

WRITING ONESELF INTO EXISTENCE: FOUR LITERARY ARTISTS  
AND THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON EXILE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY

MONICA ANGELIQUE ALFARO, B.S.

DENTON, TEXAS

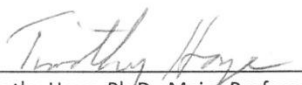
MAY 2011

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
DENTON, TEXAS

May 12, 2011

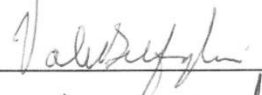
To the Dean of the Graduate School:

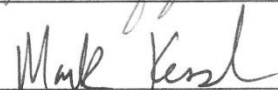
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Monica Angelique Alfaro entitled "Writing Oneself into Existence: Four Literary Artists and Their Perspectives on Exile." I have examined this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Government.

  
Timothy Hoyer, Ph.D., Major Professor


We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
Mark Kessler, Ph.D., Department Chair

Accepted:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

## DEDICATION

For exiled artists writing themselves into existence. Someone is reading your narrative.

And for poets who teach us that stories are songs, and singers are prophets.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I write these acknowledgements just as I wrote my thesis, with gratitude. With Gratitude to God, for making this possible. With gratitude to my parents Luis Alfaro and Cury Santiago. Thank you loving me unconditionally, and for injecting into me the assurance that you believed in my ability and work. The culmination of my graduate studies stems directly from your never faltering faith in me. This is for you. With gratitude to my love and constant companion Isai Rodriguez. Thank you for loving me enough to spend weeks at a time sitting quietly in my room watching me type, simply being present. Thank you for your patience and love in accompanying me through this journey. This is for you. With gratitude to my dearest friends. Thank you for your understanding of my *hermit* lifestyle over the past years. Accepting every cancellation of dates with grace. Thank you. And finally, with the utmost respect and gratitude to my teachers and mentors, Dr. Timothy Hoyer, Dr. Valentine Belfiglio, and Dr. Mark Kessler. I truly thank you for your guidance, for sharing your wisdom. This thesis would not have been developed without your direction and constant attention. I have always felt it simple to come to you, and confident that I would leave with the wisest advisement. You have guided my academic steps, introducing me to philosophies that have reshaped my thinking and life. I feel honored to have been your student. I thank you.

## ABSTRACT

MONICA ANGELIQUE ALFARO

### WRITING ONESELF INTO EXISTENCE: FOUR LITERARY ARTISTS AND THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON EXILE

AUGUST 2011

The purpose of this study is to offer a more precise meaning for the concept of exile. The field of Exile as an academic discipline and the scholarly community itself, fail to adequately define Exile. In this study issues with the field of Exilic Studies will be examined and in order to gain a more precise definition for exile, exilic narratives will be analyzed. The better defining of exile will be accomplished through a careful study of the exilic experiences and personal narratives of Hanna Arendt, Max Aub, Suheir Hammad, and Natsume Soseki. It is this study's contention that exile has been poorly defined, and any effort to better define it ought to include the work of literary artists.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
Chapter	
I. DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF EXILE.....	1
Exploration of the Term .....	1
Examples of Exile.....	3
Sebastiaan Faber and the Modern Discussion on Exile .....	6
Intellectuals and the Literary Artists in Exile.....	12
My Contention .....	14
Understanding Exile through Specific Exilic Experiences.....	15
Scope of the Study .....	18
II. HANNAH ARENDT: THE POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL	
DIMENSIONS OF EXILE .....	21
Hannah Arendt on Understanding.....	21
The Old Ponds of Arendt’s Political Philosophy .....	23
On the Influences of Aristotle, Jaspers and Kant .....	23
Exilic Humanity’s Denial of Politics .....	25
Arendt’s Political Existentialism and Jaspers .....	27
The Nature of Evil.....	30
Adolf Eichmann and the “bourgeois man” .....	32

On Stateless Persons and Navigating through the Evil of Exile .....	36
Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility .....	38
Heart of the Matter .....	42
III. SUHEIR HAMMAD: WRITING TO TELL THE FLUID	
NARRATIVE OF EXILED PALESTINIANS .....	46
Blended Cultural Rhythms and the Poetry of Exile .....	47
Writing the Exilic Experience.....	49
The Narrative of Exile, and the Story that Must be Told .....	51
Dancing Salsa to an Arabic Rhythm in Brooklyn .....	57
Writing in the Context of Refugees.....	60
Holding Reflections Responsible .....	65
Growing One's Own Olives.....	66
The Artist as Political Theorist.....	68
Suheir Hammad's Contribution to the Exilic Narrative.....	70
IV. MAX AUB: WRITING TO BE REMEMBERED .....	
A life in Exile .....	72
Spanish Homeland, Vacant Roots and Getting Lost in	
Translation.....	74
Intellectual Exodus, Mass Exile .....	75
Labyrinth of Residential Complications .....	79
San Juan, the Boat and Aub's Experience through Character	
Portrayal .....	80
Aub's Reflection in Carlos and the Banal Businessman .....	82
Guilt and Complicity in Loss of Place and Legitimacy .....	84
Faith and Action .....	87
The Politics of Remembrance.....	91

Faded Memories and the Necessary Spanish Exilic Narrative .....	95
V. NATSUME SOSEKI: THE ERODED CORNER AND EXILIC	
HARMONY .....	98
Meaningful Characters Giving an Artistic Voice.....	100
Exploring the Artist’s Life in a Three Cornered World .....	101
To Say .....	102
The Sun .....	104
The Tasseled Spear and Japanese Bushido .....	107
A Place to Stand .....	109
Mono No Aware in Exile.....	110
Living a Harmonious Exilic Experience .....	112
The Journey to Place .....	114
Following the Artist Back Home .....	116
VI. CONCLUSION: BETTER UNDERSTANDING EXILE .....	118
Understanding Exilic Studies within the Scholarly Community ....	118
Understanding the Artist’s Exilic Experience .....	119
Understanding Exilic Narrative and Defining Exile.....	122
WORKS CITED.....	126
WORKS CONSULTED .....	129
APPENDIX	
First Writing Since... ..	130



## CHAPTER I

### DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF EXILE

#### Exploration of the Term

The etymology of the English word Exile is derived from the French, *Exil*. Its origin is the Latin *Exilium* meaning banishment, or place of exile. The banished person is the *Exul*. Existing definitions of the term exile from Merriam Webster's Dictionary are: *exile* as *a*: the state or a period of forced absence from one's country or home, *b*: the state or a period of voluntary absence from one's country or home and *c*: person forced to emigrate for political reasons (Webster's). While this may seem elementary, the specifics of what it means to be exiled are anything but simple. What can be seen in these definitions is an inexorable link between the term exile and a departure of a specific place.

