" (36). He is "disintegrating" and at the end, Saleem says, he will "eventually crumble into (approximately) six hundred and thirty million particles of anonymous, and necessarily oblivious dust" (36). The pessimist tone of Saleem is obvious, but still, he states that this is the very reason he decided to *write*: "This is why I have resolved to confide in paper, before I forget. (We are a nation of forgetters.)" (36). This last quotation is a reference to Anderson's theory of the nation-state, and his chapter on "Memory and

Forgetting." As Anderson writes, nations forget and remember just like human beings.[157] But unlike Anderson's nationalism, Rushdie's novel and its protagonist reject a *unified* nationalism: at the end, Saleem predicts that, "six hundred and thirty million particles of anonymous dust" will be left, not a *uniform* nation.

The third factor contributing to the *hybridity* of Rushdie's novel is its approach to the concept of *time*. Roth's metafiction, as discussed in the previous chapter, deliberately departs from linear time and narration, which is another similarity between Roth's and Rushdie's novels. This is not a coincidence, because both works have a distance from, and are critical of the unified, progressive, national time as described by Anderson. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson states that "[a]wareness of being embedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of 'forgetting' the experience of this continuity. . . engenders the need for a narrative of 'identity'" (205). The time in *Midnight's Children* is neither *serial* nor *progressive* for that matter. To begin with, the novel starts when Saleem is a 31-year-old adult (*Midnight's Children* 3), and there is no linear narrative. The "corruption of clocks" works against Saleem (37). In the chapter called "Tick Tock," time does not flow or go forward, but rather it "count[s]down" (118).[158]

The conflict between the two different understandings of time is obvious in *Midnight's Children*: on the one hand is timeless Tai who has "watched the mountains being born. . . seen Emperors die" (11), and on the other hand is the "inoperative" clock tower (121) left by the colonial British. The midnight's children partake in both: they are the products of both the old and timeless India, as well as the now-inoperative clock

[157] "As with modern persons, so it is with nations." (*Imagined Communities* 205)
[158] The other functions of the countdown are to "build suspense" until Saleem's birth, and to show that time is "misleading" and unreliable (*Midnight's Children* 118).

tower of the British. This is why Kortenaar writes that "[n]either in the world nor in Rushdie's novel are England and India pure entities with characters that are stable and known in advance" (24). Thus, similar to Roth's *The Counterlife*, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* rejects the uniformity of the nation-state through the syncretic (and/and, not or/or) use of time. This is another factor that contributes to Rushdie's alleged *hybridity*.

The three main factors I have discussed above: the protagonist's identification with India, the novel's use of memory and the unique storytelling techniques, are all significant elements of Rushdie's metafiction that undermine the homogeneity of the narrative and the nation. Thus, Rushdie's metafiction blurs the lines between several dualities, some of them being the colonizer and the colonized, traditional and modern, East and West, lower class and upper class, Indian and English, and certainly, fact and fiction. Having discussed the unique ways that Rushdie's metafiction favors multiplicity over homogeneity, now the next step is to discuss exclusivity and to challenge the *hybridity* of *Midnight's Children*.

III. Rushdie's Secular(ist) Nationalism in *Midnight's Children*

In the previous chapters, I discussed how Casanova's theory of secularism endorses a *stadial* perspective. Finding a strong relationship between modernization and *stadial* secularism, Casanova writes that "[i]n places where such secularist historical stadial consciousness is absent or less dominant, as in . . . most non-Western post-colonial societies, processes of modernization are unlikely to be accompanied by processes of religious decline" ("Two Dimensions" 26). What Casanova means is that there is always a potential which "processes of religious revival may accompany" if secularism does not have a stadial view ("Two Dimensions" 26). In another essay,

Casanova defines this stadial consciousness as "anthropocentric change in the conditions of belief as a process of *maturation and growth*, as a 'coming of age' and as progressive emancipation" ("Secularization, Religion and Multicultural Citizenship" 23-24).[159] Thus, Casanova states that modernization is possible through a *maturation* process of religious decline. Casanova's view of secularism is also compatible with Anderson's nation-state theory that explains the rise of the nation-state as occurring with the decline of religiously imagined communities.

Building on the discussion of the previous chapters, in this section I argue that religio-national exclusivism in *Midnight's Children*'s undermines the *alleged* hybridity of the novel. In this regard, Rushdie's metafiction is exclusive, such that the Muslim characters in the novel are portrayed as people of *submission* who lack intellectual faculties, or as members of a corrupt collective identity of *businessism*. In addition, I maintain that the religio-national exclusivity of Rushdie's metafiction can also be observed spatially, as in the duality Rushdie creates between the *pluralist* India and *pure* Pakistan, as well as chronologically, when time literally comes to a halt in the Pakistan chapters. In detail, I discuss how Rushdie's secularist nationalism has an exclusive grammar similar to Casanova's secularism. Following this comparative analysis, I will also discuss the differences between the rather inclusive secularism of Roth and the exclusive secularism of Rushdie's metafiction.

In terms of its genre, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a historical autobiography. Therefore, it is not possible to understand Rushdie's work without fully comprehending the historical context of the novel. As Aruna Srivastava explains, Rushdie's work "mark[s] out an important period in the history of the Indian polity, that of the breakdown

[159] Emphasis mine.

of the Nehruvian secular consensus" (2). According to Srivastava, the "breakdown" from Nehruvian secularism became prominent in the 1975-77 Emergency, and turned into "an alternative national ideology, Hindutva, based on the supremacy of Hindu religion and culture" (2). Srivastava writes that Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* can be read as a response to the religious conflicts, Emergency rule under Indira Gandhi, and the following ethnic and religious claims of power (2).

Srivastava reads *Midnight's Children* as a novel that "exploits the dialogic possibilities of the novel form in order to question the compartmentalization of religion and politics" (*Secularism* 2). As I have discussed in the previous section, Srivastava is right in stating that Rushdie has a loud and visible *pluralist approach* to identities. However, she also states that "Rushdie's expressionistic style and his digressive and non-linear narrative juxtapose religious, mythic and secular worldviews as *equal claimants to what constitutes the nation*" (*Secularism* 2).[160] Considering the way Rushdie's metafiction depicts Pakistani and Muslim characters, I argue that Srivastava's statement concerning Rushdie's metafiction is misleading, as it ignores the exclusivist perspective of the novel. Regarding the pluralist perspective of *Midnight's Children*, Srivastava writes the following:

> His narrative of India is reacting against an authoritarian state; hence his anti-statism, and his writing of a defiantly pluralist and centrifugal history of India, where the trajectory of Muslim identity figures prominently. *Midnight's Children* cannot endorse the idea of a single national identity, because it is narrated from a minoritarian perspective, that of the Muslim Saleem Sinai (though in the course of the novel he reveals his multiple parentage, Hindu and British as well). (*Secularism* 9-10)

I agree with Srivastava that a Muslim identity appears prominently in Rushdie's metafiction, but I do not agree with *how* it appears. Similarly, Srivastava is also right in

[160] Emphasis mine.

stating that Saleem has several connections to different religious and national groups; however, Rushdie never portrays Saleem as a character that has equal distance from these identities. In other words, it is possible to trace how Rushdie's metafiction approaches each of the identities mentioned above: the novel has a more embracing approach towards some of these identities, while it has visible distance towards others. Still, Srivastava writes that

> [f]iction could potentially bridge the gaps between religious lifeworlds and rationalist secularism, between the rationalist language of social science and that of religious belief. Both translation and conversion are premised on the idea of dialogue, a defining characteristic of the novel form according to Mikhail Bakhtin. Fiction may offer the possibility of a 'universal communication' without its necessary subordination to rationalist discourse. The dialogic form of the novel stands out as a genre eminently suited for the representation of a radical pluralism of worldviews. (*Secularism* 44)

Based on Bakhtin's idea of dialogic literature, Srivastava's reading of Rushdie assumes that the novel is inclusive of all identities to an equal degree. For this reason, Srivastava has a second assumption: that Rushdie's novel is "able to articulate this pluralism with regard to the articulation of secular and religious identity in the Indian context" (*Secularism* 44). Such a view misses two points: first, Rushdie's secularism has an inherent *stadial* perspective, that is, not all religions are the same, and some religions are *more mature,* and hence, they are better than others.[161] Secondly, what Srivastava's statement above references with the phrase of "Indian context" is actually Rushdie's understanding of nationalism. Therefore, when Srivastava states that Rushdie's novel "foreground[s] the conflict between secular and religious identity and endorse[s] a broadly pluralist perspective of the Indian nation-state" (44), she does not take into account the exclusivity of Rushdie's nationalism, just like any other nationalism. As I

[161] Hinduism and Islam are the religions in question here.

discussed in the first chapter, Anderson's explanation of the nation-state is based on both *sovereignty* and *limitedness*: Rushdie's nationalism is not an exception. Hence, what I argue in this section is that *Midnight's Children* is not a novel that endorses *hybridity*; on the contrary, the apparent pluralism of the metafiction is *limited* by the stadial secularist nationalism of Rushdie. In this theoretical context, I will discuss the following three issues, as well as how Rushdie's metafiction deals with them: the way Pakistan is depicted, the stereotyping of Muslim characters, and the novel's selectivity in its cultural sources.

The starting point is the clear distinction between India and Pakistan, because this duality determines the geographical, cultural, and national limits of India in Rushdie's metafiction. To begin, India has its midnight's children who are all gifted, different, and colorful. According to Saleem, these "infants with powers of transmutation, flight, prophecy and wizardry" (*Midnight's Children* 229) are the special kids who "were born within the frontiers of the infant sovereign state of India" (224). Rushdie's metafiction separates the two countries into cultural and political opposites, and Pakistan is India's national *other*. The special children of India are "endowed with features, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous" (224). Thanks to the birth of the new Indian generation with extraordinary skills, "history, arriving at a point of the highest significance and promise, had chosen to sow, in that instant, the seeds of a future which would genuinely differ from anything the world had seen up to that time" (224). Rushdie is certainly ironic in these lines, and this passage creates a *dramatic irony*, as the children fail to meet any of the expectations of Saleem at end of the novel. Still, there is a "limited" India, as defined by Anderson, which is geographically and culturally separated

from Pakistan in Saleem's imagination. This India is not inclusive of Pakistan and its culture. In the following passage, Saleem clearly states that there is a border separating the two countries, and he does not have any knowledge of the other side:

> If a similar miracle was worked across the border, in the newly-partitioned-off Pakistan, I have no knowledge of it; my perceptions were, while they lasted, bounded by the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Himalaya mountains, but also by the artificial frontiers which pierced Punjab and Bengal. (*Midnight's Children* 225)

The geographical description of Saleem is both inclusive and exclusive: he defines *his* India that leaves out both Pakistan and (today's) Bangladesh, both of which are lands with Muslim majorities. In this passage, Saleem is depicting 1957, whereas Bangladesh was established in 1971. Therefore, Saleem's definition is exclusive of the eastern and western parts of India with Muslim majorities.

In *Midnight's* Children, Saleem states that "there are as many versions of India as Indians" (308), but Pakistan creates a contrast to this multiplicity and variety of India. The same Saleem defines Pakistan as "the Land of the Pure," a uniform community in contrast to the plurality of India (328). The difference between the two becomes more apparent when Saleem's family moves to Pakistan in 1963 (349), and when subsequently Saleem joins the Pakistani army (377).

The reason that the Sinai family moves to Pakistan is significant: in the exclusivist political climate following the Partition, Ahmed Sinai finds out that all his assets are frozen (153), just like his testicles get frozen (154). Dr. Narlikar defines it as "bad times" and says that the government chose to "freeze a Muslim's assets and. . . make him run to Pakistan, leaving all [the] wealth behind him" adding that "[t]his so-called secular state gets some damn clever ideas" (*Midnight's Children* 153). This passage may appears to be an example of Rushdie's criticism of the harsh secularist politics and

exclusivism of India, but there is more to it. Rushdie's metafiction blames the Muslims, Jinnah and their separatist vision of India based on religion/Islamic identity, more than he criticizes India's secularist policies and the decision to confiscate Muslim assets. This can be traced in the following quotation that is critical of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, "the President of Pakistan" (91, 367). In the passage below, Saleem makes a striking comparison between several dualities, including India and Pakistan, multiplicity and singularity, the potential and the failure, all connected to the duality of Nehruvian inclusive secularism vs. Jinnah's religious separatism:

> How many things people notions we bring with us into the world, how many possibilities and also restrictions of possibility!—Because all of these were the parents of the child born that midnight, and for every one of the midnight children there were as many more. Among the parents of midnight: the failure of the Cabinet Mission scheme; the determination of M. A. Jinnah, who was dying and wanted to see Pakistan formed in his lifetime, and would have done anything to ensure it— (*Midnight's Children* 120-121)

As Rakesh Ankit explains, the event Saleem mentions here, the Cabinet Mission, is a series of negotiations in 1946 that took place among the British, and the leaders of political parties of India (16-17) prior to the Partition. The Cabinet Mission finished with an "unsatisfactory end" (Ankit 17) and the idea of a *united India* of Gandhi and Nehru eventually failed (Gandhi 248). In the passage above, Rushdie's novel holds Jinnah as the one mainly responsible: Rushdie implies that Jinnah's agenda to establish a Muslim country led India to the Partition. Similarly, the duality of "possibilities and restrictions" is parallel to Rushdie's depiction of India as the land of plurality and possibilities, and Pakistan as the country of singularity and purity throughout the novel. For Rushdie, Jinnah is "a parent of midnight;" therefore, this passage is of critical importance in terms of understanding why Rushdie's metafiction has such a hostile tone while portraying

Pakistan. Saleem abhors the Partition; thus, he believes and implies that Jinnah's religious communalism undermines all other attractive *possibilities* in/of India.

After the Sinai family moves to Pakistan, Rushdie's secularist nationalism and its specific Pakistan narrative become clearer. Pakistan, or in the novel's language, "country built especially for god" (317), changes Saleem considerably. Once Saleem is in Pakistan, Pakistan "jammes" him. He says:

> [i]n Pakistan, my second period of hurtling growth came to an end. And, in Pakistan, I discovered that somehow the existence of a frontier "jammed" my thought-transmissions to the more-than-five-hundred; so that, exiled once more from my home, I was also exiled from the gift which was my truest birthright: the gift of the midnight children. (*Midnight's Children* 325)

By moving from India to Pakistan, Saleem not only crossed the physical borders of the two countries, but he also crossed the cultural borders of Rushdie's secularist nationalism, as Rushdie's secularism and nationalism are both at work here. What follows are the six consequences and implications of Saleem's border-crossing and its relationship with the secularist nationalism of Rushdie's metafiction. First, Saleem no longer grows or develops in Pakistan. If we accept the analogy that Saleem is the whole of India, Pakistan falls outside the borders of the country/nation, and therefore Saleem's all (India) encompassing skills (he is "All-India-Radio") do not work in this geographical and cultural land of Pakistan.

Second, Saleem cannot communicate with 'his' people, the midnight's children anymore. The "thought transmission" comes to a halt, as there is no "thought" in the sense that India has it. This perspective of Saleem Sinai (or Rushdie's fiction) fits the stereotype of Pakistanis (General Zulfikar, his family, and other Muslims, who are all flat characters, as I will discuss later in this chapter). Third, Saleem Sinai is in exile in

Pakistan and this *limit* or *border* reveals a worldview: this passage clearly shows the limits of the nationalism of Rushdie's fiction. Rushdie's novel and its inherent Indian identity, just as Anderson explained, cannot (or does not) escape from the principles of *sovereignty* and from the *limitedness* of the nation-state. The limits just become more apparent when Saleem comes to Muslim Pakistan. Fourth, there is no way Saleem can avoid coming here, because India and Pakistan were not separate entities before the partition, and therefore, a major part of Saleem's family still lives in this Muslim part. Yet, the novel's preferred way of portraying or criticizing the Islamic culture of Pakistan is making it ridiculous or irrelevant: Rushdie achieves this mainly through stereotyping the land and Muslim characters, as well as via hyperbole.

Fifth, Pakistan is the religio-national entity against which the new Indian identity is placed. After midnight of the Partition, Saleem and many children born that night, that is, the people of the new and promising nation of India, all acquire supernatural gifts. Yet, as Saleem states, none of these powers has any use in Pakistan. Rushdie cannot articulate the new Indian nation, without articulating its opposite, enemy, or its *other.* Sixth, Rushdie's selective secularism is the main force that shapes his understanding of nationalism. It is not surprising that several characters in the novel are plastic, fluid—that is, they change: they are round characters. However, this is not the case for the Muslim characters of Pakistan: there is always a strong and obvious ironic tone that makes them look ridiculous, which exaggerates the defects of these *caricature-like* stereotypes.