The larger purpose of this study is not to do a linguistic centered research on the term exile, but to delve into the concept of *Exilium* by studying the works of four Exul: Hannah Arendt, Suheir Hammad, Max Aub, and Natsume Soseki. To help define *exile* beyond the normative concept, this study will examine how the works of each of these artists relate to the theory of *To Stand, or Place* in Natsume Soseki's *Kusamakura*. However, before a true understanding of what a literary artist means by exile, or what it means to be exiled, the business of understanding the term itself, must be undergone. If

to speak well about things that matter is truly a virtuous activity which greatly benefits humanity, then choosing the words to use is of the essence.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy lists entries for the term exile, with no precise definition. Instead it lists persons who could be categorized as having been exiled, or who are known to have lived or experienced exile. (Stanford) Yet the ever evasive term remains defined. It seems that in recognition of the term's complexity, precision has not been possible. Taken from this absence of clarity, an assurance of at least a definite kind of person is given. "Someone" must be linked to the term exile for exile to be present. Exile then is a condition or circumstance belonging singularly to humanity. People are exiled. As a vocabulary term exile can be a noun, adjective, or verb. To use the term as a noun it must be linked to a person or persons in particular. Someone must be banished or uprooted from a place to be an exile. As an adjective the experience itself is exile. To be in exile is a description of being in a particular nowhere. To use exile as an adjective one would be explaining the experience of someone. Interestingly though, the use of exile as a verb is energetic as it can refer to the actual act of expulsion. Dictionaries change here the use of the word to place it not with a person but with an object. To use exile in a verb sense is to see the action not the person; which is in and of itself characteristic of the exilic experience.

The proper use of the term and the choice in classification is problematic for its exploration. When we talk of exile, what is it we mean? Are we talking about a person,

an experience, or an action? Are we meaning a person or an object? In this study the concept of exile will refer to the experience of one who has been displaced. Within the parameters of this exploration for such a complex term, exile will refer to someone having a particular experience. The *exul's* narrative provides the richest insight as to what the experience of exile is and consequently the character of those who are exiled. Thus, this study's concentration centers upon this very exilic narrative and the importance we should place on the insights of those who have been exiled.

### **Examples of Exile**

Examples of what the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy classifies as Exile, or moreover, exiled persons, *Exul* include: Confucius, Socrates, Seneca, al-Farabi, Maimonides, Niccolo Machiavelli, Galileo Galilei, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Voltaire, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Henry David Thoreau, and Simone de Beauvoir. (Stanford) It seems that exiled people, the *Exul*, have been held in high regard with respect to their philosophies. Therefore Hannah Arendt, Suheir Hammad, Max Aub and Natsume Soseki, are in good company. Arguably the most significant contributions made to society, particularly but not limited to, Western society, have come from exiled persons. If we explore the Stanford list with more care we see many of history's brilliant thinkers who were consistently ahead of the times in which they lived. The exiled seem to intellectually live in the possible future, while physically being trapped in the stagnant

and resistant present. The contributions of such persons are in all areas. Their work, their thoughts, their very presence has helped to mold in great part our civilization.

Of these exemplified exiles we see Socrates. "Like later public intellectuals, Socrates was an insider and an outsider in his own society." (Wilson 6) With this description of Socrates as an included exclusion we see two dilemmas to the term exile applied to an experience. Mentally, Socrates undoubtedly lived a life of constant social exile. Gadfly-like in nature, he did not fit in Athenian society. His search for wisdom, his manner, and his constant inquisition drew a mental and spiritual wall between Socrates and Athens. This mental and spiritual detachment from Athens makes for an internal exilic experience. Yet Socrates as an exile also contains physical exile of the most permanent sort, death. The final judgment of the Athenian court provided for lasting separation from Athens, lasting exile.

The problem with exile is found in Socrates' very life as both internal and external exile is exemplified. This juxtaposition of internal and external exile is worth exploring as Exilic Studies is on the rise in academia. The concept of exile does indeed provide for plenty of grey area in which to construct disciplines and avenues for study. Among these avenues are research into memoirs or histories of people who have been exiled throughout history. As a study of a people this can take shape in the realm of the humanities. This exploration of exiled persons also has taken form in various societies and research groups dedicated primarily to the forced immigration of Jews under Nazi

Germany and those emigrate scholars who fled Germany during the same period. This focus on those who have been exiled exemplifies the question of external exile, yet only touches part of the question on internal exile.

As a developing field of research, Exile Studies has a place in the curriculum of Florida International University. Here the field is described as, "Global in scope, exile, in essence, is multiculturalism out of necessity; hence the Certificate in Exile Studies is by its nature multicultural and interdisciplinary" (FIU). With possible participation Literary Studies, History, Political Science, Psychology, Foreign Language, Sociology, and many others it has continued to be difficult to give exile precision even in research. The field is arguable one of today's most viable courses for study as the phenomenon of exile and its corresponding consequences reach anywhere from domestic to foreign policies. As exiled persons flee from their native homelands and relocate elsewhere, cultures merge and perhaps create a breeding ground for friction between the tectonic plates of societies.