In addition to Jinnah's idea of *the two independent nations*, Rushdie's fiction is critical of another issue regarding Muslims in India: the novel portrays *violence* to be one of the dominant elements in the political climate of the Muslim community. In *Midnight's*

Children, Mian Abdullah is the creator of the "Free Islam Convocation" as an "alternative to the dogmatism," (46-47) which is politically in disagreement with the Muslim League and "its demand for partitioned India," and Mian Abdullah "oppose[s] the partition" (47). But one thing he ignores is that Agra is a "Muslim League stronghold," and therefore, Rani of Cooch Naheen implies that Mian should have "go[ne] to Allahabad" (47). In the end, Mian Abdullah is violently killed with "long curved blades" (48) which were also "blunt" (49). Kortenaar writes that Rushdie's Mian Abdullah is "based on" the Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah (156). The violent execution of this character, according to Kortenaar, reveals Rushdie's interpretation of how the hopes for a united India "were crushed" by the dominant violence among Muslims (156). Thus, Rushdie's fiction implies that the Muslims did/do not have the tolerance for democratic and pluralist thinking, and the path to the Partition was paved by this ethno-centric thinking.

When Saleem goes to Pakistan, he finds a similar dark *aura*: "the air and the food in that mosque-shadowed house beg[ins] to take its toll" (378). In the same way, Saleem's Karachi is "a place of shadows and yellowed paint, across which there fell, every afternoon, *the long accusing shadow of the minaret* of the local mosque" where he can "sniff the narrow, clutching, accusative odor" (352).[162] Pakistan is quite a dirty and horrible place according to Saleem: he never "forg[ives] Karachi for not being Bombay." "Set between the desert and bleaky saline creeks whose shores were littered with stunted mangroves, my new city seemed to possess an ugliness" (352). In Karachi of Pakistan, Saleem breathes the "fatalistic hopelessness of the slum dwellers and the smug defensiveness of the rich" (352). There, Saleem is "sucked along the smell trails of dispossession and also fanaticism" (352). In short, based on the change in Saleem's

[162] Emphasis mine.

description, one may argue that Saleem does not feel the attachment for Pakistan that he feels for India, considering his views of Pakistan being both an ugly and hopeless place.

It is not only the geography of Karachi that repels Saleem, but he is also equally disgusted by its people: according to Saleem, "Karachiites had only the slipperiest of grasps on reality, and [were] therefore willing to turn to their leaders for advice on what was real and what was not" (353). I argue that Saleem's dislike for the city is not an ordinary choice, because it is shaped by the stadial secularist and nationalist perspective of Rushdie's metafiction. In his comparison between Bombay and Karachi, Saleem states that Karachi is "beset by illusionary sand-dunes and the ghosts of ancient kings, and also by the knowledge that the name of the faith upon which the city stood meant 'submission,'" and he Saleem also states that his "new fellow-citizens exuded the flat boiled odors of acquiescence, which were depressing to a nose which had smelt—at the very last, and however briefly—the highly-spiced nonconformity of Bombay (*Midnight's Children* 353).

In the above passage, Saleem's India-Pakistan comparison is based on the *smells*, *histories*, and *people* of the aforenamed cities and countries. In this analogy, Pakistan reeks of "acquiescence" to Saleem, as he implies that Pakistani Muslims all lack individuality. He also thinks that the people of Pakistan are historically and culturally used to the idea of "submission," as expressed via the "ghosts of ancient kings," which implies that the kings are still influential over the allegedly *backward* people of Pakistan. Saleem's comparison finishes with clearly defining which *side* Saleem favors: the smell of Pakistan is "depressing for him," because he already knows the "highly spiced non-conformity of Bombay." In this expression, Saleem implies two more critical points.

First, according to Saleem, India's Bombay is an inherently pluralistic and more colorful city, traits that Pakistan's Karachi lacks. Second, he equates the submission of Pakistani Muslims to conformity; or in other words, the pluralist (or we may call this *hybrid*) people of India think, whereas the conforming people of Pakistan "submit."

What do all of these implications have to do with Rushdie's selective secularism or his nationalism? Another relevant question is whether Rushdie's fiction still displays *hybridity*, as argued by several critics in the previous section's discussion. To answer these two questions, I first emphasize that Rushdie's fiction is self-consciously using the exclusivist "us-them" language. While doing so, the novel is generalizing and stereotyping Muslim communities. For this reason, Rushdie's work does have a sense of nationalism, determined by geographical, cultural, and religious borders. In this regard, there are some individuals, traditions, religions, and cities that fall within the borders of Rushdie's nationalism, and there are those that do not. Pakistan's Karachi and its Muslim community is an example of the latter. I also note that Rushdie is not hostile to all religions and/or all religious ideas. The novel regards Hindu myths as richness, and they are among the main components of *Midnight's Children*. In contrast, the myths of Islamic culture are not conceived or represented in the novel in a similar way. For this reason, I contend that Rushdie's fiction has a *selective* secularist perspective. Rushdie's secularism is also *stadial*, because of its selectivity of religions: Rushdie sees Indian myths and religions as richness and uses them as the components of his novel, whereas he refuses to do the same or similar when it comes to Islamic mythology (Kortenaar 22). This is why Rushdie's metafiction, I argue, also has a *stadial* perspective, as it makes a distinction

between the *backward* religions, and more *mature* ones. In this sense, Rushdie's fiction takes on secularism in Casanova's sense.

The more time Saleem spends in Pakistan, the deeper his stereotyping becomes. He consistently keeps comparing India to Pakistan, and finds the latter to be

> a country where the truth is what it is instructed to be, reality quite literally ceases to exist, so that everything becomes possible except what we are told is the case; and maybe this was the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence—that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disorientated, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies. (*Midnight's Children* 373)

This passage contains two of the recurring themes of *Midnight's Children*, particularly regarding the way that Rushdie's fiction sees Pakistan and Muslims. The novel consistently repeats the following: how Pakistani Muslims are shaped by the idea of submission, and hence, how they do not have individuality; also how the country is based on a falseness, and that "reality ceases to exist" in Pakistan; and that there is just one strictly hierarchical cultural and political structure where no one thinks, but rather people just obey, submit and survive. At the other end of Rushdie's spectrum is *his* India, which offers/offered a variety of "alternative realities." The significance of this passage comes from the way Rushdie's metafiction positions the narrator and the narration: the narrator/protagonist Saleem views Pakistan from a very specific vantage point: *his* India. This vantage point determines the criteria against which Pakistan is measured, because what does not fulfill the expectations of Saleem (and in this case, it is the rich alternative realities of India), is defined as "falseness, unrealities and lies." Once Saleem is outside of the *limits* of *his* India, he becomes "adrift" and "disoriented." Whether one agrees with Rushdie's presentations of the ideologies of India or Pakistan is totally another matter, but in terms of storytelling, Rushdie's metafiction comes to have a narrator that is far from

being *hybrid*: when Saleem comes to Pakistan, his vantage point becomes loud and clear. For this reason, I argue that the minority position of Saleem is just a disguise, particularly when he is in Pakistan: as soon as he steps into Pakistan, Saleem the storyteller loses the pluralist view he once had in India.

That vantage point of Saleem pushes him to start to create categories and eventually to categorize *others* accordingly. Similar to his narrative of India, Saleem continues to narrate Pakistan through his immediate family. In the following passage, he explains the relationship among his aunt, Pakistan's education system, and how Pakistan turned out to be what it is:

> My aunt Alia's contribution to the fate of nations—through her school and college—must not be minimized. Having allowed her old-maid frustrations to leak into the curricula, the bricks and also the students at her twin educational establishments, she had raised a tribe of children and young adults who felt themselves possessed by an ancient vengefulness, without fully knowing why. (*Midnight's Children* 378)

How does Aunt Alia "contribute" to the fate of Pakistan's education and the past, present and future of the nation? To be able to answer this question, I must first explain how Rushdie's fiction stereotypes Muslim characters: Saleem's Aunt Alia is one of the several Muslim stereotypes in Rushdie's novel, which are reduced to one specific trait such as fundamentalism, submission, businessperson, spinster, etc. and are depicted through the continuous hyperbole/exaggeration of a specific personality *flaw*. In this example, Alia wants to marry Ahmed Sinai, but her sister marries him, not Alia (*Midnight's Children* 67), after which Alia remains "silent" and "bruised," (67) never marries again, "turns into spinsterhood and bitterness and finally bursts out in deadly revenge" (120). Her "embittered virginity would last until a bomb split her in two over eighteen years later," (123). "All on her own, [she] go[es] to Pakistan—even she is making a decent life,

teaching in a fine school" (157); [she] becomes "head-mistress" (176); she still has "undimmed envy" (176); "Alia's spinsterhood filled the air and ruined [their] food" in Pakistan (215); she remains "bitter" (311); she "spread[s] her ancient, dusty disappointment through the air" (313). When Alia meets the Sinai family in Pakistan, Saleem notices that his "headmistress aunt had acquired the heavy-footed corpulence[163] of undimmed jealousy; the thick dark hairs of her resentment sprouted through most of the pores of her skin" (351). On the docks of Karachi, Saleem sees once more that Alia "had knitted her hatred," and that she is "possessed by revenge-lust," and he can also "smell the vengeful odors leaking out of [Alia's] glands." (351) Saleem and his family have got nothing to do, as they are "powerless to protest; [they are] swept into the Datsun of [Alia's] vengeance and driven away down Bunder Road to her house at Guru Mandir—like flies, only more foolish, because [they] celebrate [their] captivity" (351).

At this point Saleem merges the two themes that stereotype Muslims: "the long accusing shadow of the minaret of the local mosque" is on Alia's house, which makes Saleem confess he "never forgave [ugly] Karachi for not being Bombay" (352). He "studie[s] history at [his] Aunt Alia's college; but not even learning could make [him] feel a part of this country devoid of midnight children" because his "fellow-students took out processions to demand a stricter, more Islamic society—proving that they had

[163] The "heavy-footed corpulence" is not an accidental phrase; on the contrary, it continues a stereotype Rushdie's fiction uses. In the earlier stages of the narration, Saleem informs us that "Alia had inherited her mother's tendency to put on fat. She would balloon outwards with the passing years" (*Midnight's Children* 57). In the above quotation, Rushdie's novel merges Alia's physical deformity with her psychological imbalance and social failure, which would later influence Pakistan's education system destructively. This is a noticeably disturbing example, because Rushdie's metafiction takes on a completely different tone: the characters in Pakistan are not hybrid or plural, unlike the ones in India. Rushdie's metafiction not only stereotypes the Muslim characters, but also narrates them as scapegoats. Rushdie's metafiction is hybrid only insofar as Saleem is in his India. In other words, Saleem's metafiction is shaped by his selective, stadial secularism and nationalism. This narrow and exclusivist view pushes Saleem to reduce people to stereotypes and scapegoats. There is nothing plural or hybrid in this perspective.

contrived to become the antitheses of students everywhere else on earth" (355). Saleem keeps on merging the different stereotypes. In Pakistan, soon he merges "[the] uglier smells of . . . the bitterness of Aunt Alia, and the hard unchanging stink of my fellow-students' closed minds" (361). In the meantime, Alia begins to "wreak her awful spinster's revenge," (377) and Alia's "hatred of the man who had abandoned her and of the sister who had married him gr[ows] into a tangible, visible thing, it s[its] on her living-room rug like a great gecko, reeking of vomit" (377). In short, Alia's character is one of the Muslim stereotypes[164] of Rushdie's fiction.

In the example of Aunt Alia, I have explained how Rushdie's fiction makes Saleem create a stereotype out of one personality flaw and how the novel exaggerates it into a characteristic of the Muslim community. His stereotyping is certainly sexist, with almost misogynistic and xenophobic terms. I can now return to the question I have asked above: how does Aunt Alia "contribute" to the fate of Pakistan's education and the past, present and future of the nation? In connection with this, how do Aunt Alia's "old-maid frustrations. . . leak into the curricula" and how does she "raise a tribe of children and young adults who felt themselves possessed by an ancient vengefulness, without fully knowing why" (*Midnight's Children* 378). In this passage, Saleem implies that Pakistan teaches "frustration" to its citizens, which makes the country more of a "tribe" than a "nation." Saleem's narrative, in this regard, defines a major flaw in the Muslim character, exaggerates it, and through this stereotyping enables Rushdie's novel to define the Muslims as a scapegoat. As I discussed above, Saleem uses his vantage point of India to implicitly blame Pakistani Muslims for the current turmoil of India. It is for this reason

[164] Reverend Mother is a noteworthy stereotype, for instance. She is the embodiment of two of the recurring personality traits Rushdie's fiction ascribes to Muslims: submission, and businessperson.

that Saleem says the following, of "[his] Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence" (378): "in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disorientated, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies" (378). In this regard, Saleem, or Rushdie's narrative implies that it was the Muslims, Muslim culture, Jinnah's communalism and his two-nations theory that all led India to the Partition. There is nothing wrong with having such nationalist ideas, but from a literary perspective, it is wrong to propose that Rushdie's metafiction is based on *hybridity*. Saleem's *hybridity* is limited by Rushdie's selective and stadial secularism, as well as his nationalism.

I will provide another example from the novel to support this thesis: Saleem makes sure that the readers understand that it is Alia, a Muslim character, that undermines the harmony of *the whole family*. He says that "[Alia] fed us the birianis of *dissension* and the nargisi koftas of *discord*; and little by little, even the harmonies of my parents' autumnal love went out of tune" (*Midnight's Children* 378).[165] The food metaphor, the "chutnification" of Saleem, that is, the preservation of a memory like food, enables Saleem to tell the story of the "amnesiac nation" (530). It refers to the "grand hope of pickling the time" (529). In India, chutnification, the metaphor that blends history with food and memory, takes on a different form from in Pakistan. In India, chutnification refers to the "symbolic value of the pickling process: all the six hundred million eggs which gave birth to the population of India," (529) and therefore, it is a product of pluralist thinking, it *is* hybrid. However, that same food metaphor is reduced to a single and destructive trait when applied to the Muslims: "poisonous" Alia (379)

[165] Emphasis mine.

feeds "dissension" and "discord," which makes *the whole family*[166] sick. To repeat my argument, this is just another example supporting my statement that Rushdie's metafiction is not always based on the concept of *hybridity*, as his fiction has a strongly exclusive trait, which is shaped by Rushdie's secularism and nationalism, both of which exclude Muslim characters.

IV. The Limits of Hybridity: Secularism, Nationalism and Stereotyping

In the previous section, I discussed how *Midnight's Children* suspends its narrative of *hybridity* when the protagonist physically and fictionally goes to Pakistan, as Saleem takes on an exclusivist language which stereotypes and scapegoats the Muslim characters. This, I argued, is a consequence of Rushdie's stadial secularism and nationalism, as exemplified in the character of Aunt Alia in *Midnight's Children*. In this section, I provide an analysis of other Muslim characters and the way Rushdie's metafiction narrates them. In connection with the previous section, I maintain that Muslim characters in Pakistan are systematically stereotyped by Rushdie's fiction and that they are reduced to two main ideas: "submission" and "businessism." Both of the terms belong to Saleem and he uses them to *define* and *categorize* Muslim characters and Pakistan itself. This perspective, I assert, is the exact opposite of Saleem's pluralist approach to India. The characters I will focus on in this section are Saleem Sinai, Reverend Mother, Shaheed Dar and General Zulfikar.

In my analysis of these characters, I will argue that Rushdie's metafiction and his narrative follow a specific pattern in the depiction of Muslim characters as stereotypes.

[166] Emphasis mine.

Apart from Saleem, the names mentioned above are all flat characters.[167] E.M. Forster defines flat characters as "types" or "sometimes caricatures" (35). "In their purest form," Forster writes, "they are constructed round a single idea or quality" (35). As Forster puts is, caricaturization explains exactly how Rushdie's metafiction portrays the Muslim characters mentioned above. Similar to the depiction of Aunt Alia discussed in the previous section, Rushdie's novel chooses one personality trait, exaggerates it, and turns a human being, a religion, and/or a country into a one-dimensional idea, an over-exaggerated flaw, a caricature. Maria DiBattista writes the following on caricaturization, flat characters, and stereotyping:

> The stereotype, as the literal origins of the word indicates, is typecast, pre-fabricated, and pre-assigned to solid and fixed forms. It thus expresses a more mechanical, standard, and less differentiated vision of human beings than the word character, which retains important associations with the art of engraving. . . But flatness may also serve more sinister designs . . . A kind of perceptual contagion may result, in which the character who either is or simply *feels* threatened by loss of distinction, begins "flattening" those beneath or beside him, becomes the agent as well as target of ridicule and prejudice. . . Such reasoning at once unites and divides. (172-173)

DiBattista points to a significant relationship between flat characters/stereotyping and ridiculing and prejudice: this is exactly what is happening in Rushdie's fiction regarding Pakistan. The characters I mentioned above do not change in Rushdie's plot. Instead, Rushdie's metafiction chooses one absurd personality trait, and it keeps growing uncontrollably bigger and bigger, like a metastasis taking hold of the rest of the body. The parts and the whole are one main theme in Rushdie's metafiction. The process explained above is an example of the relationship between the parts and the whole in

[167] Saleem is different from other characters due to the specific way Rushdie forms the metafictional plot: he is a mixture of several historical, cultural and political elements, but just like the others, he is reduced into a flat character and one personality trait, as I will soon discuss.