As external exile can shape foreign diplomacy, the world economy, and social intermixing, the ones who are exiled are also going through an extensive inner process. Perhaps the scope of inner exile is the most complex of the two. Inner exile could deal primarily with the displaced person's psychological reaction to exile, or it could refer to that mental exile which is experienced internally yet not physically. Do the outcasts of society whom feel displaced by their own countries yet are not forced to flee, count in

exilic studies? Authors such as Henry David Thoreau in America, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez in Colombia, were never made to flee their homeland, yet their writing is rich with criticism of society and overwhelmed in solitude, and separation. This schism in the mind of literary artists portrays that which will be later explored in the active attempted reconstruction of Natsume Soseki's dismantled corner of society. Therefore, in an attempt to better define exile and shape its content into a field of study the limitations are extremely broad.

### **Sebastiaan Faber and the Modern Discussion on Exile**

In 1995 Dr. Sebastiaan Faber wrote his dissertation for the University of California and titled it "Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico (1939-1975)" which would later be published as a book. From this research Faber put forth the article titled, "The Privilege of Pain: The Exile as Ethical Model in Max Aub, Francisco Ayala, and Edward Said." Within this article, Faber explains the, "tensions, contradictions and dangers of this figurative use of exile as an ethical model, arguing that it minimizes the concessions, negotiations, and struggle for legitimacy that generally mark the exile's existence." (Faber 15) Faber believes that while the study of exiles is valuable, and Exile Studies as a field is viable, to utilize the exiled person as an ethical model is problematic at best. This narrowing of focus within the study of exile is precisely about inner exile. How the *exul* deals with their displacement and experiences their experience while quite remarkable, according to Faber is not always the best

ethical model to follow unquestioned. While the exile's experience is perhaps the wisest place to begin the search for a clearer understanding of exile, the method by which one survives exile is more a tool to understand rather than a prime ethical example to follow.

Sebastiaan Faber suggests that the scholarly field of Exile Studies, "the interdisciplinary domain that deals with the social, cultural, and political dynamics of forced displacement," has become unmanageable, and has accomplished little in the aim of better explaining the exile experience. With no real direction or ability to navigate through the various types of exile creating a determined list of inclusionary and exclusionary material, exilic studies has been a worthwhile yet unsuccessful endeavor. Which exilic narratives are to be seen as viable to the discipline and which are best left to other studies of the human character? For example, when is inner exile, as in the case of Garcia Marquez, Thoreau, or Socrates, enough to cross over into a full blown expression of exile? According to Faber, "Exile Studies as such does not seem to have made very clear advances toward a better understanding of the exile experience" (Faber 16).

In *The Privilege of Pain*, Sebastiaan Faber describes three problems with the field which are Delimitation, Reductionism, and Existential Metaphor. These problems arrive because of the aforementioned hospitality that exile offers to the humanities and social science disciplines. He describes these three problems of exile as basic to the field and

to resolve them at least in part would mean great advancement in the journey to understand exile

Delimitation, for Faber, is the problem of limiting and deciding what is considered exile and what should be included in scholarly conversations about the topic. Questions such as, “What, really, is the field’s scope? Should we attempt a careful definition of exile and, if so, what would that be? How do you determine who qualifies to be considered an exile and who doesn’t? Do you exclude economic immigrants or refugees?” arise as well as many others. The answers to each of these questions themselves are complex and could quickly become as unmanageable as the field of exile itself. Who answers these questions? As a field of study, what should Exile include? Delimitation then for Faber, as well as the scholarly community, has the sole problem of inclusion. In the categorization of what should be included in the field of exile, the temptation to over generalize dominates. When deducing the accounts of exiles, less and less is asked of them in order to become part of exile’s scope. Both internal and external exile are included and within this, we see a broadening of the inclusion so sweeping that it becomes difficult to ascertain what is not exilic in nature.

The second problem Faber describes is what he calls Reductionism. Reductionism is dangerous as it severely boxes in the exiled person and his or her work. Everything the exiled person does, especially what they write is directly connected to the experience of being exiled. In this reductionist enclosure, the literary artist is barred



from having the ability to write anything without it directly referring to or being written because of their exiled experience. This is a volatile action to commit against those persons who create their art from a place of exile and who have something to contribute on the topic, yet have other contributing factors as well. While it is generally believed that much of the exiled person's writing can be attributed to the experience of being exiled, it is a precarious business to label all of the artist's work as *exilic*.

For example, taking the poetry of Suheir Hammad into account we see various contributing factors to her voice as a poet. She writes in exile, yet also is firm in a grounded place of identity. Hammad writes as a woman, and many of her poems center on this classification. She has been linked with women's movements around the country and has become the Audre Lorde of Palestinian women. Having roots in two quite distinct cultural spheres, Brooklyn, New York and Palestine, we see her language morph into the specific poem's need. While she is an *exul* she is also a Brooklynite woman who connects with her present.

"Connected with this problem is the tendency to over generalize, to lose track of the historical specificity of each exile experience" (Faber 16). The question of including all the literature an exiled person writes as exiled literature is difficult and can change on a case by case basis. In fact, scholars looking at exiled literature itself are unsure whether the literature category has any validity worth studying or deserves to be classified as a separate entity (Faber 16). According to Faber, this problem of

overgeneralization does a grave disservice to literary artists. As a critic of their places, their societies, they reveal to the audience their experience in exile. Yet they also enter into dialogue with their societies without necessarily excluding themselves internally. Once classified as exilic in nature literary artists have the opportunity to be seen through the exilic lens, yet consequently run the risk of becoming trapped within it.

The third problem Sebastiaan Faber expresses concern with is the conversion of exile into an existential metaphor. Faber states, "Once we allow ourselves to think of exile in existential or figurative terms, there is little that would automatically fall outside of the field's scope" (Faber 17). Literary artists, whether in physical exile or not, very often feel outside the scope of their society's inclusion. This feeling of isolation from the communality with peers makes the artist much more attune to the failings of the space around them. To write with clear understanding of what is lacking, presupposes exile. Exile as an existential metaphor, is an interesting phenomenon in the course of its study. "Don't all writers, in some sense, live in exile? And why stop with writers? Who isn't an exile of sorts? Isn't life itself, especially modern or postmodern life, a quintessentially exilic experience?" (Faber 17). The search for a more precise definition of exile then is increasingly necessary in order to carefully sort what should be studied as exile.

This is where the literary artist becomes Exile Studies' asset and enemy. If in fact the artist in question falls into the realm of having been over generalized, then they are part of an existential metaphor and ought not to be included in the study of what exile

is. The problem with exile is that once psychological exile is included, we are all in a sense personally exiled. This “temptation of the trope” as Faber puts it, could bring in literary artists and their work that should be examined closer, and yet could damage greatly those who have lived a true exilic experience. To reduce the experience of exile to a metaphor is to strip what is basic and most influential to the true exiled literary artist. That is to say, putting level a mentally exiled author with a physically displaced person and their account is simply not just.

These questions of inclusion and exclusion are a form of exiling literature from being known as exile. It is to say that it is not sufficient to have been exiled, for all one’s writing should be deemed exilic; while those writings themselves were created in the exiled experience. Work that is written on the concept of exile falls into none of the categories Faber lists. The study of exile, as Exile Studies should incorporate the writing of persons who have been both exiled internally as well as externally, as well as those who have something to say on the concept of exile, while recognizing that not all their work is exilic in nature. This still excludes those who study the field; those who interact with the writing and those who interpret the work of literary artists. This leaves out important literature on the conversation we should take from exile, for what is the purpose of having the experience of exile documented if not to study it closely and attempt to make sense of it?

## Intellectuals and Literary Artists in Exile

Exile in ancient time, namely Athens, was reserved for opposing aristocratic families. The Aristocrats in power at the time would ostracize for a designated period of time the rival family, and in turn that family would link themselves with aristocratic allies and return by force. Upon their return the family which had ostracized first would then be exiled themselves. "Examples of this back and forth movement of rival aristocratic factions from power to exile can be found in the history of Corinth, Megara, Mytilene, Samos and Athens in the seventh and sixth centuries" (Forsdyke 236). Exile in Athens meant a destabilization of power, and a stripping of personhood from the exiled. However, exile in Athens was mostly temporary as the ostracized person was allowed to return after a designated time period, typically 10 years. Upon return they would have resumed ownership of their property, and for the most part, their reputation would be intact.

Exile today does not resemble, even in part, that ostracism in the Athens of classical antiquity. Exile today is for the most part is involuntary and severely detrimental to the lives of those exiled. Moreover, when coupled with underlying political strife exile turns into a permanent amputation of part of the *exul*. It is in this painful exile, without the hope of Athenian return that literary artist and intellectuals produce the bulk of their work which could be categorized as exilic literature. This absence of hope shapes the way in which the artist writes, but also shapes the way in

which that literature is received by society. According to Faber, "There is something undeniably heroic about these works of art and learning, often created under the most precarious of circumstances, turning daily life needs into literary or scholarly virtues" (Faber 3). The literary artist in exile is held, most times, in a quite heroic regard which they may or may not have been held had they not been exiled.

It is this romanticism which encircles the artist or intellectuals' work that must be appreciated and yet recognized in its ability to mold their work into something the audience needs it to be and not what the artist had intended. However, the cloud of romance around the writings also makes the literature spiritually accessible to its readers. When characterized as having transcendental knowledge of the political culture around them, the literary has a reach that undoubtedly places them in a powerful position should society choose to recognize their work. It is this personal, privy knowledge of what it is and how it feels to be exiled that the literary artist commands. Because the concept of exile is so abstract, the literary artist turns into a tunnel and pathway to a clearer understanding of the nature of exile. Whether the artist becomes something of a hero outside the exiled land, or continues to defy the political culture while being present in their society, their contributions become invaluable. Moreover those literary artist who do not write from a place of external exile, but rather internal, are arguably more powerful in their influence long term.

## **My Contention**

The schism between the exile's personal narrative and society's rejection of that narrative is perhaps the clearest definitive view of what inner exile is. Yet these are the murkiest waters for this concept as most literary artists are in various senses internally exiled. It is problematic here to argue for the inclusion of the literary artist who has not been formally exiled or expatriated from their homeland. However, in the understanding of what is meant by homeland, or place, we must reference Natsume Soseki. This is the reason Soseki is pivotal to the understanding of exile as a concept; for exile has no merit without the loss of place. It is important to recognize the other corners in Soseki's construction of the world, as it is together that one is fully present and at his best. The erosion of any of the corners would weaken humanity. Within Soseki's world we see the four corners of: to Speak, the Sun, Tasseled Spear, and to Stand. The four cornered perspective on exile by Natsume Soseki will serve for this study the in role of binding the other three perspectives discussed together.

As to be seen in Soseki's work, the corner of "to Stand" is the corner that exile erodes. To have a greater understanding of exile and how it is experienced, is to better understand the importance of a person's being able to stand in one place of their own. It is the importance of standing, and being grounded in the roots of a land under the feet, which this paper aims to explore. Exile studies as a field in academia is a field which lives in that which is lost, that which has been eroded. For the study of exile to be a

viable method of understanding the literary artist, the literary artist must first be able to define their own exile. Also the interpreter of that writing must be able to see clearly the absence of place within the work and its importance in life. When the literary artist has a place, it gives them an avenue from which to be fulfilled in the three other corners of Soseki's world. Place provides for a solid ground to defend, to explore and articulate, as well as somewhere to find transcendence.