Rushdie's novel in the sense that the awkward part being portrayed attempts to possess the rest of the body.

What are the literary, cultural, or political implications of establishing such a relationship between the whole and a part, in which the latter takes over the former? Aunt Alia's "spinsterhood" turning into the "educational establishments" and her "raisi[ng] a tribe of children" (378) are not only stereotyping and scapegoating, but they are also a form of fearmongering. Philip Roth's metafictional novel *The Counterlife*, has flat characters too, such as Mordecai Lippman. However, the fictitious author of the novel, Nathan Zuckerman, never states or implies that Orthodox or fundamentalist Jews like Lippman (in terms of fundamentalist tendencies and the desire to have power, he is comparable to Rushdie's Alia, Reverend Mother, or General Zulfikar) are the sole or main reason for the plights of the Jewish or non-Jewish societies. Instead, Roth's metafiction shows the *temporality* of the fundamentalist characters. In other words, through his clever and complex plot construction, Roth's self-reflexive novel shows not only what Jewish identities were prior to Lippman, but also that other alternatives of belonging exist. Such a critical but *inclusive* secularist politics has the following characteristic: metafiction in Roth's style is inherently more plural, that is, the fiction's pluralism is not limited to/by characters of the same or similar identities. To clarify, according to Roth, there is no standard or criterion for being a Jew, an American, or an Israeli. His metafiction narrates *multifarious* identities within a span of *time*, and thus shows the readers how they happened to be, as well as how they may change over time. Yet, this is not the case for Rushdie's metafiction: Alia's "spinsterhood" demolishes the education system and turns Pakistan into a "tribe," which is one of the several examples

of Rushdie's stereotyping of *the other*. Below is my analysis of similar characters of the same sort, which supports my argument that there is a stereotyping and an exclusivist pattern in Rushdie's novel. This undermines the dominant Rushdie criticism that his novel is an accomplished example of hybridity.

Saleem Sinai, the narrator and protagonist of *Midnight's Children*, who is connected to "all the so-called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike, [who] jostled for space within [his] head" (*Midnight's Children* 192), is usually interpreted as the embodiment of all of India, or an all-encompassing character. A literary critique of this sort can be seen in the following passage in Srivastava's work:

> The narrator of *Midnight's Children* embraces a minoritarian perspective precisely because he belongs to both Indian 'majority' and 'minority' cultures. His 'adoptive' parents are Muslim, but his real parents are English Christian and Hindu, respectively. He is brought up by a Goan Catholic ayah, and in the course of the novel switches nationalities: first he is Indian, then he becomes Pakistani. Saleem Sinai is thus in a unique position to *embrace* all mythologies, but at the same time he exhibits a wariness of any fixed belief. (*Secularism* 51)[168]

Even though I agree with the comment that Saleem is *formally* or *structurally* "in a position to embrace all mythologies," I think one should also ask *how* and *to what extent* Saleem is embracing these identities or perspectives. For this reason, I will focus on the Pakistan chapters of *Midnight's Children*, so that we can compare the Saleem in India to the Saleem in Pakistan. As the above quotations show, Saleem is structurally and formally inclusive of several identities. But once Saleem is in Pakistan, the exclusivist and secularist grammar of Rushdie's metafiction once more becomes loud and clear. The following passage shows how Saleem is reduced to one function in Pakistan:

> there it was only the buddha; who recognizes no singing voice as his relative; who remembers neither fathers nor mothers; for whom "midnight holds no importance;"

[168] Emphasis on the word "embrace" is mine. I will argue that Saleem Sinai becomes particularly "exclusivist" in the depiction of Pakistan. Therefore, I disagree with the critique of Srivastava.

> who, some time after a cleansing accident, awoke in a military hospital bed, and accepted the Army as his lot; who submits to the life in which he finds himself, and does his duty; who follows orders; who lives both in-the-world and not-in-the-world; who bows his head; who can track man or beast through streets or down rivers; who neither knows nor cares how, under whose auspices, as a favor to whom, at whose vengeful instigation he was put into uniform; who is, in short, no more and no less than the accredited tracker of CUTIA Unit 22. (409)

In this passage, Saleem retrospectively portrays himself like a dog, a military dog, and this is the extent to which he could be a Pakistani. Rushdie's nationalism and secularism have serious national limits, and they use the exclusive grammar of the nation-state very effectively, and in the following ways.

First, as soon as Saleem becomes a member of the C.U.T.I.A., that is, *The Canine Unit for Tracking and Intelligence Activities*, he forgets who he is. Simply, he does not remember anything about his past. Rushdie's fiction implies that Pakistan has a similar relationship with history: as Anderson discusses, nations not only create their own myths, but they also base them on the continuous processes of *selectively* remembering and forgetting (*Imagined Communities* 205-206). Rushdie's Pakistan, however, is only based on forgetting: Saleem "remembers neither fathers nor mothers," and "midnight holds no importance" for him, as the history is "cleansed" (409). What Rushdie's novel implies in this passage is that Pakistan used to be India, and the narrator's vantage point becomes once more clear: in the Pakistan chapters, Rushdie's tone becomes nostalgic, yearning for the lost India, which turns into Pakistan. In other words, as Saleem had stated before, India as *the land of many possibilities* is lost in favor of *the restrictions of possibility*.[169] In this analogy, the role for Pakistan is being *the other* of India. The land and its people,

[169] Saleem's full remark: "How many things people notions we bring with us into the world, how many possibilities and also restrictions of possibility!" (*Midnight's Children* 120)

in other words, are all painted with the same brush, which has nothing to do with literary pluralism.

Second, Rushdie's fiction implies that the collective culture of Pakistan wipes out individuality, just as it cleansed history. Saleem simply "aw[akes] in a military hospital bed, and accept[s] the Army as his lot" (*Midnight's Children* 409). No human traits, no ability to think, judge, and/or decide applies to Saleem anymore. This abrupt transformation is only explained through the hitting of the spittoon, which "purifies" him (392), such a sudden and unusual change that Rushdie's metafiction does not even use proper punctuation to emphasize the abruptness of the transformation: the hit simultaneously "strips [Saleem] of past present memory time shame and love" (392). The change is so *purifying* that everything that makes Saleem, including his parents and "Prime Minister Nehru" (392-393), is cleansed. Once again, I argue, Saleem's vantage point on India appears here, which implies that Pakistan's collective culture wipes out the culture, history, and plurality of India.

Third, just like other Muslim characters (such as Shaheed Dar, Reverend Mother, Aunt Alia, and General Zulfikar), Saleem in Pakistan is reduced to one single function: following tracks by sniffing like a dog. Rushdie's fiction had a similar reductionist narrative and its consistent stereotyping of Muslim characters follows the same pattern. In this regard, Saleem simply "does his duty," "follows orders," "lives both in-the-world and not-in-the-world," "bows his head," and he "track[s] man or beast through streets or down rivers" (409).

Fourth, Pakistan is the land of submission, according to Saleem. Previously, I argued that Muslim characters and Pakistan are depicted with the personality

traits/patterns of *submission*, *businessism,* or both. Saleem in Pakistan is the example of the first. He submits. The idea of submission is equated not only with Pakistan, but also with Muslims in general, because Salman Rushdie uses the same theme in his *Satanic Verses*. In that novel, not only Mahound, but other Muslim characters are portrayed through the religion of "submission" (*Satanic Verses* 127, 298, 343, 375, 378, 382, 387, 403). Therefore, this pattern of stereotyping Muslims is common in both Rushdie novels.

In short, this passage is more of a depiction of Pakistan than that of Saleem: geographically and culturally, according to Rushdie's fiction, Pakistan is essentially a place that cleanses people of their history, individuality, and reduces them to a single element, idea or function. This is why Saleem retrospectively states that Pakistan is described as "the land of submission, the home of purity" (*Midnight's Children* 466). Correspondingly, time in Pakistan does not flow in the same way as it does in India: time in India is "an unsteady affair" and "not a thing to be relied upon," as time "could even be partitioned: the clocks in Pakistan. . . run[s] half an hour ahead of their Indian counterparts" (86-87). For this reason, S.P. Butt asks, “If they can change the time just like that, what’s real any more? I ask you? What’s true?" (86). Thus, Pakistan becomes the national and religious *other* of India in Rushdie's metafiction. This, I argue, is the extent to which Rushdie's fiction embraces other identities. For this reason, I maintain that Rushdie's alleged *hybridity* is limited by its nationalist and secularist perspective.

The stereotyping of Rushdie's fiction that is fed by his exclusivist secularism shows its finest example in the depiction of Shaheed Dar. From beginning to end, Shaheed proves to be a caricature in Forster's sense, that is, a character "constructed around a single idea or quality" (35). Shaheed's father lets his son know that the meaning

of his name is “martyr” (*Midnight's Children* 405). He then "expresse[s] the hope that [Shaheed] would prove worthy of it, and perhaps become the first of their family members to enter the perfumed garden, leaving behind this pitiful world in which a father could not hope to pay his debts and also feed his nineteen children" (*Midnight's Children* 405). The stereotype is so clearly depicted by Rushdie's fiction that the readers know what Shaheed's function is, and what will happen to him. Shaheed, or "martyr," believes in his function in this world, therefore, "[o]n his fifteenth birthday, Shaheed Dar had lie[d] about his age and enlisted" (405). With two other teenagers and Saleem as the man-dog, Shaheed is given the title of CUTIA Unit and the assignment to track "those Hindus. . . Vegetarians," (399).[170] During their journey, they witness lots of violence, but Shaheed keeps dreaming "his pomegranate dream," that is, the way he will become a martyr (413, 416). He "kill[s] ants and lick[s] them off his palm (424). They observe more violence in Pakistan: "lady doctors [are] being bayoneted before they [are] raped, and raped again before they were shot" (432) And in the meantime, "[a]bove them and behind them, the cool white minaret of a mosque stare[s] blindly down upon the scene" (432). So far, Rushdie's fiction not only creates a caricature of Shaheed, but also depicts a country where there is no sense of history and individuality, but rather only a collective culture of violence sublimating death, as well as religious indifference to all.

The death scene of Shaheed is noteworthy: first, a grenade "bisects" him (433) and he mistakes the grenade for the light of the God, which is "hanging above his head, the grenade of his dreams, hanging just above his head, falling, falling, exploding at waist-level, blowing his legs away to some other part of the city" (*Midnight's Children* 433). After that, upon Shaheed's request, Saleem takes him up to the "cool white minaret,

[170] "The Canine Unit for Tracking and Intelligence Activities" (*Midnight's Children* 399)

where Shaheed babbled of light-bulbs" (433). In the meantime, prayer is heard from "a gramophone connected to a loudspeaker" and Saleem "protect[s] his halved companion from the disillusioning sight of this mechanized muezzin" (433). Shaheed dies not only due to the explosion of the grenade, but also from the ants he had been killing eat him alive. Saleem informs the readers of Shaheed's death as follows: "blood had been seeping along trowel-furrows; ants, following this dark viscous trail, had arrived at the source of the leakage, and Shaheed expressed his fury at becoming the victim of not one, but two wars" (433). According to the narrator of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem, "Shaheed, fulfilling his father's dearest wish, had finally earned his name" (434).

How should the death scene of Shaheed be interpreted? What is Rushdie's fiction of alleged hybridity and plurality achieving through depicting a young boy getting blown in two by a grenade, crawling up to a minaret, while the mechanized muezzin reads the prayer, and ants eat him alive? For the following four reasons, I argue that Rushdie's stadial secularism and Indian nationalism are the main factors that motivate him to caricature Shaheed as a less-than-human character, Pakistan as a "pure" country, and Islam as the religion of "submission." First, Rushdie's metafiction makes sure that the readers understand that any of these, Shaheed, Pakistan or Islam, lacks the depth that Saleem, India or the religions of India have. This is why the novel caricatures or stereotypes them. Second, all of the above are by-products of a collective culture: Rushdie's novel implies that religion/Islam sublimates death, Pakistan offers nothing but violence and collectivity, and there is no thinking involved, as people only *submit*. Third, Rushdie's metafiction means to create a contrast between India and Pakistan, and examples of Shaheed's sort create a funny effect. In other words, Pakistan is almost a

joke, except that its violence is real and consequential. Fourth, the cultural symbols such as the shadow of the minaret, the mechanized muezzin, and the never-ending stupidity of desiring martyrdom are all used by Rushdie's novel to show that there is no depth in Muslim characters. This is why Saleem's "thought-transmission" is "jammed" in Pakistan (325). Consequently, Rushdie's metafiction once more proves that its plurality and hybridity do not involve anyone and anywhere beyond the cultural and geographical limits of Rushdie's India. His secularist perspective stereotypes Muslims through caricature.

Lastly, I will connect Rushdie's secularist narrative of Pakistan and Muslim characters with the depiction of two more characters: General Zulfikar and Reverend Mother. Earlier in this chapter, I argued that Muslim characters are narrated through the themes or patterns of *submission* and *businessism*. I maintained that when Saleem is in Pakistan, he loses his memory and identity, and turns into a man-dog. Similarly, Shaheed is a stereotype/caricature of submission. Correspondingly, the depiction of General Zulfikar follows the same pattern as those of Aunt Alia, the buddha (Saleem), Shaheed, and Reverend Mother.

Before presenting examples of how Rushdie stereotypes Muslim characters with *businessism*, I will first clarify the meaning of the term. According to Sadik Jalal Al-Azm, Rushdie's fiction profiles "those who abandoned India and its 'midnight's children' in the service of 'Businessism' to become Muslim 'merchant princes' through police and other kinds of contracts" (264). In this regard, the term implies the following two characteristics. First is a national, cultural, or identity-related distance from or differentiation from India, that is, being non-Indian or falling far from the ideals of

"midnight's children;" and second is the implication of being morally and legally corrupt, abusing a social or political position for financial gain. This definition of Al-Azm fits not only Mahound of *The Satanic Verses*, but also General Zulfikar of *Midnight's Children*. General Zulfikar is not the only example of such a reductive reading, which defines a group, religion or country with one exaggerated trait. As mentioned above, in Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, the narrator repeatedly calls Mahound a "businessman" (94, 95, 96 97, 111, 117, 120, 124, 158, 396). This implies that Mahound's religion, called "submission," is just one of the many "businesses" that exploits people's naïveté and incompetence.

The stereotyping of General Zulfikar is not so irrelevant in this perspective. For instance, he is portrayed as a servant of the "town's military commander, Brigadier Dodson," as Saleem sees Zulfikar "passing him a towel" (*Midnight's Children* 44). His name reminds Saleem of violence: "Zulfikar is a famous name amongst Muslims. It was the name of the two-pronged sword carried by Ali, the nephew of the prophet Muhammad. It was a weapon such as the world had never seen" (65) Saleem says. Thus, the *businessism* of General Zulfikar, that is, the abuse of power or social position for monetary gain, is emphasized early in the novel, according to Saleem.[171] Zulfikar abuses his position not only for himself, but also for the Sinai family. Saleem mentions that "through Major Zulfikar, who was now an aide at Military G.H.Q. in Delhi, Ahmed Sinai had landed a contract to supply leathercloth jackets and waterproof table coverings to the Army itself" (77). Therefore, in the early stages of the novel, we learn that General Zulfikar has the two characteristics defined by Al-Azm.

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[171] Note the similarity between General Zulfikar of *Midnight's Children* and Mahound of *The Satanic Verses*. As explained above, they both abuse their social and religious ranks and their power in the society for financial gain. In this regard, Rushdie's Muslim stereotyping based on the themes of *submission* and *businessism* can be found at least in two of his important novels.

The story progresses in the novel, but just like the character of Aunt Alia, Rushdie's fiction keeps exaggerating one trait of the character, making it look irrelevant, ridiculous or just simply bad. Zulfikar's businessism is merely a means of becoming rich. In a letter to Ahmed Sinai, General Zulfikar tries to persuade him to meet M.A. Jinnah with the following words: "You must decide for Pakistan when it comes, as it surely will. It's certain to be a *goldmine for men like us*" (91).[172] Through such an expression, Rushdie's fiction stereotypes not only Zulfikar, but also Pakistan, as the country is depicted as only a safe haven for the corrupt. Yet, I underline that such a description of the country fits the Pakistan chapters in the novel, where the country is described as a dark, dangerous place where Saleem cannot even think.