### **Understanding Exile through Specific Exilic Experiences**

By interpreting what the literary artist says in their work, and seeing what they write as an extension of their exilic experience, exile, as a concept, becomes clearer. In the process of taking an interpretation of an artist's work, a framework must be put into place from which to construct notions on the subject. I suggest that this framework should be Hannah Arendt's view of exile, and her writings on the topic to help to frame the construction of a better understanding of exile. Hannah Arendt, as a scholar, has written on the subject of person to person relationships, and person to society tensions. Arendt's understanding of totalitarian regimes, and the construction process that makes them possible, facilitates a greater understanding of the exiled experience. This experience at the center of totalitarian governments lays the groundwork for necessary isolation of people. It is impossible for people to be politically exiled unless they are dominated by these types of governments which strip them of their basic human characteristics.

With a work solely dedicated to exploring humanity, *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt molds the understanding of people as a whole, and what is necessary for the successful completion of a person. By taking Hannah Arendt's understanding of humanity and exile as a framework the importance of Soseki's four corners is revealed. Arendt gives her readers an understanding of what people are capable of when there is something absent in their world. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* Arendt arguably explores all four of Soseki's corners for a complete world. The banality of evil lies in the absence of action both from German citizens during World War II, the Jewry, and the civilized world as a whole. By looking away from Nazi Germany's actions under Hitler's regime, the ease of evil is exposed. The complicity of doing nothing reveals the lack of *Joushiki*. In this text we see how those who knew spoke in riddles and word games, while everyone simply did not speak. Also noted is a clear lack of transcendence and poor understanding of providence in the humanitarian sense. There is no transcendence in the mass killing of Jews, as there is no transcendence in exile. Finally the Jews themselves are stripped of a place to defend as they become no one's people and everyone's problem.

From exile to exile we see the vicious cycle of those who have been exiled, forcing others into the same experience. In an effort to understand what this experience looks like, Palestinian poet Suheir Hammad is referenced. Her exilic experience stems directly from the consequences of the banal evil Arendt presents. Born in a refugee



camp in Jordan to displaced Palestinian parents, Hammad is a modern link to the literary artist in exile. Applying Soseki's interpretation of the purpose of the literary artist, we see Hammad attempting to restore an understanding at least, of the missing corner for Palestinians today. Politically, Hammad is relevant and powerful as her generational experience is marked by her parent's forced exile. As a link to modernity and today's culture we can see Hammad as a Brooklynite, whose dialogue is that of a woman in Brooklyn right now.

Melded with the songs of her father, Hammad writes of the smells of her neighborhood. This is an invaluable glimpse into what exile looks like today, as she is raised in American schools and speaks American English, yet is directly linked to the largest refugee population at this moment. Tensions between the Middle East and the West are the meat of current journalism, and one of these core issues is Israel and Palestine. To have Hannah Arendt's brilliance in shedding light on the Jewish experience and the world's inaction alongside Hammad's poetry in exile today compliments the understanding of exile. The many failed attempts at a peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians today is arguably, the very evil banality that was the purpose of Arendt's writing.

### **Scope of the Study**

In the study of physical displacement, historical accounts must be incorporated. These are both within the scope of Exile Studies and their use is applicable for politics today.

To understand exile through the eyes of someone who has been externally exiled is the rawest form of experiencing exile second hand. These accounts melt together historical facts, with the importance of place and the psychological repercussions of its loss. Max Aub is referenced as having lived and written under Franco's Spain. Aub's roots are a mix of Arendt's subject matter and Hammad's experiences. His father was German, his mother French, his family Jewish, and they were all Spanish citizens. As a writer and intellectual Aub's forced departure from Spain marked a loss to Spanish society. Having spent time in concentration camps in France and Algeria, Aub flees to Mexico and spends the rest of his life in an intense dialogue with the people of Spain. This absence of place marked the writings of Aub step by step as he never remained silent about his feelings for Franco, as well as Spain and her people.

Sebastiaan Faber references Aub as an intellectual whose ethical model is perhaps one of the most unchanging. With a direct link to the "corner of the Sun", or transcendence for Soseki, Faber states that, "Intellectuals, for Aub, should be interested in politics, address it and take positions; but what distinguishes them from politicians is that they see political issues in primarily moral terms." (Faber 20) Aub then connects Arendt, Soseki, and Hammad as he is who Arendt writes about, lacks Place yet relishes its connection to transcendence and speaks prolifically about it with his peers, and experienced exile quite literally as Hammad and her family have.

In the search for a greater understand of the concept of exile, the term must first be defined. As there has not been a satisfactory definition from academia on what exile means, then those exiled must be studied. What to study is perhaps the most daunting task of all as without a definition, the classification of something or someone as exilic in nature becomes increasingly difficult. Sebastiaan Faber discusses three main problems with Exile Studies as a field, naming Delimitation, Reductionism, and Existential Metaphor. Each of these exacerbates the problem of defining exile as inner and external exile are real for those experiencing it, but as a field the inclusion of every exile's experience does injustice to those who have been quite literally exiled. It is in the search for understanding exile that the literary artist is most valuable.

The literary artist serves the understanding of exile in three ways. First, the artist provides a definite example in themselves of what exile looks like. Second, the artist recognizes the harm of exile and tries to explain its danger to society. Third, the artist links the importance of the other three corners for the compilation of a complete person. In the search for artists who exemplify these three things in their work, this paper will center on Hannah Arendt as a framework through which to see exile, Natsume Soseki for an understanding of why exile is detrimental, and finally on Suheir Hammad and Max Aub to describe their exilic experiences through their respective narratives. It is the aim of this study to better understand exile through these lenses.

This will be done with the intention and hope of bringing a more clear understanding to the concept of exile through the perspectives of four literary artists.

## CHAPTER II

### HANNAH ARENDT: THE POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF EXILE

*“What is important for me is to understand. For me, writing is a matter of seeking this understanding, part of the process of understanding.”*

-Hannah Arendt (Essays ix)

#### **Hannah Arendt on Understanding**

Hannah Arendt was born in 1906 in Hanover, Germany and lived till 1975.

Arendt was a German born Jewish woman whose life span saw the emergence of the Nazi party in Germany, Hitler’s charisma, systematic genocide of Jews, the end of WWII, and the following years of consequential aftermath. Arendt lived when the state of Israel was created and through both the 1948 and 1967 intifadas. These life events, as well as her brilliant writings make her take on the concept of exile pivotal. Through her work, two instrumental concepts illuminate the search for a richer understanding of exile within this study. The first is Arendt’s understanding of politics, of which exile is an extreme example. Second is the understanding of evil and banality from which the feeling of personal responsibility for the injustices which we are made aware of permeates.

To deny man a place to practice politics, in is essence, to deny him that which makes him human, as a political animal at his core. To misunderstand evil, or be blinded

to its origin in banality is a failure to see that inaction is complicity. Therefore it is a great injustice not to write or explore the concept of exile. It is arguably equal to actively participating in the displacement of people and the denial of their civic activity. To know and, to be aware, makes one responsible. At the center of Hannah Arendt's work is this search for understanding the nature of politics, and for the purposes of this study, the importance of when politics is denied; as the most extreme example found in exile.

*"What is important to me is the thought process itself."*

-- Hannah Arendt (Essays 3).

This careful examination of truth, and the arduous journey through which one attempts to glimpse it, is important for understanding and thinking thoughtfully as Arendt intends. In the spirit of wrapping one's head around the subtleties of Arendt's underlying theme, care must be taken in grasping and appreciating her detailed work. Reading Arendt in essence is opening oneself to the unprecedented, and must be preceded by readying the earth in which to plant the seeds of Arendt's philosophy.

### **The Old Ponds of Arendt's Political Philosophy**

One cannot attempt to understand the theories of Arendt, or any true philosopher and political theorist for that matter, without first searching through her work for the remnants of her mentors and their impact on her foundation. The foundational pieces which laid the groundwork for Arendt's construction of her thoughts on politics, evil, and statelessness, stem from key components in her early

career as a scholar. These components are the work and thoughts of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, and Karl Jaspers. The threads of Aristotle, Kant, and Jaspers are woven neatly into the tapestry of Arendt's work and built upon in her selected works such as *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Essays in Understanding: 1930-1954*, and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, which best illustrate how Arendt thought and felt on matters of politics, humanity, evil, exile and statelessness.

### **On the Influences of Aristotle, Jaspers and Kant**

“Understanding, as distinguished from having correct information and scientific knowledge, is a complicated process which never produces unequivocal results. It is an unending activity by which, in constant change and variation, we come to terms with and reconcile ourselves to reality, that is, try to be at home in the world.” (Arendt, *Essays* 307)

These masters in their own right come together in Arendt to form revolutionary thought processes in the changing world of political theory today. The influence of Aristotle on politics and Western culture can be far from over estimated, as much of our society at present has been molded, for better or worse, from the legacy of Ancient Greece and poured into the container of modernity. Aristotle's construction of how we should think about man deals chiefly with the core of human nature. For Aristotle and consequently Hannah Arendt, this core is politics. Man is a political animal and must take part in politics in order to be complete.

The polis is the space constructed for this thinking, this civic engagement. The acts of speaking together, collectively, about that which matters most to our society is at the heart of Greek philosophy. The importance of this engagement can be seen in Aristotle's work on politics, where the point of the polis is not some *Hobbesian* fear contrived format for keeping people in line, but a living organism which fosters the betterment of the people and encourages noble acts. For Aristotle, politics is not a two party war over logistics and near sighted policies, but an overall obligation for its citizens to take part in and enrich the city as a whole.

Arendt's grasp of Aristotle's polis is evident in her work on the *Origins of Totalitarianism* as the totalitarian state at its core is a destroyer of the political man. Arendt states, "Totalitarian movements are possible wherever there are masses who for one reason or another have acquired the appetite for political organization. . . . Potentially, they exist in every country and for the majority of those large numbers of neutral, politically indifferent people who never join a party and hardly ever go to the polls." (Origins 311) These are not political people, who support and uphold unrighteous totalitarian governments. These are people with failed basic human characteristics, poorly developed by civic engagement, who lack recognition of the world and human community at large. The success of Totalitarian governments relies chiefly on the eroded polis and its corrupted inhabitants.



## **Exilic Humanity's Denial of Politics**

It is this study's contention that at the heart of Arendt's contribution to the study of exile is an underlying search to understand politics in relation to humanity, and the meaning and consequence of its absence in exile. Exile is the most extreme example of corrupted politics as building on the importance of the polis, this medium is expressly denied to exiled persons. Those displaced and stateless lack an area in which to exercise their civic duties. In the denial of a place for these people, they are in essence being dehumanized. Just as exile is an extreme example of injustice for Arendt, Palestinians are an extreme example of exile today.

Palestinians today not only lack proper paperwork with which to move around in the world, they lack the legal connection to a state that would supply that paperwork. They are citizens of nowhere, with no tangible rights, unprotected from harm claimed people do not face, and left exposed to the cruel elements of political uncertainty. The hub of Palestinian humanity is missing. The soil which harbors their cultural traditions, their native tongue, and most importantly their political structure is denied to them. They in accordance with Arendt's focus on the Aristotelian Polis, lack the possibility to develop their political nature.

This denial of the basic human right to a political space is accomplished by being coupled with the denial of Palestinian existence. As a people the Palestinians are put into a sub-human category, as no respectable human would be made to tolerate such

conditions. In order to sustain the prolonged exilic mandate for Palestinians, they must be degraded and made to look less human. On the topic of Nazi propaganda Arendt states, "Lying was not enough. In order to be believed, the Nazis had to fabricate reality itself and make Jews look subhuman. So that even today, when faced by the atrocity films, common sense will say: 'But don't they look like criminals?' . . . . 'What terrible things these Jews must have done to have the Germans do this to them!'" (Essays 199)

When the human parts of people are chipped away at, it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate *friend from foe*, and consequently the tendency to be apathetic to one another predominates. It is this apathy which Totalitarian regimes rely on, and which Arendt has routinely singled out in her work. The concentration of what we do to one another when we deny other people's humanity in Arendt's work stems largely from her experience with existentialism, and chiefly one of its main proponents. Karl Jaspers as an existentialist maintains that existence precedes essence. Although Hannah Arendt may not be classified as an existentialist in the manner in which Jaspers is, she certainly was influenced by his work and philosophies.