The narration in the novel continues, but the character of General Zulfikar remains the same, except that his businessism gets bigger: he keeps "buying refugee property at absurdly low prices, laying the foundations of a fortune that will rival the Nizam of Hyderabad's," Saleem informs us (*Midnight's Children* 125). Saleem observes the greed of Zulfikar and the other members of Zulfikar's family in the "grudging hospitality of General Zulfikar, the self-satisfied preening of my aunt Emerald, who would no doubt enjoy showing off her worldly success and status to her unhappy sister and bereaved sister-in-law" (327). Nevertheless, Saleem always feels his uncle Zulfikar's condescending perspective, as he mentions that "(and despite my uncle's continued fondness for me) we were well-established as social inferiors" (335).

As expected from a stereotype, General Zulfikar does not change in the remaining part of Rushdie's fiction, but just as in the case of Aunt Alia, or the cancer spreads from one place to another, one negative trait gets bigger and bigger. Zulfikar, becomes "Major-

[172] Emphasis mine.

General," and "insist[s] on being called a General," and he comes to have a "fabulous wealth, which had by now grown into the seventh largest private fortune in Pakistan" says Saleem (215). Zulfikar and his wife Emerald "my aunt Emerald," Saleem informs the readers "brought twenty-seven pieces of luggage and two servants" (310-311). In the Pakistan chapters of *Midnight's Children*, the narrator of *Midnight's Children* lets us know of one source of Zulfikar's corrupt wealth. General Zulfikar, as a high-up Pakistani commander, is a traitor who sends smugglers to the war area, and makes a fortune out of it: Zulfikar's "fortune, built originally on the miseries of fleeing Hindu families in 1947, was now augmented by these spring-and-summer smugglers' convoys through the unguarded Rann and thence into the cities of Pakistan" (385). Examples of this sort abound, but there is no need for further repetition, as General Zulfikar is narrated in Rushdie's fiction as a Muslim stereotype that is a corrupt abuser of social rank and people. In this regard, he is a stereotype of *businessism.*

As I discussed prior, Rushdie's stereotyping is not limited to one or two Muslim characters. Rather, Rushdie's novel implies that it is Pakistan (or the Muslim culture) that changes people and makes them greedy capitalists. I will explain this through two examples: the Reverend Mother and Jamila the Singer. When the whole family of Saleem meets in the "Buckingham Villa" in India (*Midnight's Children* 310), Reverend Mother gets very angry with Saleem's Aunt Pia, on the basis that she does not mourn or cry for her deceased husband, Hanif: "Pia remain[s] still, dry-eyed, and anticlimatically composed" (312). In response, Reverend Mother threatens Pia: "[u]ntil that woman shows my son's memory some respect, whatsitsname, until she takes out a wife's true tears, no food will pass my lips. It is shame and scandal, whatsitsname, how she sits with

antimony instead of tears in her eyes!'" (312). Pressured by the Reverend Mother, Pia cries and mourns so much that she "t[ears] her garments and her hair" (312). Then the family moves to Pakistan, to "the Land of the Pure" (349). The same Reverend Mother who had scolded Pia for not mourning for her husband Hanif properly, "purchase[s] a concession on the long-dreamed-of petrol pump" (375) and Reverend Mother

> never mentioned Aadam Aziz, nor would she grieve over him; it was almost as though she were relieved that my querulous grandfather, who had in his youth despised the Pakistan movement, and who in all probability blamed the Muslim League for the death of his friend Mian Abdullah, had by dying permitted her to go alone into the Land of the Pure. Setting her face against the past, Reverend Mother concentrated on gasoline and oil. The pump was on a prime site, near the Rawalpindi-Lahore grand trunk road; it did very well. (*Midnight's Children* 375)

What does Rushdie's metafiction show through this example? The Reverend Mother in India was one that scolded Pia for not mourning, whereas the Reverend Mother in Rawalpindi/Pakistan does not even mention her husband, let alone grieve over him. The passage clearly shows that Reverend Mother is happy to be rid of her husband Aadam Aziz, who had "despised Pakistan" and kept her away from not only "the Land of the Pure," but also from her "long-dreamed of petrol pump" (375). In short, Reverend Mother is one of the typical Muslims in Rushdie's fiction, particularly when she is in Pakistan: an untrustworthy investor who lacks even the most basic human values. This is another example of the connection Rushdie's secularist nationalism finds between the fundamentalist/"pure" Pakistan and "business."

A similar character that Pakistan *hones* is Jamila the Singer. I deliberately use the verb "honing," because Pakistan just sharpens that *one negative or destructive potential* in these "Muslim" characters. For instance, Reverend Mother (or Naseem) was already

depicted as a fundamentalist, racist and bigot at the very beginning of the novel.[173] In the end, she reaches Pakistan and becomes a businessperson and the business "[does] very well" (375). A similar pattern can be observed in Jamila the Singer. She, too, just like Reverend Mother, has a past of religious "fanaticism" (*Midnight's Children* 290).[174] She first becomes a Christian, and according to Saleem, she chooses this religion for her "elevation to the role of favored child" and "to regain her old, comfortable position in the family doghouse" (290). In her Pakistani years, the collective identity of Pakistan takes over Jamila, but as in other examples, it is *business*: she is told that her "voice will be a sword for purity; it will be a weapon with which we shall cleanse men's souls," so she "dedicate[s] herself to patriotism" (*Midnight's Children* 360). Therefore, her singing, according to Saleem, becomes instrumental in promoting, endorsing, or making propaganda for Pakistani-type *religious nationalism*. Saleem says that such a

> ...virus subjected her to the exaggerations and simplifications of self which are the unavoidable side-effects of stardom, so that the blind and blinding devoutness and the right-or-wrong nationalism which had already begun to emerge in her now began to dominate her personality, to the exclusion of almost everything else. Publicity imprisoned her inside a gilded tent; and, being the new daughter-of-the-nation, her character began to owe more to the most strident aspects of the national persona than to the child-world of her Monkey years." (*Midnight's Children* 359)

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[173] Naseem (Reverend Mother) is a bigot, and she sees the world as black or white, through the lens of Islam. When Aadam Aziz ousted the religious tutor, she reveals her exclusivist and fundamentalist attitude. She alludes to Aadam's education in Germany and "marry[ing] . . . daughters to Germans:" she feels uncomfortable at having married Aadam with his foreign education: "'Man without dignity!' she cursed her husband, and, 'Man without, whatsitsname, shame!' Children watched from the safety of the back verandah. And Aziz, 'Do you know what that man was teaching your children?' And Reverend Mother hurling question against question, 'What will you not do to bring disaster, whatsitsname, on our heads?'-But now Aziz, 'You think it was Nastaliq script? Eh?'-to which his wife, warming up: 'Would you eat pig? Whatsitsname? Would you spit on the Quran?' And, voice rising, the doctor ripostes, 'Or was it some verses of 'The Cow'? You think that?'… Paying no attention, Reverend Mother arrives at her climax: 'Would you marry your daughters to Germans!?' And pauses, fighting for breath, letting my grandfather reveal, 'He was teaching them to hate, wife. He tells them to hate Hindus and Buddhists and Jains and Sikhs and who knows what other vegetarians. Will you have hateful children, woman?'" (*Midnight's Children* 42)

[174] Saleem says that Jamila "mounted to extremes of religious fervor, reciting the Our Father morning and night, fasting in the weeks of Lent instead of during Ramzàn, revealing an unsuspected streak of fanaticism which would, later, begin to dominate her personality" (*Midnight's Children* 290).

If we trust Saleem, there is a strong correlation between Jamila's "blinding devoutness" and her "nationalism," which Saleem defines as a "virus." This virus in/of Pakistan motivates her to leave behind the "last relic of her old flirtation with Christianity," and thus, she becomes the "Bulbul [Nightingale] of Faith" (361).[175] Saleem clearly states that Jamila's singing in Pakistan is a *career*: "Jamila had been launched on the *career* which would earn her the names of “Pakistan’s Angel” and 'Bulbul-of-the-Faith'" (350).[176] As Jamila, "Jamila s[ings] of holiness and love-of-country" (364), and in Saleem's words, uses her voice as "a weapon," "a sword," that is meant to "cleanse men's souls." To reiterate: even before Jamila becomes "the Bulbul of Faith," Rushdie's fiction lets the readers know that she will be a part of *show business*: "Major (Retired) Alauddin Latif" is a "darn good friend" of General Zulfikar, who used to "be with [Zulfikar] in the Border Patrol Force back in ’47” (356). Let me note that Rushdie's narration implies that Latif is at least as corrupt as General Zulfikar, as he was "with Zulfikar. . . in 47" while Zulfikar was organizing the smuggling across the border. In addition, after leaving the army, Latif "enter[s] show-*business*" (357).[177] Zulfikar's colleague from the army, Latif, promises Ahmed Sinai that he (Latif) "will just rub [his] jolly old lamp and out pops the genie bringing *fame and fortune*" (357).[178]

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[175] The reference of "bulbul" is literal and historical: in the Persian/Middle Eastern/Islamic Diwan Poetry, the poems and stories of the rose and the nightingale (aka the bulbul) are famous. The *bulbul* sings beautifully, and the rose has extraordinary beauty, but the two can never unite physically in this *cihan* or *alem* (the world). The lover, bulbul, can never attain the rose, the beloved, (as the rose has thorns). Therefore, a dervish (a follower of Sufi tradition), as a suffering lover, must leave behind the worldly love (just like Jamila) and pursue a transcendental, Godly love. This is what Rushdie's secular metafiction refers to, in a quite critical fashion.

[176] Emphasis mine.

[177] Emphasis mine.

[178] Emphasis mine. In all expressions italicized, Rushdie's fiction implies that Jamila is one of the several Muslim *businessists* in the novel.

What brings all these characters together? What are some of the similarities among Aunt Alia, General Zulfikar, Reverend Mother, Latif and Jamila the Singer? All of these characters are Muslim, and all are connected to and shaped by Pakistan, as well as its religious nationalism. This religious nationalism of Pakistan is narrated through two main concepts: *submission* and *businessism*. In this regard, neither Pakistan, nor the Muslim characters in Rushdie's metafiction have the depth expected from a full character in the sense that Forster explains. In other words, I argue, Rushdie's metafiction depicts the Muslim characters and Pakistan as *caricatures*, or stereotypes: all of these characters are somehow corrupt and incompetent, and when they reach Pakistan, their corruption, incompetence, greed, submission, or businessism just *peaks*.

These Muslim characters do not change, but Rushdie's metafiction does: in this section, I argue that Rushdie's self-reflexive narrative has quite different approaches to India as the *Homeland* and *Pakistan* as *the Land of Pure*. Clearly, this shift in the narrative shapes and is shaped by the stadial secularist perspective and nationalism of Rushdie. It is *stadial* in Casanova's sense, because as Kortenaar writes,

> the story-telling in Rushdie's novel has several traces from "... the Mahabharata. and. especially, the *Arabian Nights*. Saleem explicitly compares himself to Moses. . . Ganesh. . . and Scheherezade. . . the narrators or supposed writers of those books, (he compares himself to the Prophet as well) . . .but the Quran, of course, does not display the same drive to narrative" (*Self, Nation, Text* 21-22).

Thus, Rushdie's metafiction has *stadial* tones: Islam is, "of course," not one of the cultural sources of the novel. On the contrary, Islam in Rushdie's metafiction is Pakistani Islam, which is represented through the stereotypes or caricatures of *submission* and *businessism*. The exclusive grammar of his secularism, as represented in his use of metafiction, determines the limits of the inclusivity and/or exclusivism of his nationalism.

As the above examples show, the cultural and political borders of Saleem's India are not inclusive enough to call the fiction *hybrid*. So far, I have discussed Rushdie's secularist nationalism in his *Midnight's Children*, and in the last section of this chapter, I will show how this stadial secularist nationalism can be traced to the *theory* of Salman Rushdie himself.

V. Rushdie's Theory of Secularism

In the last section of this chapter, I relate Rushdie's fiction to his theory and other extratextual views. Considering that Rushdie is a prolific writer who theorized on his novels, I pursue the potential connections between his novel's interpretation of nationalism and secularism, and the way he explores, discusses or defines these terms in his other works. In detail, by further analysis of Rushdie's views outside the novel, I simply *juxtapose* the novel with his later work. This section can be read as an addendum to the previous sections of this chapter, as I do not intend to impose Rushdie's later theory or views on his novel. Still, I argue, his *extratextual* views on nationalism and secularism cannot be ignored.

As I have stated previously, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* has a stadial secularist perspective in the way Casanova defines it: Islam, in Rushdie's metafiction, is not one of the cultural sources of India. Instead, the narrative equates Islam with the Pakistan that is "pure," quite dangerous, dark, and dirty. And this Pakistani Islam, or the Islamicized nation of Pakistan, and its Muslim characters are reduced to two concepts: *submission* or *businessism*. I have also argued that Rushdie's secularism helps shape his nationalism, which are both exclusive of Islam and Muslim characters. The following passages from

Imaginary Homelands can be read side-by-side with my thesis, as I contend that Rushdie's views provide extratextual support for my perspective.

Rushdie feels the need to define his position repeatedly in *Imaginary Homelands*: he sees himself as an "Indian writer who writes from outside India [who] tries to reflect that world, [who] is obliged to deal in broken mirrors" (10-11); a "writer who is out-of-country" (12); an "Indian write[r], in England, writing about India" (13); one of the "Indian writers in England" who is "not willing to be excluded from any part of *our* heritage"(15);[179] a writer "partly of the West" (15); one of "England's Indian writers" (16); a "British Indian writer" (17); one of the "Indian writers in these islands"[180] (19); and an "Indian writer in England" that has "access to. . . the culture and political history of the phenomenon of migration, displacement, life in a minority group" (20). Considering the emphasis of Rushdie in his definition of the self, I can assert that there is a *national* "I" of Rushdie, no matter how distanced or hybrid it is. However, his nationalism is quite complicated, as he states in *Imaginary Homelands*: it includes being "Indian outside India," and preserving culture "without being ossified" (17). Similar examples can be found, and my thesis remains the same: Rushdie has a complex sense of belonging to more than one country, but still, he does have a national/Indian/British identity.

In his *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie clearly states his views on secularism at a personal level. He defines himself as "a member of that generation of Indians who were sold the secular ideal" (16). Rushdie also states that the one thing he enjoyed in the past, and what he still "likes" about India is its "non-sectarian" philosophy" (16). In the same

[179] Emphasis mine. My aim here is to show that Rushdie has a sense of *national* "I," albeit a loose, distanced or hybrid one.
[180] Rushdie means America and England.

paragraph, the writer Rushdie separates himself from the narrator Saleem, but still underlines that the novel "enters its subject from the point of view of a secular man" (16). Therefore, as I have discussed before, there is a *vantage point* of the narrator and the narration in Rushdie's novel, and it is that of a *secular(ist) man*. As I have explained the nature of *the novel's* perception of secularism, I will not repeat it here.

So what? What does this literary manifesto of Rushdie show us? As I have discussed previously, this manifesto supports my thesis that Rushdie's fiction demonstrates *secularist nationalism*, in which the modifier and the complement, that is the *secularist* and *nationalism* simultaneously shape each other. Just as Anderson and Asad argue, both of these terms are highly exclusivist, as both secularist secularism and nationalism define themselves against the *others*. Let me be more specific: Rushdie's secularist nationalism defines itself *against* Pakistan, Pakistani Islam, and caricatures Muslim characters based on the ideas of *submission* and *businessism*. That is why Rushdie says that "Pakistan sucks" in a recent interview:

> Pakistan sucks, especially if you are used to India, which is a rich complicated open society full of colours and smells and excess. You cross the frontier into Pakistan, which used to be the same place. Now, in a cultural sense, you feel a kind of airlessness, people are not allowed to say what they think, they aren't allowed to do what they like, women and men are segregated, there is a gigantic drug culture because it is one of the world's major producers of opium and heroin, there is an exploding AIDS problem which is not looked at because Muslims of course do not get AIDS, there is a highly gangsterised urban society, there is political corruption on both the civilian and military side, there is economic corruption [...] there is enormous regional dislike, everybody hates the Northwest frontier, where they are fundamentalists and pro-Taliban, it sucks. (*Interview*)[181]

[181] Rushdie, Salman. *Salman Rushdie Interview* by The Connecticut Forum. 6 June, 2011, http://www.ctforum.org/panelist/salman-rushdie. Accessed 19 Oct. 2016.

This passage by Rushdie from a recent interview fits the secularist nationalism of the novel, as well as its exclusivist grammar. First, the vantage point of Rushdie is once again loud and clear: *his* India is "rich, complicated, open, full of colors and smells," whereas Pakistan "sucks." This perspective fits the narrative of Pakistan in *Midnight's Children*: dark, dirty, and dangerous. Second, Rushdie associates the ugliness or airlessness of Pakistan with its religion and religious characters as portrayed by Rushdie, which is reminiscent of the novel's image of a mosque-shadow over the houses in Karachi. Third, the "us/them" grammar of nationalism and secularist secularism becomes evident here. Fourth, note how the two ideas of Muslim *submission* and *businessism* are repeated here: similar to General Zulfikar, Aunt Alia, Jamila Singer, Major Latif or Reverend Mother, the people of Pakistan are "corrupt," "criminal," or "sick." This is how Rushdie's secularism and nationalism endorse exclusivism.

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the limits of the *hybridity* of Rushdie's metafiction, and argued that *Midnight's Children* uses the exclusivist grammar of nationalism and stadial/secularist secularism. I also compared the structural hybridity and the complex heritage of Saleem to the exclusive grammar of the narrator. I showed that the storyteller Saleem and his narrative have a specific vantage point, particularly with respect to the depiction of Pakistan and Muslims. I also explained the narrative shift between India and Pakistan: the plurality and richness in the narration of India, I argued, leaves its place for the singularity and corruption of Pakistan. In addition, I analyzed how Rushdie's metafiction depicts the Pakistani or Muslim characters. Regarding them, I maintained that there is a pattern in the novel's depiction of Muslim characters: Rushdie's work, I

exemplified, portrays Muslims as "corrupt," "submissive" or "businessists." Following that, I pursued the connections between Rushdie's secularist nationalism in his fiction and the exclusivist grammar in his *Imaginary Homelands* and his 2011 interview.

Politically, what is the problem with secularist nationalism in Rushdie's sense? In other words, why does it matter? Srivastava provides an answer to this question by explaining Indian secular nationalism, and its effects on the India-Pakistan relationship:

> But our concern is more with the faultlines of Indian secular nationalism after Independence and Partition. What secular nationalism effectively did to a significant part of the Indian population (the part which then became Pakistani citizens) was to turn them into non-Indians (and today the propaganda of the Hindu right attempts to depict Indian Muslims as 'non-Indians.'" (*Secularism* 40)

The problem with Rushdie's nationalism is the non-inclusive grammar of the discourse. As Srivastava argues, the secular(ist) nationalism of Rushdie creates clear cultural and political borders, and whatever falls beyond the borders of the homeland is depicted in the form of stereotypes of one sort or another. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie has an outstanding passage on the shortcomings of nationalist discourses. He writes:

> There is one last idea that I should like to explore, even though it may, on first hearing, seem to contradict much of what I've so far said. It is this: of all the many elephant traps lying ahead of us, the largest and most dangerous pitfall would be the adoption of a ghetto mentality. To forget that there is a world beyond the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers, would be, I believe, to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile which in South Africa is called the 'homeland'. (19)

Rushdie is quite right regarding the elephant traps and cultural borders: first, he is extremely aware of the pitfalls of what he calls "the ghetto mentality," and the second is that his *Midnight's Children* contradicts the ideals stated in the above passage. With the expression *ghetto mentality*, Rushdie possibly targets bigotry and religious fanaticism. However, a critique of religious fanaticism does not always have to be in the secularist

discourse of Casanova or Rushdie: Roth's metafiction, too, deals with religious fanaticism, but his work does not have the exclusivist grammar or the elephant traps that Rushdie's fiction has. Roth's fiction criticizes the religious orthodoxy or fanaticism through his metafiction that underlines the temporality of belonging and identity. This is the main difference between the two metafictions. Hence, the metafictions of Rushdie and Roth are politically at different ends of the spectrum: Rushdie employs secularist and exclusivist nationalism, while Roth's metafiction is more plural, and inclusive, and it endorses fast transitions among the parties involved in religious or national conflict.

Other than Roth's novel, are there any other literary alternatives to Rushdie's secularist nationalism, which can both avoid the exclusivist grammar of the nation-state *and* keep the critical capacity of secularism? In other words, can *literature* offer comparably more inclusive ways for engaging with religious fanaticism critically, without falling into "the elephant traps"? The answer to this question will be in the next chapter on Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red*, which is a historical fiction on Turkish modernity, exploring the cultural, historical, and political reasons for the disappearance of the art of painting in the Ottoman Empire.

"Thus withered the red rose of the joy of painting
and illumination that had bloomed for a century in Istanbul,
nurtured by inspiration from the lands of Persia."
(*My Name is Red* 501)

Chapter IV: The Imagination of the Self, Art and the World through Identity Categories: Pamuk's *My Name is Red*

I. Introduction

In the first chapter, I discussed how certain methods of reading and studying the nation might fail to account for the complexity of the modern nation. In connection with this, in the secularism section, I discussed how different definitions of secularism have different attitudes towards plurality, inclusivity, and exclusivism. The previous two chapters, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, were built on these theoretical conflicts: when juxtaposed, these two chapters, I argued, reveal a set of differences in Roth's and Rushdie's metafictions. These literary and methodological differences, I maintained, account for different perceptions and attitudes towards plurality in the nation-state, which is one of the connections between theory and literature. For additional emphasis, I will restate here the main difference between the two uses of metafiction, as reflected in the works of Roth and Rushdie. On the one hand, Roth's metafiction has a structural emphasis on the *temporality* of belonging (shown via a continuously shifting narrative, time, and plot in each chapter). Through his metafiction's continued emphasis on the *temporality* of identities, Roth's self-reflexivity manages to be harshly critical of religious or national fundamentalism, *without* nestling in an exclusivist grammar of certain secularist and nationalist discourses. On the other hand, I argued, Rushdie's metafiction

emphasizes plurality or hybridity undermined by the stadial, secularist perspective and exclusivist nationalism, as shown via the "freezing of time" in Pakistan, or Saleem's "purification," or in the stereotyping of several Muslim characters, or in the way he loses his intellectual powers once he is beyond the cultural and political borders of India.

Note the critical difference in the perceptions of time between Roth's and Rushdie's metafictions. I pointed out that Rushdie's fiction is highly self-aware in its use of time: Saleem's narrative of India is full of flashbacks, a particular and complex "chutnification" process and a desire to re-build identity through remembering and narration. However, the same complex understanding of time *freezes* in the Pakistan chapters. There are two significant points I underline here: first, the narratives of India and Pakistan have different perceptions of *time*, and this difference is considerably shaped by the secularist and nationalist perspective of Rushdie's fiction. Second, *temporality* in Roth's metafiction and the "freezing" of time in the Pakistan chapters of Rushdie's metafiction correspond to different degrees of national and secular inclusivity/exclusivity. I find Roth's metafiction more inclusive and plural, because his use of metafiction does not fall into the traps of the exclusivist grammar of nationalism in Anderson's sense and of secularism in Asad's sense.

In this chapter, I continue to build on this discussion. My aim is to show the following. First, Pamuk's metafiction is highly aware of the problem of plurality, inclusivity, and exclusivism concerning the theoretical debates on belonging, identity, and secularism in the nation-state. This awareness and the novel's statement are expressed via the inherent plurality of the narrative, achieved through constantly shifting perceptions and the use of several unexpected narrators in the novel. Second, I find such

a pluralist use of metafiction quite significant, because the novel not only gives voice to the underrepresented, as Hobsbawm recommended,[182] but also because Pamuk's metafiction offers an alternative and more plural, inclusive and democratic understanding of self-reflexivity. Thus, I maintain, metafiction in Roth's and Pamuk's sense can make meaningful contributions to theory and its capacity to better understand modern, cosmopolitan and multicultural nations.

Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red* is a historical detective fiction that narrates the story of a search for the murderer of the miniaturists in 16th-century Ottoman Istanbul, when and where painting was forbidden for *ostensibly*[183] religious reasons,[184] which opens up an argument about the reasons for the disappearance of the arts of the miniature and painting in Istanbul and the Ottoman world. *My Name is Red* is not only the story of the murder of miniaturists, but also a critique of Turkish modernity and its failures: specifically, its strict identity categories, its mutually exclusive grammar, its fear of the different and difference, as well as the apathy of the people.

In this chapter, I argue that Pamuk's *My Name is Red* demonstrates three critical points. First, single elements of dichotomies[185] in the world of the novel by definition cease to have meaning without the other half. To state this in the language of the novel, "nothing is pure."[186] Second, *My Name is Red* delineates the infertility of seeing the self, art and the world through identity categories, as well as how internalizing *the*

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[182] See chapter 1 and Hobsbawm's theoretical and practical recommendation to study nations from below.

[183] Pamuk's novel shows that the problems are too intricate to explain with simple classifications.

[184] "We're struggling with something more forbidden and dangerous; that is, we're struggling to make pictures in a Muslim city" (*My Name is Red*, 200).

[185] Some of these dichotomies are meaning and form in art, miniature and portraiture, fiction and fact, East and West, as well as religious and secular.

[186] (194).

imaginary[187] to the extreme could drag individuals into the grammar of mutual denunciation. And third, the identity categories in question fall short of explaining the complexity of human psychology and behavior. Overall, Pamuk's *My Name is Red* questions the place of the individual within the overarching narratives; specifically, Pamuk's novel traces individuality between tradition and the modern.

II. Introduction to Dichotomies

Dichotomies are defined as "mutually exclusive or contradictory" categories.[188] However, *My Name is Red* complicates this relationship by questioning the contradictoriness of dichotomies and bringing the trait of *complementariness* to the forefront. In other words, Pamuk's novel does not see the parts of the dichotomies as the antithesis of one another; rather, it depicts them as parts of a whole that are nourished by each other. More specifically, for example, in *My Name is Red* the arts of *miniature and portraiture* are not simply opposites; rather, the miniature artists continuously re-question and re-position their art and works in relation to their European counterparts and hence, directly or indirectly, are influenced by European portraiture.

Another dichotomy is *God's time vs. the individual's time*[189] in painting, which is supposedly connected to Eastern (Tebriz and Istanbul) and Western (European) artistic traditions, but the miniaturists in the novel secretly hide personal details in a miniature, thus inserting their own perspectives and time into their work, which is otherwise

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[187] I borrow the terms from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Section II of this chapter discusses how Pamuk's novel employs both metafiction and several fables to show how fiction and imagination come to reality and start shaping identities.

[188] "A division into two especially mutually exclusive or contradictory groups or entities" in "Dichotomy." Merriam-Webster.com. *Merriam-Webster*, Web. 28 Nov. 2015.

[189] "According to Master Osman, 'time is' what separates a good miniaturist from others (83). "This dichotomy is also related to the dichotomies of an omniscient view vs. perspective, as well as Sufism vs. Realism and East. vs. West.

supposed to be an omniscient view. In other words, the dichotomy of God's time vs. individual time imposed by Master Osman (83) falls short of considering the hidden styles and creative skills of the miniaturists. Likewise, the dichotomy of *word and image* becomes a complementary one, as the miniaturists seek ways to disguise their images under the form of *calligraphy*, beautiful writing (478). *Meaning in art*[190] is juxtaposed with *form in art,*[191] but some supposedly devoted[192] artists enjoy drawing things merely for the pleasure of drawing even though the painting still has a story (81);[193] and there are also several works and "books commissioned by sultans, shahs and pashas" painted for the "beauty" of the image (323).[194] In other words, a miniaturist might both have a story, and draw/paint out of the pleasure of painting an image. Correspondingly, there are other miniaturists who employ their creativity to undermine the hierarchy of the intended moral story of the miniature;[195] hence, a detail in a miniature becomes a significant individual image. In other words, the separation of form-based European artistry from meaning-based Eastern miniature becomes impossible to effect fully.

An additional dichotomy is *subject* and *object* in the art of miniature: the artists argue over whether the image of horse should be drawn from memory (58, 88, 92, 94, 227, 264, 306) and either as an example of its kind (an object), or as a distinctive individual separate from all others of its kind (a subject); several miniaturists enjoy

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[190] The art work as a part of a moral story vs. the art work by itself (meaning-form). The miniature: all images must be a part of a moral story (*My Name is Red* 132).

[191] Portraiture, focusing on the details, gestures and generally, on the form(s) of the human.

[192] Here, I use devoted in two senses; miniaturists are supposed to be devoted to both religious values and the artistic tradition.

[193] Butterfly and the debtor's scene. He takes pleasure in making personal additions, such as the beautiful daughter of a debtor (*My Name is Red* 81).

[194] Another example is when Ottoman Sultan expects all miniaturists in his workshop to avoid painting without a moral story (*My Name is Red* 132); however, we witness several miniaturists who do otherwise. Olive is an example (145-146).

[195] Miniaturist Butterfly, who paints the Sultan and the dog in the same tone of red (*My Name is Red* 81).

drawing distinctive images, or place personal clues[196] that may lead the image back to its creator. Consequently, this is one more dichotomy whose parts are not always in conflict with each other, but artists—deliberately or not—may do both simultaneously.

Fiction and fact is another significant dichotomy in Pamuk's novel, and more particularly how *fiction/imagination seeps into reality*.[197] Several fables narrated by miniaturists show readers how fiction could become real.[198] One interesting question Pamuk's novel raises is how the characters fail to recognize the fictionality in/of their lives and traditions, even though they narrate different versions of this theme. Similarly, Ottoman and Frankish artistic traditions are juxtaposed with traditions of Tebriz and Herat, which, in the end, show that these traditions not only position themselves towards each other, but also considerably benefit from other artistic traditions. So an *either/or* is not so relevant in this context.

The dichotomies of *secular and religious*, *traditional/conservative and progressive* are other central themes in the novel; however, as this paper will show, similar to several dichotomies mentioned above, these are not separate and conflicting entities, nor can they be clearly and easily defined. The following three parts of this essay show how Pamuk's *My Name is Red* undermines the hierarchical and conflicting relationship of dichotomies; and then how interpreting art and life according to mutually exclusive identity categories can drag individuals into the grammar of mutual denunciation.

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[196] Olive's unintended style and his distinctive way of drawing the nose of the horse (333) is a good example. This is what gives him away as the murderer.
[197] (*Imagined Communities* 36).
[198] One example is the story of Fahir Shah (85-87). Another example is in Section II of this chapter; see "The Quintessence of Histories."

III. The Pluralism of *My Name is Red*

The dichotomies mentioned above, by definition, cannot exist without the other half; as Enishte Effendi mentions, "nothing is pure" (194). However, *My Name is Red* does more than just state this. The novel articulates this through its form: for instance, events and many details, which would otherwise not be recounted, are narrated through various characters. As the story progresses, readers get to know the stories of various symbolic characters, narrated by themselves: a dog[199] which reminds readers that they are reading a fiction (12);[200] a coin which warns[201] readers that he/it is "not genuine" but "counterfeit" (125); a tree with existential questions asking "to which story was [it] meant to add meaning and grace?" (59);[202] death, who complains that it "had not been drawn with enough mastery"(155);[203] two outcast dervishes who died a long time ago but managed to survive as they were "rendered[204] in the Venetian style" (373); Satan, who implies that evil is as important and necessary as virtue (350);[205] a horse wondering and asking "whether it is [him] being depicted in all cases" (263);[206] or the color red, informing us

[199] The dog in question is cursed by a fundamentalist cleric (*My Name is Red* 14), and there is a religious animosity towards dogs (*My Name is Red* 15). The dog's perspective adds to the critical, humorous and ironic tone of the narration.

[200] The self-reflexivity of the novel. This sort of use of metafiction is a central theme of the work, and reminds the readers of the fictionality of beliefs, identities and traditions.

[201] One of the several examples of the novel's self-reflexivity.

[202] The question of the tree is significant, as it is related to several other dichotomies, such as Venetian/European Painting vs. Istanbul/Eastern Painting, the moral function of art vs. Art for art's sake. The tree wonders whether it is possible for him to exist outside a moral story, a role or identity given to him.

[203] This is another important theme of the novel: criticism of a general superficiality of works, and lack of depth of knowledge. On a larger scale, this is a criticism of Turkish modernity.

[204] Pictured.

[205] "If all men went to Heaven, no one would ever be frightened, and the world and its governments could never function on virtue alone; for in our world evil is as necessary as virtue and sin as necessary as rectitude " (*My Name is Red* 350).