### **Arendt's Political Existentialism and Jaspers**

Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt had a deep respect and appreciation for each other's work and thoughts. Correspondence between the two from the years 1926-1969 has been published and is extensive. "Lieber Verehrtester" or "Dear Most Honored One" is how almost all of the later letters, after their trust in each other had developed

further, written by Hannah Arendt to Karl Jaspers were addressed. For Arendt, her relationship with Jaspers was one of supreme admiration, of a mentor, a sensei. In the dedication to Jaspers of a book of hers published in Germany Arendt says, "Back then, I was sometimes tempted to imitate you, even in your manner of speech, because that manner symbolized for me a human being who dealt openly and directly with the world, a human being without ulterior motives." (Essays 214) This purity of thought and honest attempt to understand of Jaspers' was greatly admired by Arendt. Consequently his habit of initially bestowing a certain benevolence toward an idea or place was constantly challenged by Arendt's bringing of fact to his table.

The relationship between Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers began in 1926 at Heidelberg University, when she was a student of his. It is exemplified in a rare cosmic connection in which absolute truth and frankness in thought between the two. The lack of ulterior motives in Jaspers was for Arendt the best starting point from which to grow a fruitful correspondence and later friendship. In letter 34 of their published correspondence Arendt tells Jaspers,

"You speak of trust. Do you remember our last talks together in Berlin, in 1933? I did not find some of your arguments convincing, but on a human and personal level you were so utterly convincing that for many years I was, so to speak, more sure of you than I was of myself." (Correspondence 28)

It is within the protection of this trust that Arendt can reveal to Jaspers the difficulty she has had with being stateless, since they both survived the same German deluge. The reality that she was in Aristotelian essence alien everywhere permeated Arendt's writing and gave her the direction she needed to focus her life's work on Philosophy, like Jaspers, but moreover on Political Theory with specificity to the Jewish question. The correspondence between Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt also brings to light Arendt's classification of herself. She wrote foremost as an ethnic Jew, not a German, nor as a subscriber to Jewish religious beliefs. In Letter number 50 from her to Jaspers she explains her identification in this manner,

“To be perfectly honest, it doesn't matter to me in the least on a personal and individual level. . . I'd put it this way: Politically, I will always speak only in the name of the Jews whenever circumstances force me to give my nationality. . . I never felt myself, either spontaneously or at my own insistence, to 'be a German.' What remains is the language. . . .” (Correspondence 70)

It is this study's extrapolation from this comment that if the language is indeed what remains, then the conversation among people must be equally as important as it hinges on a common tongue. Consequently, where this conversation takes place is Arendt's Aristotelian polis. To lack inclusion to a polis is the essence of exile and for Arendt, the foremost attack on humanity. As Hannah felt nor German or religious Jew, she could not be tied to Germany's soil nor root herself in Israel's Jewish society. America became her home after she fled Germany and it is in that country which values

political people that Arendt feels free enough to respond to Jasper's question. She is forever stateless, regardless of legal status. All Arendt would care to remember from her life in pre-war Germany is the language and her tutelage under Jaspers. Language and knowledge rely solely on a place in which they can be learned and expressed for a purpose, namely a polis for Arendt, and nowhere for those exiled.

Speaking well about things that matter always comes at a cost, as pious political activity is a pearl of great price. The high price that Hannah Arendt paid for her insistence on such speech came with the public's reaction to the publication of her 1963 book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Detailed in the introduction by Amos Elon in the 2006 edition of *Eichmann*, "The Excommunication of Hannah Arendt" is an examination of, "*the civil war it had launched among intellectuals in the United States and in Europe. . . .*" (Eichmann vii) and, "*The attacks were often intensely personal. . . .*" In letters to Jaspers during the trial readers are able to witness the careful formulation and ever gradual formation of Arendt's argument on the nature of evil. Of this vengeful backlash Jaspers writes Arendt in Letter 332, "*Truth is beaten to death, as Kierkegaard said of Socrates and Jesus. . . . In the long run, of course, your nature will win out and shine through in triumph.*" (Correspondence 512), asserting that he would in fact be in total solidarity with his student and friend. Arendt herself responds to the accusations made of her book with, "*When people reproach me with accusing the Jewish people that is a malignant lie and propaganda and nothing else. The*

*tone of voice, however, is an objection against me personally. And I cannot do anything about that”* (Essays 16).

### **The Nature of Evil**

Emerging from the German education system and chiefly their respective time periods, both Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers were products of Immanuel Kant’s philosophies and intellect. In order to better understand how Hannah Arendt would define exile it is wise to study her concept of the nature of evil, particularly in juxtaposition with the definition of it given by Immanuel Kant. When looking at evil in a Kantian sense, we are looking at what he calls Radical Evil. The etymology of the term radical can be found in the “The German word ‘*radikal*’ derives from the Latin word ‘*radix*,’ which means ‘root’ (‘*Wurzel*’), ‘origin’ (‘*Ursprung*’), and ‘source’ (‘*Quelle*’)(Kluge 664).” (Huang 1).

For Kant, evil is essentially the willingness of man to adhere to morally offensive maxims. Humans have innately not the Christian doctrine of original sin, but a sensual and self gratifying disposition; which may be combated if not overcome, by the choosing of maxims which do not invert the moral order. Kant states, “For man, therefore, who despite a corrupted heart yet possesses a good will, there remains hope of a return to the good form which he has strayed” (Kant, Religion 39). As an end in himself and never a means to one, Kant places man’s innate disposition to choose sensual maxims over virtuous ones squarely in accordance with the ability to reason and willfully decide.