[206] Even though the horse figure is painted frequently and the horse is sure that the artists perceive him differently, he finds a commonality in the paintings: " Of course, I'm proud of myself. Yet, I also question whether, indeed, it is I being depicted in all cases. It is evident from these pictures that I'm perceived differently by everyone. Still, I have the strong sense that there's a commonality, a unity to the illustrations" (*My Name is Red* 263). Uniqueness vs. commonality, individuality and perspective vs. tradition.

that red is "everywhere. . . before us" but "[r]ed cannot be explained to he who cannot see" (228).[207] Such multiperspectivism is the formal stance of the novel towards pluralism. Through metafiction and self-reflexivity, *My Name is Red* not only endorses a multiplicity of voices, but also shows the existence of a multitude of perspectives in an *allegedly* religious and conservative community. Thus, the hierarchy of the narratives is undermined by giving voice to various living and non-living things, including things of the imagination. For instance, *the color red* cannot be described through dichotomies, traditions, worldviews, or identity categories, nor is it religious or secular. Yet, as the color itself states, red is everywhere (228). It is this in-betweenness and impossibility of classification that gives its name to Pamuk's novel, *My Name is Red*. As the epigraph puts it, "the blind and the seeing are not equal."[208] Thus the novel calls for a new perspective, beyond the discourse of conflicting dichotomies or identity categories.

Then, what exactly does the color red signify? Pamuk's novel is pluralist in his answer to this question, as the color red does not have a fixed meaning:[209] Butterfly, one of the miniaturists, depicts a scene in which the Ottoman Sultan frees wretched people from their debts, and, with a sudden decision, he adds "the poor debtor's wife" into the scene, "wearing a purple dress in the wretchedness of destitution, along with his longhaired daughter, sorrowful yet beautiful, clad in a crimson mantle" (81). In another scene, Butterfly feels proud about doing "something the old masters never did," that is,

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[207] "'The meaning of color is that it is there before us and we see it', said the other. 'Red cannot be explained to he who cannot see'" (*My Name is Red* 228).

[208] This is a verse from the Quran, from the sura of "The Creator," which adds more depth to the novel's call: Pamuk's work does not simply classify religion as a backward or primitive entity; therefore it does not have a stadial perspective.

[209] This pluralist attitude of Pamuk's novel is clearly different from the monist view of Master Osman, who believes in just one tone of red. Master Osman agrees with the great masters of the miniature on this issue: "Only a weak and hesitant miniaturist would use a variety of red tones to depict the red of a caftan, they claimed—shadows were not an excuse. Besides, we believe in only one red" (*My Name is Red* 227).

painting "the dog resting off to the side in precisely the same hue as the Sultan's caftan of atlas silk" (81). It is the cursed dog, also one of the narrators of the novel, that comes to be painted in the same *hue* as the Sultan. Thus, the color red becomes a tool for some miniaturists to insert their unique individual interpretation into the miniature, and, therefore, the miniaturist secretly signs the painting, which becomes a way to undermine the implicit social hierarchy.

Another dichotomy in *My Name is Red* is *word and image*. Similar to other dichotomies, these two entities do not always oppose each other. Black, a miniaturist, admits that "pictures are forbidden by . . . faith," but pictures can be drawn in the disguise of calligraphy as "no one has anything to say against decoration" (478). Because "masterpieces . . . are ultimately seen as an extension of border ornamentation, no one would take issue with them, reasoning that they enhanced the beauty of writing and the magnificence of calligraphy" (478). Thus, word and image are not separate and opposing entities, particularly in the context of the art of the miniature and calligraphy. Similarly, Enishte Effendi, while trying to convince Black to write stories for the illustrations, says that "poetry and painting, words and color, these things are brothers to each other" (134). Therefore, the dichotomy of word and image is another example of transitivity between two non-rigid entities.

IV. Mutual Denunciation: Seeing *The Self*, *Art* and *The World* through Ideologies and Identity Categories

Considering that the whole novel is the story of a failure that leads to the disappearance of the art of miniature, Pamuk's novel raises a basic question: why and how did this happen? In this respect, *My Name is Red* problematizes the infertility of

seeing *the self*, *art* and *the world* through monolithic perspectives and identity categories, and shows how internalizing *the imaginary* in the extremes can drag individuals/artists into the grammar of mutual denunciation. In this context, one of the central themes in the novel is whether the miniature artists could have a style or not (119, 443,457, 458, 483); and style is seen as a "fault" (339) as well as an "imperfection" (22, 79, 80). The miniature artists are expected not to display any marks of individuality in their miniatures.

Why should an artist not have a style? In the workshop of miniaturists, style and signature are not allowed, because *selflessness* is expected from the artist. Master Osman, the head of the miniaturists' workshop, says that "[i]t is indeed important that a painting, through its beauty, summon us toward life's abundance, toward compassion, toward respect for the colors of the realm which God created, and toward reflection and faith. *The identity of the miniaturist is not important*" (70).[210] This is a view in which the miniaturists are expected to repeat the tradition before them, not developing anything new, not questioning the current methods, as well as rejecting any other *rival* methods including the European portraiture and the use of perspective. In doing so, the miniaturists are also required to avoid anything mundane, and to depict a world "that Allah envisioned and desired" (24). In this respect, the head miniaturist seems to be following a fanatical and monist reasoning in his justification for the refusal of perspective, style and signature in art.

Olive, the murderer miniaturist, explains why he killed Elegant Effendi by stating that Elegant was complaining that the "use of the science of perspective and the methods of the Venetian masters were nothing but the temptation of Satan," picturing "the face of

[210] Emphasis mine.

a mortal using the Frankish techniques, so the observer had the impression not of a painting but of reality" (194). Elegant comes to believe that "this image has the power to entice men to bow down before it, as with icons in churches. . . which is the Devil's work, not only because the art of perspective removes the painting from God's perspective and lowers it to the level of a street dog" (194). Here, Elegant has an *either/or perspective*: the science of perspective of the Venetian masters vs. Eastern tradition; the temptation of Satan vs. God's way; the moral lesson of a painting vs. bare reality; the Devil's work in perspective vs. God's omniscient view; and finally, the faithful man vs. a street dog. Still, Pamuk's novel delves deeper into the psychologies of the miniaturists and shows that this *either/or perspective* is too reductionist, and even the most traditional miniaturists desire uniqueness and style: Black says that "Everybody secretly desires to have a style" (307). Thus, even though uniqueness is not one of the desired characteristics among the miniaturists in Master Osman's miniature workshop, there is something enticing in both being unique and painting the unique(ness) for the miniature artists.

How limiting is belief and tradition for the miniaturists in *My Name is Red*, particularly considering that most miniaturists limit their art (by using only the omniscient view and avoiding perspective) in terms of form? Most miniaturists require their artistic work to be a part of a moral story; in other words, images in the miniatures are strongly expected to be a part of a story (*My Name is Red* 30, 31, 57, 59, 66, 95, 132, 144-145). More specifically, in terms of function, some miniature artists defend the idea that miniatures should "serve *our* religion," (130)[211] whereas in terms of content, story is held to be "essential for the miniature" (132). Put differently, unlike European portraiture, miniatures of 16th-century Istanbul in *My Name is Red* are expected *not* to be painted

[211] Emphasis mine.

without a moral story, and an image without one is received as blasphemy (148). This, actually, is where the conflicts in the novel start, and they lead to events including the murders; and it is how the conflict between tradition and modern materializes.

The conception of time is another element in Pamuk's novel that shows how imagined identities separate themselves from *their counterparts*. Master Osman explains his criteria to distinguish a "genuine" painter from a bogus one, so he asks three questions to all young miniaturists: which tradition (European or Eastern) a miniaturist believes in, which time he tries to paint in —particularly, "the illustrator's time" or "Allah's time," and what he thinks about the blindness of the artist (73). These questions are strictly related to the expectation of evading individuality and uniqueness; moreover, they call for an idealized/moralized version of painting and art. This is another point of conflict between old and new, or tradition and the modern.

What exactly does the head-miniaturist Osman mean by a separation between "illustrator's time" and "Allah's time," which is his second question and criterion? While explaining his philosophy of the miniature, first he defines the time of illumination: "[b]efore the art of illumination there was blackness and afterward there will also be blackness" (92). In other words, Master Osman believes that this world he is in is temporary, and the mundane life is irrelevant, particularly when compared to the idea of eternity. Master Osman takes this idea one step further and clarifies the function of his understanding of art: "[t]hrough our colors, paints, art and love, we remember that Allah had commanded us to ‘See’! To know is to remember that you've seen. To see is to know without remembering. Thus, painting is remembering the blackness" (92). If the art of

illumination is an act of remembering of this blackness, of what existed before, it differentiates itself from the "Frankish" painting that depicts the *here and now*.

Master Osman makes his point more clear by defining what he means by the blackness: "[t]he great masters, who shared a love of painting and perceived that color and sight arose from darkness, longed to return to Allah's blackness by means of color. Artists without memory neither remember Allah nor his blackness" (92). Thus, the act of remembering is recalling God, and Master Osman's ideal miniaturists, according to him, should portray things with a desire to integrate with God, and their main interest should not be this mundane world. Master Osman's view of art (and hence, that of his workshop)[212] is highly ingrained with his religious beliefs. He even goes further to claim an ultimate goal for the art of the miniature by saying "[a]ll great masters, in their work, seek that profound void within color and outside time" (92). Thus, Master Osman commissions the art of the miniature with the task of laying a bridge between this temporary world, and the real, eternal time of Allah. This is the exact distinction he makes between *Illuminator's time* and *Allah's time*. This is also why all the miniaturists are expected to draw from memory, and blindness is seen as a respected status for elder illuminators, as they have the experience to draw directly from memory, without any need to look at the object itself.

Blindness is one of the central themes in *My Name is Red* and the idea of blindness is also at the core of the artistic formation of the miniaturists. There are two types of blindness that are idealized within the world of the miniaturists: the first one is metaphorical blindness, that is, closing one's eyes to this temporary world and

[212] Master Osman imposes his strict understanding of art in the workshop: "Those of us who believe that the old morality ought to persist at the workshop, that we should follow the path laid by the Persian masters. . . We shouldn't forgo the old models (*My Name is Red* 114)"

drawing/painting merely from memory,[213] and the other is actual blindness in old age, performed in order to prove that the seasoned miniaturist does not need to *see* anymore in order to paint, as in the example of Master Osman who blinds himself (394) with the same plume needle that the Persian Master Bihzad had blinded himself with years ago (397). Why do the miniaturists blind themselves? The first reason is to prove they have attained an artistic and spiritual level where a master miniaturist is able to illustrate things merely from memory, and in the same omniscient way that God allegedly sees things: "[p]ainting is the act of seeking out Allah's memories and seeing the world as He sees the world" (96). But secondly, it is equally important how murderer-miniaturists like Olive *sees* this world: "filthy and miserable" (91).

Banning distinct artistic styles and signatures, avoiding uniqueness and individuality, classifying the work of art only as part of a moral story, the enthusiasm to paint outside of individual time, and blindness: what brings all of these ideas together? In other words, which artistic and political perspectives is *My Name is Red* questioning? A reductionist answer could have been *religion*, indicating *religious fanaticism*, but that is not the case. Pamuk's novel juxtaposes the realist tradition, represented by European portraiture, with the Sufi tradition in the context of the Ottoman miniature, and explores

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[213] All miniaturists in the novel --Olive (*My Name is Red* 333), Butterfly (335), Stork (337)--draw the figure of a horse starting from its hooves or forelegs, completely from memory. The reason is explained via a fable:

". . . one can properly complete a picture of a horse beginning from its hoof only if he carries the entire horse in his memory. Obviously, to render a horse through excessive thought and recollection, or even more ridiculous, by repeatedly looking at a real horse, one would have to move from head to neck and then neck to body. I hear there are certain Venetian illustrators who are happy to sell tailors and butchers such pictures of your average street packhorse drawn indecisively by trial and error. Such an illustration has nothing whatsoever to do with the meaning of the world or with the beauty of God's creation. But I'm convinced that even mediocre artists must know a genuine illustration isn't drawn according to what the eye sees at any particular moment, but according to what the hand remembers and is accustomed to. The painter is always alone before the page. Solely for this reason he's always dependent on memory" (*My Name is Red* 324).

the place for individuality and originality in this conflict.

The dialogue between Olive (the murderer miniaturist) and Enishte Effendi (who oversees the painting of the secret book in the European style, commissioned by the Sultan) is a good example in which *My Name is Red* brings together the realist and Sufi perspectives. Olive finds it "dishonorable" to "imitate the world," because "[t]hey[214] depict what the eye sees just as the eye sees it" (206). Thus, the first difference between the two traditions is that the realist European painting depicts things *as they are*. Olive's understanding of the miniature is shaped by his belief: in Master Osman's workshop; he refuses to "paint what they see," instead, says Olive, "we[215] paint what we look at" (206). What is the difference between *seeing* and *looking at?*[216] There is no selectivity in the former (*görmek*; to see), whereas the latter (*bakmak*; to look at) is a totally selective act, as the looker chooses in which direction to look, and what to see. It is no coincidence that the depiction of several figures (the dog, Satan, death, the woman, the outcast dervishes) for the secret book creates turmoil both in the coffee house and among the miniaturists. It should be noted that Pamuk's use of metafiction and having these *unexpected* minor characters partake in the narration is a deliberate and pluralist attitude. Master Osman's or Olive's negative stance towards realist painting is also connected to the dichotomy of *uniqueness and collective identity*: Olive, for instance, finds European portraiture dangerous as it creates a desire to be "different from all others, a unique, special and particular human being" (206), something he finds incompatible with a collective

[214] Olive means Frankish/European artists who do portraits and use perspective in painting.
[215] Even though there seems to be an ambiguity in the use of "we", it is more probable that Olive refers to the miniaturists of Istanbul and Tebriz, generally non-European artists. The other and less likely possibility is referring to the miniaturists in the workshop of Master Osman. This is unlikely, because all miniaturists relate their art to other artists in Tebriz and Herat in the east.
[216] In the original: Gözün görüverdiği her şeyi gözün görüverdiği gibi resmediyorlar. Onlar gördüklerini resmediyorlar, bizler ise baktığımızı" (*Benim Adım Kırmızı* 197).

identity.

On the other hand, *My Name is Red* does not leave much doubt about the influence of Sufism on the miniaturists. While expressing the close relationship between himself and Butterfly, Olive states that they "were never closer than when working on the eight illustrated plates that were to accompany a collection of Fuzuli poems" while they were working together in Tebriz twenty years ago (120). Hence, Pamuk carefully shows the influence of Sufism in Istanbul and Tebriz, both at the time of and twenty years before the incident, and more interestingly, Sufi ideals are influential on both the murderer (Olive) and the victim (Elegant).

How is the idea of collective identity connected to Sufism? Since the days and nights Olive and Elegant spent together in Tebriz twenty years ago, Olive still vividly remembers one single but striking line they used to recite from the collected works of Fuzuli: "I am not me, but eternally thee" (120). This line, referring directly to God, sees the individual and the rest of the world as a revelation of God. This pantheist view mostly informs the understanding of the self and the world, and shapes the miniaturists' philosophy of art, as well. Therefore, uniqueness and individuality, for Olive, become incompatible with the collective identity formed by the revelation of God.

The separation between the realist painting of Europe and the Sufi-informed miniature of Tebriz and Istanbul is reiterated and emphasized by Olive through another example: "[a]s we begin to paint in imitation of the Frankish and Venetian masters, as in the book that Our Sultan had commissioned from your Enishte, *the domain of meaning ends and the domain of form begins*" (386).[217] Here, *the domain of form* refers to the

[217] Italics mine.

European painting that portrays "a unique, special and particular human being" with all the distinctive details in each artistic work (206), whereas *the domain of meaning* indicates the pantheist Sufi view that sees people and the world as a reflection of a superior being, of God. This is also the reason behind most miniaturists' endeavor to paint and figure "the world as Allah sees it" (97), not as the painter sees things. How is tradition or the modern represented in this dichotomy? The artists in question are expected to choose one specific *form* over the other, and such an *either/or* type of expectation becomes too limiting, inefficacious and in the long run, destructive. Thus, Pamuk's novel questions the usefulness of any formalist, reductionist perspectives of self and art.

How does *My Name is Red* problematize such a perspective? What might be wrong with defining art through certain political or religious identities? Through a parable in the novel, Pamuk relates[218] the disappearance of the art of the Ottoman miniature to the story of the Ottoman Sultan, who feels a great discomfort with the "miraculous clock" sent by the Queen of England, as it "symbolized the power of the infidel"(500). After smashing the clock, the Sultan dreams of the Prophet, who tells him: if [he] "allow[s] his subjects to be awed by pictures and, worse yet, by objects that mimicked Mankind and thus competed with Allah's creations, the sovereign would be diverging from divine will" (500-501). The parable shows another version of how an art(istic work) gets lost through imagined identities that produce the language of mutual denunciation.

[218] "Thus withered the red rose of the joy of painting and illumination that had bloomed for a century in Istanbul, nurtured by inspiration from the lands of Persia" (*My Name is Red* 501).

Nevertheless, Pamuk's novel further complicates this issue through its form once more: we learn that the Prophet's warning comes to the Sultan in a dream. After the Sultan smashes the clock, he "more or less"[219] dictates the events to his "faithful historian,"[220] which were then depicted by calligraphers in pieces, which eventually made their way into a book entitled "The Quintessence of Histories,"[221] [222] which subsequently came to be told as a parable by one of the characters, and then came to be published in the novel (501). The quintessence of history,[223] then, was a story in a story in another story, which was only *approximately* narrated to the calligraphers, who brought the story together to create a book, which was merely a dream in the first place. In other words, there are several layers of fictionality, and with each additional layer in metafiction, Pamuk's novel reminds readers of the nature of *imagined* identities and the difficulties that may arise when/if art and art-works are read through these lenses.

In connection with this, *My Name is Red* brings another twist to the plot. At the end of the novel, the murderer miniaturist confesses to his crimes and retrospectively states that there was nothing to kill or die for: "[t]here was. . . neither a painting nor anything else so mysterious that it called for murder!" (482), because Olive realizes that Enishte Effendi had just aimed "to prepare a provocative book whose taint of illicitness would feed his own pride. . . with a slavish awe toward the pictures of the Frankish masters" (479). Olive now believes that "there was nothing damaging or sacrilegious in

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[219] Pamuk's irony is noteworthy: unreliability is emphasized.

[220] Pamuk is very ironic at this point. The word faithful (*sadık*, in Turkish) refers to the professional integrity and reliability of the historian. However, several layers of fictionality and Pamuk's use of metafiction makes it quite hard for readers to believe in the authenticity of the story.

[221] Similarly, Pamuk continues his ironic style, showing how imagination turns into reality.

[222] Again, ironically, Pamuk writes that the Sultan "forbade its illustration by miniaturists" (*My Name is Red* 501).

[223] This is also what lies behind the disappearance of an artistic work, the clock, just like the disappearance of the art of miniature.

the book," and Enishte, well knowing this, just "pretended that he was preparing a forbidden book and it gave him great satisfaction to be involved in such a dangerous venture" (479). Otherwise, Olive cannot see "anything contrary to religion, any faithlessness, impiety or even the vaguest illicitness" (479). This twist is important, because it becomes further apparent at this point that *My Name is Red* is more about Turkish modernity, than it is about the Ottoman world. Enishte Effendi attempts to imitate European portraiture, similar to the Turkish experience of modernity that has attempted to copy European models of governance—such as secularism and nationalism—since the 1920s. However, these projects, Enishte Effendi's book and, by implication, Turkish modernity, fail to be completed successfully (501) as they lack the required depth.

V. Identity Categories Fall Short of Explaining the Complexity of Human Psychology and Behavior

As the previous section explicates, Pamuk's *My Name is Red* shows that dichotomies (meaning-form, miniature-portraiture, fiction-fact, East-West, religious-secular, etc.) and related conflicts do exist; however, there is no *either-or relationship* between the parts of dichotomies, and these categories are insufficient to account for the intricacy of human relationships. In other words, the subdivisions of dichotomies mentioned in this study are not always in conflict with each other, but they are complementary constituents of a whole. In addition to this, Pamuk's novel further complicates the matter: a close inspection of the murderer miniaturist shows that the psychology of the murderer Olive is complex, which is displayed through several mental and behavioral shifts. Put differently, the murderer miniaturist's split personality and

unstable psychology make it both impossible and irrelevant to categorize his behavior in the aforementioned dichotomies, such as eastern or western, religious or secular.

At one moment, Olive feels guilty about the murder,[224] and feels restless and perpetually dissatisfied[225] in the next. Then he makes himself believe that his crime is now a thing of a distant past,[226] but then he can't help thinking about it[227] and he frequently "finds himself in the same strange state of mind" (148). As we keep observing Olive in his stream of consciousness, his mind leaps back to his past and re-experiences his previous moral and sexual splits and traumas.[228] Olive's split personality shows influence beyond a stream of consciousness and the two murders: the self-narrative of Olive unmistakably proves that his personal disorder has been influential on his view of art.[229] Olive also seems to have delusions of grandeur, as he repeatedly tells himself that he is the best artist[230] by far.

In another conversation, Olive explains why he killed Elegant Effendi: having overheard the rumors about the secret book commissioned by the Sultan, he fears that Elegant would denounce all miniaturists as "unbelievers. . . committing blasphemy" (*My*

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[224] "Now and again, I even feel as if I haven't committed any crime at all" (*My Name is Red* 18). Pamuk's characterization of Olive is important: Olive is psychologically unstable.

[225] "Nevertheless, being a murderer takes some getting used to. I can't stand being at home, so I head out to the street. I can't stand my street, so I walk on to another, and then another" (*My Name is Red* 18). And Olive continues his walks, "which grow increasingly longer due to [his] restlessness" (*My Name is Red* 20).

[226] ". . . my offense at times recedes from me like a foreign galleon disappearing on the horizon" (18).

[227] "I force myself to think of different things." (*My Name is Red* 21).

[228] "I force myself to think of different things, just as I forced myself, writhing in embarrassment, to banish thoughts of women when performing prayers as an adolescent. But unlike those days of youthful fits when I couldn't get the act of copulation out of my thoughts, now, I can indeed forget the murder that I've committed" (*My Name is Red* 21).

[229] "I've spent my time appeasing these jinns and demons. I've painted pictures, which many regard as miracles that have issued from my hands, with the help of these evil spirits. But for seven days now after dusk, since I murdered that disgrace, I'm no longer able to control the jinns and demons within me. They rage with such violence that I tell myself they might calm down if I go out for a while" (*My Name is Red* 146)

[230] "They're justified in being jealous. Not one of them could surpass me in mixing colors, in creating and embellishing borders, composing pages, selecting subjects, drawing faces, arranging bustling war and hunting scenes and depicting beasts, sultans, ships, horses, warriors and lovers. Not one could approach my mastery in imbuing illustrations with the poetry of the soul, not even in gilding" (*My Name is Red* 19-20).

Name is Red 147). Therefore, in order to prevent the destruction of the entire workshop and rescue the Sultan from his helplessness, Olive takes on the task of murdering Elegant (147). It is true that Olive believes Enishte Effendi's secret book project is "pure blasphemy" (148); still, one question becomes relevant: how right would it be to explain the murder, Olive's and other artists' approaches to art and the inevitable disappearance of the art of the miniature only with the vague category of religion or the subcategory of *the religious* motives? In other words, how possible is it to categorize Olive's motives and inner conflicts with the narratives or dichotomies of *western and eastern* or *religious and secular*? As a likely answer to this question, Pamuk's novel shows readers that the roots of the problems related to art and life lie much deeper and are more complex than they appear to be. In addition to the *complementariness of the dichotomies* and the novel's clever *use of metafiction*, the *complex psychology* of the murderer becomes the third element that helps readers question the validity of thinking through identity categories.

Olive finds Elegant and Enishte Effendi —his two victims— very similar, almost like the two sides of the same coin, on the basis that they were both spreading fear around.[231] Olive goes further to claim that Enishte and Elegant tried to scare him and that Enishte hid the pieces of the whole picture to create an air of mystery; and thus, they just wanted to feel more significant[232] by pretending that the project itself was a big "heresy" (478). In this regard, Olive believes that Elegant and Enishte Effendi "were a perfect match for each other" (479).

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[231] "A genuine Muslim knows the fear of damnation serves to frighten others, not himself. This is what Elegant Effendi was doing, you see, he wanted to scare me. It was your Enishte who taught him that he might do such a thing; and it was then I knew that this was indeed the case" (*My Name is Red* 478).

[232] "Your Enishte taught Elegant Effendi that he was involved in some forbidden project by covering up the final picture, by revealing only a specific spot to each of us and having us draw something there—giving the picture an air of mystery and secrecy, it was Enishte himself who instilled the fear of heresy" (*My Name is Red* 478).

With another twist, Pamuk's novel demonstrates that the murderer and the murdered are not so dissimilar, and that they are suffering from similar, if not exactly the same problems. Even if Olive's claims about Elegant and Enishte Effendi (stated above) are true, it must be noted that Olive has a similar issue of delusion of grandeur, and he wants to be at the center of attention just like his victims. Moreover, just like Enishte Effendi, Olive tries to achieve this through imitating and copying the means of Europeans, which is another striking similarity:

> In the center of this world, where Our Sultan should've been, was my own portrait, which I briefly observed with pride. I was somewhat unsatisfied with it because after laboring in vain for days, looking into a mirror and erasing and reworking, I was unable to achieve a good resemblance; still, I felt unbridled elation because the picture not only situated me at the center of a vast world, but for some unaccountable and diabolic reason, it made me appear more profound, complicated and mysterious than I actually was. I wanted only that my artist brethren recognize, understand and share in my exuberance. I was both the center of everything, like a sultan or a king, and, at the same time, myself. (*My Name is Red* 485)

Several issues are revealed here: first, Olive is envious of the Sultan's central position in the hidden painting, and he craves to replace him; second, just like Enishte Effendi and the hidden project, Olive does not create something new and only attempts to paint his face to replace that of the Sultan;[233] third, similarly to Enishte Effendi and the book project, he fails to finalize his endeavor; and four, similar to his victims when he has accused, Olive takes an ambivalent, guilty pleasure from his attempt which, ironically, is doomed to failure. But most importantly, the common point in all three (Enishte Effendi, Secret Book Project and Murderer Olive) is *the way they all fail*: all of the aforementioned are copycats, imitators of the European means of artistic production.

[233] Note the similarity: Olive clearly states: "I was unable to achieve a good resemblance" (*My Name is Red* 485).

Then, this brings us to the dichotomy of the *murderer and the victim*. Once more, Pamuk's novel shows that the people in these two categories are not so different from each other. In terms of imitating other traditions, failing to self-question, not being able to explore and find an original means of artistic production, the murderer Olive and the victim Enishte Effendi are very similar. For these reasons, the disappearance of the miniature cannot be explained simply through the religious-secular dichotomy, as these common problems occur in both central characters.

Accordingly, *My Name is Red* offers a loud and clear critique of the way people perceive art and life. In a highly pessimistic tone, Olive predicts that all their methods "will die out. . . colors will fade" and nobody will care about books or paintings (206); mice, termites and worms will eat up the manuscripts, women will burn up books and paintings in the stoves, children will tear out the books, and whatever is left will be banned by the "religious censor" (207). The way Pamuk makes Olive complain about the audience/reader evokes the feeling that Pamuk, as a modern Turkish writer, is indirectly addressing the people of the modern Turkish community who fail to establish a critical and productive engagement with *the self*, *art* and *the world*. Once more, Pamuk's novel reminds how all parties —similar to the characters mentioned above— lack a serious and productive critical engagement with art and the world: "[w]hile mothers destroy the illustrations they consider obscene, fathers and older brothers will jack off onto the pictures of women and the pages will stick together" (207). More than anything else, in *My Name is Red*, it is this shallowness and disinterestedness that lead the way to the disappearance of art. And in the end, Shekure informs readers of what happened afterwards:

> the conflict between the methods of the old masters of Herat and the Frankish masters that paved the way for quarrels among artists and endless quandries [sic] was never resolved. For painting itself was abandoned; artists painted neither like Easterners nor Westerners. The miniaturists did not grow angry and revolt, but like old men who quietly succumb to an illness, they gradually accepted the situation with humble grief and resignation (501).

Whose story is this, that of a group of miniaturists in 16th-century Istanbul of the Ottoman Empire, or that of modern Turkey? Pamuk hides certain clues in the novel, which might help find an answer to this question. In the closing scene between Olive and the other miniaturists when Olive is being blinded, a likely answer is provided: “Thanks to your Enishte, we've all learned the meaning of portrait', I[234] said.' God willing, one day, we'll fearlessly tell the story of our own lives the way we actually live them.' 'All fables are everybody's fables', said Black" (483-484). Thus, the answer is probably both; Pamuk's *My Name is Red* is a well-rounded critique of Turkish modernity questioned within the historical context, which is incomplete and "unfinished" (501) just like the Euro-imitation book project of Enishte Effendi.

VI. Conclusion

My Name is Red delineates the shortcomings of reading and understanding the world through the lenses of certain monolithic perspectives or dichotomies. However, the monolithic perspectives in question are neither Islam, nor Sufism. Instead, Pamuk's novel questions *living through imitated models*: the miniature artists in *My Name is Red* continuously re-position their art in relation to the *great masters* of Tebriz, or the *blasphemous* Frankish portraiture artists. Yet, miniaturists barely do anything systematically productive to create something new, except for re-interpreting the European and Persian artistic means of production. The project of Enishte Effendi, being

[234] Olive.

nothing more than an imitation of European art, is doomed to fail and has no future, because it lacks the essential intellectual/scientific accumulation and the inquisitive curiosity behind it. Correspondingly, the disappearance of the art of the miniature is linked to an analogous reason: between Europe and Tebriz, Ottoman Istanbul fails to develop anything new beyond incompetent imitations. In this respect, *My Name is Red* shows that the *either/or perspective* (as in the example of making a choice between the old masters of Tebriz or those of Europe) does not work, because such a perspective is far from being inquisitive or creative.

In his definition of *historical stadial consciousness* José Casanova writes that secularism makes a separation between modern and premodern, defining *the secular* as modern, and *the religious* as backward or primitive. Pamuk's novel does not have such a strict Euro-centered secularist perspective; and religion is not perceived merely as "an intellectual regression" (Casanova 59). In that sense, Pamuk is not biased towards religion and has a more balanced critical view of Turkish modernity, one that does not scapegoat religion.

Another idea that comes from the novel is the shortcomings of dichotomies in explaining the complexity of human psychology and behavior. *My Name is Red* demonstrates that dichotomies such as secular/religious, East/West, religious/secular and meaning/form may be too limiting at times, and may not be able to account for the intricacies of human lives. In several examples, Pamuk's novel shows that the subdivisions of the dichotomies are not always in conflict with each other. As the tree in the novel says, "the story is more complicated" (56).

Patricia Waugh writes that metafiction brings the element of play into writing to show that the act of writing itself is something fictional; however, she continues, in a language-based universe, history itself is an entity that is very similar to fiction; and one of the functions of metafiction is to show this fictionality (49). In this respect, metafiction has two significant roles in *My Name is Red*: first, the sharp use of metafiction helps readers question the imagined, constructed, fictional aspects of the culture, something the characters of the novel fail to see. In other words, *My Name is Red* explores the concepts of fact and fiction and specifically how they relate to imagination and reality. Through the frequent use of self-reflexivity, via fables told by characters, and with several layers of fictionality, *My Name is Red* shows its readers what the characters cannot see: how the imagined seeps into reality.[235] Second, being pluralist in perspective, *My Name is Red* gives voice to the parties who are not represented in a dichotomic either/or perspective: Satan, a dog, a coin, or outcast dervishes are some of these.

My Name is Red is a critique of Turkish modernity. Even though the novel is set in 16th-century Istanbul, Pamuk's work is more in dialogue with 20th-and 21st-century modern Turkey, rather than with the Ottoman world. This is so, because the novel, at the very beginning, informs the reader that there has been a murder (a murder of a miniaturist), but also, at the end of the novel, the disappearance of the art of miniature is declared, tying together all the other events in the plot (501). Therefore, Pamuk's novel becomes the story of the shortcomings of Turkish modern life: its troublesome and superficial relationship with European culture, its unproductive identity categories, its mutually exclusive language, and the inherent fear of others and any change that might come from the outside, as well as the apathy of the people. Turkish modernity, just like

[235] *Imagined Communities*, 39.

the imitation work of Enishte Effendi, is an unfinished business. This is how *My Name is Red* depicts the shortcomings of identity categories, as well as the inevitability of failure in trying to impose these categories on art and life.

Pamuk's metafiction has some noteworthy similarities and differences in comparison with the self-reflexivity of Roth and Rushdie. The main difference becomes apparent in the attitudes of the three novels towards plurality, inclusivity, and exclusivism. All of the three works that I analyzed throughout the dissertation question national, religious, and secular forms of belonging. The narrative constructions of these novels, that is, the way the novels connect the *form* to the *content* create a specific understanding of metafiction. Each specific use (of Roth's, Rushdie's, and Pamuk's works), I maintain, determines (and is also determined by) certain theoretical discussions I interrogated in Chapter 1. In this regard, I find Roth's and Pamuk's metafictions more effective in their criticism of the exclusivist grammar of nationalism and secularism. Rushdie's metafiction, on the other hand, is limited by the borders it draws itself: the protagonist's pluralism is constricted by the cultural and political borders of India, which is exclusive of Pakistan. Such exclusivism is rejected in Roth's and Pamuk's metafictions through the emphasis on the structural and narrative *temporality* in *The Counterlife*, and the narrative's continuous shifts in perspectives in Pamuk's *My Name is Red*. As I stated before, I find Roth's and Pamuk's use of metafiction more pluralist, more inclusive. Considering Hobsbawm's methodological advice to study nations from below,[236] I suggest that *literature* can thus contribute to *theory* through its capacity to account for the complexity of modern cosmopolitan nations. In this regard, the plurality of Pamuk's and Roth's metafictions, I maintain, offers more useful means of reaching the

[236] See Chapter 1 for my discussion on different methods of reading and studying the nation.

underrepresented individual perspectives that have the democratic capacity to undermine any *collective* identity, *unisonant* imagination, and *exclusive* form of belonging.

Conclusion

I. The Main Findings of the Dissertation

In this dissertation, I explored *nationalism*, *secularism*, *identity*, and *belonging* in the novels of Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie, and Orhan Pamuk. I provided a comparative analysis of these significant and controversial concepts in conversation with theoretical and literary accounts. In doing so, I had two main goals: to explore some of the shortcomings of theories of nationalism and secularism, and, in a discussion of some of the limitations of theory, to explore how and on what terms *literature* could contribute to the discussion. Starting with the more general and going to the more specific, my main findings are as follows.

First, regarding the *exclusive grammar* of nationalism and secularism: the conflicts discussed in the novels (such as religious fundamentalism, and the cultural and political borders of nationalism and secularism) are complex and multilayered. Two key concepts, *secularism*, and *nationalism* are among the main sources of conflict in both theory and in all of the literary works I discuss. Each perception or definition of nationalism and secularism entails drawing some borders in the sand, and the existence of borders brings about the essential dichotomy of and choice between *exclusivism* and *plurality*. The tension intrinsic to this duality is evident not only in the novels of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk, but also in the theoretical works of Casanova, Anderson, and Asad, and others.

Second, in the reading and early writing stages of the dissertation, I became more aware of the different approaches to nationalism and secularism. As umbrella terms, they include a variety of perspectives that define them in different (and usually conflicting)

ways. In this regard, I noticed that literary works can be read in dialogue with theory, and that the novels of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk are quite critical of some theories. Thus, my second point is that *literature* not only has the potential of contributing to *theories* of nationalism and secularism, but also is strongly and frequently critical of them.

Third, throughout this dissertation, in addition to observing how some literary works challenge current theories of identity, secularism, and nationalism, I became aware of how some novels endorse certain views. Specifically, in the previous chapters, I argued that Rushdie's metafiction endorses Casanova's brand of secularist secularism, while the self-reflexive novels of Roth and Pamuk adopt more pluralistic interpretations of secularism and nationalism through their complex metafictional structures. Thus, my third assertion is that the alternative views of secularism and nationalism offered by *literature* are various. And a close reading of literary works reveals that novels have already developed indirect *literary* discussions on secularism and nationalism, similar to those expressed as *theory*. Not all literary works are equally critical of these terms, as I will explain in the section below.

Fourth, secularism and nationalism are *not* fixed concepts, and literary works not only continuously challenge current theories by showing their shortcomings in and through fiction, but also call for new theories, perspectives, and *possibilities* that do not *exclude*. Therefore, my fourth argument is that secularism and nationalism must be approached both in *temporality*, as Roth's metafiction suggests, and in *plurality*, as proposed by Pamuk's self-reflexive fiction. In this way, I believe that new and more inclusive definitions of nationalism and secularism can appear: perhaps, this critical view can be one of the main contributions of *literature* to *theory*.

Fifth, I observe that the critical views expressed particularly in the metafictions of Pamuk and Roth are in dialogue with some recent methodological arguments, not only regarding theories of nationalism and secularism, but also in the discipline of Comparative Literature. For instance, as I discussed in chapter 1, Eric Hobsbawm has suggested that it is important to approach nations from "below," that is, at the individual level. The critical point in his argument is that ordinary individuals' desires, hopes, and interests are neither national nor nationalist. This is exactly what each of the novels of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk does methodologically: exploring the nation or nationalism at the individual level. This enables both writers and readers to encounter the complexity and multiplicity of a nation, which can get lost in the *from above* vantage point of theory. This view is in line with the theory of Bhabha, who writes that nations are not something complete, but rather are continuously shaped by citizens in a reciprocal process: a nation shapes its citizens, and it is equally shaped by them (3), as well as with Spivak's call for "permanent *from-below interruption* of a Comparative Literature to come" (*Death of a Discipline* 16).

Sixth, I underline that all these three writers place the *act of writing* at the very center of the metafictional structures of their novels. In itself, this is a literary and political statement—that all national, religious or secular identities are *fictional*, and hence, constructed. Yet, the *fictionality* of these political structures does not mean that they do not have significant cultural and political consequences. On the contrary, as Benedict Anderson so rightly warns us, *imagined* (communities) are not *imaginary*: rules, laws, borders, conflicts, and wars are *all* real. Hence, my sixth and last major argument is that *literature* in general, *metafiction* in particular, practically removes the nation-state

from Anderson's *mythic* and *endless time* and re-places it in the present *temporality*. This, I maintain, is how metafiction and literature offer us a wake-up call regarding *our* attachment to *our* identities.

In this section, I have listed the main findings of my dissertation. In the following section, I continue the pattern in proceeding from the general to the specific, and provide further comparative analysis of the similarities and differences among the metafictions of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk. The following section will help the reader to better comprehend what I discussed in each chapter, while connecting each chapter to the overall discussion.

II. More Specific Findings of the Dissertation

As stated above, in this section I provide a comparative reading of the metafictional structures in Roth's *The Counterlife*, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and Pamuk's *My Name is Red*, in order to discuss the political implications of the novels' different approaches to nationalism and secularism. To do so, I compare the *perspective*, *character construction*, *plot construction*, and *the literary tone* of those works, as well as their understanding of *modernity*, *secularism*, and *nationalism*. As discussed throughout the dissertation, I find Roth's and Pamuk's novels and metafictions to be politically much more inclusive, while I argue that Rushdie's fiction is noticeably more exclusionary, for the following reasons.

The problem of *perspective* is one main difference between Rushdie, on one hand, and Pamuk and Roth, on the other. I maintain that the metafictions of Roth and Pamuk explore the limits of *literary plurality* in different ways. Pamuk's *My Name is Red* achieves such plurality through its metafictional emphasis on the multiplicity of

narrators: in each chapter, a different and unusual narrator appears, until the following chapter when another narrator appears and takes over the story. Some of these *odd* narrators are *a coin*, *a tree*, *death*, *Satan* and *the color red*. Pamuk's metafiction resists any *imposed identities* or *narratives*, whether national, religious, or secular. Such multiplicity does not allow any single perspective to thrive for long. Similarly, in *The Counterlife*, Roth's metafiction emphasizes the *temporality* of the identities and the narration: in each of the five chapters that make up the novel, the narrator re-starts the story, and the plot of each chapter contradicts the chapter that precedes it. In this way, Roth's metafiction not only changes the characters' roles and identities, but it also urges the readers to become aware of the *temporality* of identities: time in Roth's metafiction does *not* and *cannot* flow serially. This is how Pamuk's and Roth's novels resist Anderson's idea of *seriality*, defined as the state's imposition of identities for easier "governmentality," "which classifies each individual monolithically" (Hollinger 148). Such monolithic narratives simply get lost in the structural multiplicity and pluralist narratives of Roth and Pamuk.

On the other hand, Rushdie's metafiction is far from being plural in perspective. Even though the storyteller, Saleem Sinai is structurally a mixture of the historical forces and class struggles that shaped India, as Srivastava argues, he holds a minority perspective (*Secularism* 49). The structural plurality mentioned above (a series of events that place Saleem in the Sinai family) is *not* reflected in the narrative, as Saleem's narrative is culturally and politically exclusive of Pakistan, Islam, and Muslims. The vantage point of his story is India as a nation, or Saleem as an *Indian*. Such an attitude differs from that of Roth: he, too, narrates fundamentalism (of the Orthodox Jews in

Israel), but Roth's metafiction never allows the storytelling to claim a national identity (such as American, Israeli, British etc.), even though the characters *test* belonging to different forms of Jewishness in those nation-states. Thus, my first argument in this section is that the metafictions of Roth and Pamuk are structurally more pluralistic and inclusive compared to the politically exclusive metafiction of Rushdie.

The second point of comparison is the *character construction* of the novels, which is closely connected to the *perspective* in the metafictions. In the novels of Roth and Pamuk, the characters have to change: in Roth, the shifting narrative makes Henry Zuckerman a middle-class Jewish dentist from Newark NJ in one chapter, an Orthodox/fundamentalist Jew in Israel in another, and so on from chapter to chapter. The narrative deliberately resists the stability or fixity of any identity. However, this is not the case for Rushdie's metafiction: as I discussed previously, Saleem's narrative depicts Muslim characters as stereotypes or caricatures of the idea of *submission* and *businessism*: Muslims are either corrupt capitalists, or submissive fools. For this reason, my second point is that Rushdie's metafiction has flat characters, whereas Roth's are generally dynamic and ever-changing. As Cooper writes, Roth's *The Counterlife* is a novel that explores "how somebody can be one thing at one moment, and something altogether at another" (*Philip Roth and the Jews* 156).

The third point of comparison is the plot construction of the novels and the flow of events. Roth's metafiction, as stated above, is full of deliberate and disturbingly abrupt shifts in the narrative. Rushdie's and Pamuk's works are historical metafictions. Their narratives are frequently shaped by specific historical events (this is more apparent in

Rushdie's fiction).[237] There is a noteworthy difference between Rushdie and Roth: in Roth's novel, the sudden shifts in the narrative create various accounts of Jewishness, while Rushdie's metafiction portrays Muslims as one or two types only: corrupt or submissive. As I previously stated, Rushdie's is an exclusionary, stadial, secularist nationalism, while Roth's secularism is more plural and inclusive.

The fourth difference is in their depiction of *time*. In Roth, all the characters are narrated in *temporality* in the U.S., Israel, or Europe, while time in Rushdie's novel stops when the narrative comes to Pakistan, which is the *cultural and political other* of India. While Roth emphasizes the fluidity of Jewishness, Rushdie's novel narrates Pakistan and Muslims in a fixed fictional time. Roth's Jews constantly change, while the Muslims in Rushdie's narrative remain constant. This is one of the differences between the two writers' approach to secularism and nationalism. For Roth, Jewishness, being American or Israeli does not hold much significance; his novel shifts the geographies, identities and stories, whereas Rushdie's fiction narrates Pakistan through a strictly secularist perspective and the national vantage point of India (or Saleem as an Indian).

All of the above, I argue as my fifth point, determine the tone of the novels: Pamuk's and Roth's metafictions are *exploratory* in tone, as the metafictional plot structures invite different perspectives from the periphery to the center. Pamuk's novel acquires this through multiple storytellers, while Roth's work achieves it through the narrative that restarts in each chapter. Unlike Roth and Pamuk, Rushdie *defines* the *others* of India. His *definitive* tone (versus the exploratory tones of Roth and Pamuk) is why and how Rushdie's novel portrays stereotypes while caricaturing Muslims and Pakistan. Roth's and Pamuk's novels resist such definitions of identities and blur the borders

237 Events such as the Indo-Pakistan War or The Partition are two examples.

between countries, characters, stories. In Rushdie's fiction, these borders become much more visible. For instance, when Saleem crosses the border of India and arrives in Pakistan, he loses his memory, and is reduced to a dog. The implication is that Saleem cannot continue to exist in Pakistan with his Indian identity.[238] This border defines the limitations of Rushdie's inclusivity as set forth by his nationalism and secularism.

What do all of these comparative examples show us about the representation of modernity, secularism, and nationalism in the novels of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk? At this point, the different approaches among the three writers become more visible. Roth's secularism is much more inclusive compared to that of Rushdie, because *the secular* in Roth is *mixed with* and influenced by *the religious*: they both appear in the same character *through* the abrupt shifts in the narrative. Throughout *The Counterlife*, the metafiction and the fictitious author of the novel criticize and reject "either/or" perspectives, and pursue the "and/and" (*The Counterlife* 306).[239] Rushdie's secularism, on the other hand, is a *secularist* one with several "either/or" moments: for Rushdie, India should not be *contaminated* by Islam. In *Midnight's Children*, the border that separates India and Pakistan strictly separates *the secular* and *the religious*. However, there is one significant point I must underline once more: Rushdie's secularism is not exclusive of *all* religions or *religious traditions*. His *secularism* in *Midnight's Children* is quite inclusive of the religions and religious traditions of India, which contributes to the form and the

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[238] Such stereotyping is not limited to Saleem in Pakistan. For the stereotyping of other Muslim characters in Rushdie's fiction, see my discussion of characterization in the Rushdie chapter.

[239] Roth's inclusive views on nationalism and secularism are perfectly stated in this extraordinary passage: "The burden isn't either/or, consciously choosing from possibilities equally difficult and regrettable—it's and/and/and/ and/and as well. Life is and: the accidental and the immutable, the elusive and the graspable, the bizarre and the predictable, the actual and the potential, all the multiplying realities, entangled, overlapping, colliding, conjoined—plus the multiplying illusions! This times this times this times this ... Is an intelligent human being likely to be much more than a large-scale manufacturer of misunderstanding?" (*The Counterlife* 306).

content of the novel. Yet, as Kortenaar states, "The Quran does not display the same drive to narrative" (*Self, Nation, Text* 21-22) in Rushdie's novel. Therefore, Rushdie's selective and stadial secularism is strongly shaped by his nationalism. Pamuk's secularism falls somewhere in-between: unlike Rushdie's, his novel does not have the stadial secularist perspective and does not scapegoat or stereotype *a religion* (Islam), but his inclusive tone is not as boisterous as Roth's, even though the multiplicity of perspectives is structurally secured through his metafiction.

All three of the metafictions of Roth, Rushdie, and Pamuk have distinct views on *modernity*: for Roth, being modern is something *plural* and *inclusive*, which can be said to be true for Pamuk's novel, as well. Yet, for Rushdie, being modern is exclusive of Islam or Muslims. One can see the stark difference between the ways, for instance, in which Roth and Rushdie approach secularism and nationalism: in Roth's novel, it is impossible to find any definitions, endorsements, or approval of any sort of *Jewishness*, whether it be "mixed" or "hybrid." Roth's metafiction and continuous abrupt shifts in narrative never allow even a minority position to thrive. Unlike Rushdie's Saleem, Roth's metafiction rejects all collective identities at any given moment in the novel. In comparison, Saleem is the embodiment of Indian history. Even though Saleem is *not* the whole India, he is still the one who tells the whole story through one perspective. This is what separates Rushdie's metafiction from those of Roth and Pamuk: Rushdie's storyteller, no matter how allegedly and structurally "hybrid" he is, narrates from a *vantage point*. Roth's metafiction refuses to occupy such a *narrative position* or a *vantage point* of that sort, and Roth's novel shows this critical attitude through restarting the story in each chapter and by employing a fictitious author. In addition, Roth's novel

uses the trope of a lost and recovered manuscript, undoing the narrative of the previous chapter, and thus, Roth's self-reflexivity places many layers between *any vantage point* and the writer and any *worldviews* or *identities* he may have. Pamuk's metafiction achieves the same effect through multiple storytellers, and his novel's self-reflexivity is a structural rejection of singularity in art, as well as in politics: this is also how Pamuk's work rejects descriptive identity politics. In short, Roth's and Pamuk's metafictions do not have the sharp edges that Rushdie's novel has: Roth and Pamuk *explore* the "and/and", while Rushdie *defines* via "either/or." These literary and political differences account for how various uses of *metafiction* shape and are shaped by diverse interpretations of *nationalism*, *secularism*, and *modernity*.

This dissertation is a comparative analysis of nationalism, secularism and identity issues in Philip Roth's *The Counterlife*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red*. In spite of their various differences, when approached together, all three novels express *literature*'s distinctive voice in response to various conflicts regarding the concepts of secularism, nationalism, identity and belonging. If we put aside all the differences among these novels for a second, and think about the overall *literary perspective* presented to us by the novels, then we can start to better understand what these literary works are *performing*. When we give an ear to the unheard stories of the unusual storytellers, *coin*, *death*, or *tree* in Pamuk's novel, when we observe Saleem's curious relationship between *the parts and the whole* in Rushdie's metafiction, or when we witness how the *Zuckermans* claim so many identities at once in Roth's self-reflexive novel, then we can better understand that all of these literary works challenge several limits or borders imposed through diverse identity politics. In response to Eric

Hobsbawm's call, all three metafictions "look [to the nations] from below," and such structural pluralism is a strong political statement in itself. Such a pluralist attitude, I contend, is *literature*'s call from a late 20th-century *temporal* perspective, for more inclusive forms and definitions of secularism and nationalism, as well as for alternative *possibilities* for co-existence.

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