Furthermore, when one does come to the willful decision to act not in accordance with what Kant would call a morally just principal, one is doing so by harboring in the mind or sub-conscience a certain “perverted ill-will”.(Origins 459) Intent to do wrong is present then, before wrong is actually chosen.

The autonomous ability to elect one’s evil or righteous actions is expressed by Kant, and adopted by Arendt. Yet it is in the pre-election where Arendt would contend with Kant. In her knowledge of Kantian ethics and definitions of evil, she sees no example of the necessary presence of ill-will. In Adolf Eichmann she sees precisely the opposite of malicious intent, which is no intent at all, or more precisely a severely skewed reasoning for acting which does not coincide with reality. Absent in Eichmann is the ability to rationalize and think about his actions in anything more than sound bites or clichés. The evil act of sending Jews to their death was not a plan born in the malicious heart of Eichmann and carried out by his willingness to adhere to morally inverted maxims, but by the glaring opaqueness of his thought. The evil monstrosity that was the Holocaust for Arendt, was not the work of sadistic geniuses or extraordinary men. The horrors of the Third Reich were carried out by just the opposite: banal, very ordinary people who were overwhelmingly un-extraordinary. These un-extraordinary men are those Arendt deems, “bourgeois” and thinking men who have managed to hold on to their Aristotelian origins are for her, “political man.”

### **Adolf Eichmann and the “bourgeois man”**

*“... Himmler’s over-all organization relies not on fanatics, nor on congenital murderers, nor on sadist; it relies entirely upon the normality of jobholders and family men.”* (Essays 129)

Of the theory of Radical Evil, three principals which rest on the faculty of reason and man’s ability for discernment may be drawn in order to have a more concise understanding Kantian ethics. These three principals are that one should act according to the virtuous moral maxims and in doing so act solely for duty’s sake, “identify his own will with the principle behind the law—the source from which the law sprang. In Kant’s philosophy, that source was practical reason; in Eichmann’s household use of Kant, it was the will of the Fuehrer” (Eichmann 137) and lastly that people are not a means to an end but an end in themselves. Astonishingly, one of the two books Eichmann claimed to have read and live by, as Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*. Hannah Arendt, while present in the courtroom as Eichmann was on the stand, notes that in his invocation of Kantian ethics, “He then proceeded to explain that from the moment he was charged with carrying out the Final Solution he had ceased to live according to Kantian principles, that he had known it, and that he had consoled himself with the thought that he no longer ‘was master of his own deeds,’ that he was unable ‘to change anything.’” (Eichmann 136)



Eichmann's complete distortion of the Kantian principals mirrors the Nazi regime's own distortion of Kant which Arendt centers upon and describes it as the focal point as the evil banality in totalitarian regimes. *"The making of radical evil into a rule constitutes the banality of evil, subjecting it to a law that thoughtless law-abiding citizens must respect"* (Levy 35). Eichmann is the perfect prototype for banality in that he muddled the waters of understanding higher philosophical thought, failed to distinguish friend from foe, and above all else, chose blind obedience to the word of the Fuehrer as law made flesh. In every sense of the term, Eichmann is Hannah Arendt's "bourgeois" man incarnate. Reading *Eichmann in Jerusalem* closely and through the lens of Arendt's purpose, one feels a hollow fear in the innermost self when descriptions of Eichmann's routine character are given. The question that haunts throughout the work is, does he look like us?

The realization that the most dangerous of men is also the most common is startling and disquieting. Even more so disturbing, is the whispered inner certainty that knows this is true. Its validity is perfectly captured in the desperate question asked by those tried following the fall of the Third Reich, "What should I have done," or to the accuser, "What would you have done?" These questions pierce our consciences as we internally ask of ourselves, "What would I have done?" Stripped of the self serving belief that we would have been different, acted differently, been better humans, we are left

with the empty wonder of whether that is true or not. Would we truly have been different? Furthermore when given the opportunity to act differently, do we take it?

The problem of reading Arendt in a pro-Israeli state as the U.S. or in Israel itself lies in, “the difficulty of confronting, morally and politically the plight of the dispossessed Palestinians. The Palestinians bore no responsibility for the collapse of civilization in Europe but ended up being punished for it” (Eichmann viii). Arendt’s critique of the method in forming the state of Israel transformed her tremendous foresight of the crisis to come, into what many critics called instead her blaming the Jews for their easy victimization in the Holocaust. Yet when we examine Eichmann and ruthlessly pick apart, with good reason, his failed moral vision and virtue, where do the Palestinian people’s suffering surface to injure our own sense of righteousness?

As if inaction in saving Jews were not enough to morally convict Eichmann and consequently our conscience, Hannah Arendt describes this “bourgeois” man as the ultimate modern day patriarch. He puts food on the table for his family, he goes to work, pays bills, raises children, loves his wife, and enjoys ordinary pastimes. The “bourgeois” man is nothing special; he does not glitter and sparkle with other-worldliness, and does not have sadistic tendencies. Disturbingly, Arendt states that,

“It became clear that for the sake of his pension, his life insurance, the security of his wife and children, such a man was ready to sacrifice his beliefs, his honor, and his human dignity. It needed only the Satanic genius of Himmler to discover that after such degradation he was entirely prepared to do literally anything

when the ante was raised and the bare existence of his family was threatened. The only condition he put was that he should be fully exempted from responsibility for his acts.” (Essays 128)

The “bourgeois” man is your typical family guy, who routinely forgets to think. The absence of being truly present among each other and rationalizing our actions and their implications for our fellow humans brings us into this description of the “bourgeois” man. This archetype is not a Nazi German, nor is he of any other political faction, belonging to a specific historical time period or ethnicity. He falls in with any group, speaks any language, and travels among us casually, without fuss. He is a tourist nowhere, as he is truly an “international phenomenon” (Essays 129). The “bourgeois” man, who is capable of disconnecting himself so fully from the moral implications of his actions, is us?

“For many years now we have met Germans who declare that they are ashamed of being Germans. I have often felt tempted to answer that I am ashamed of being human. . . . Since then peoples have learned to know one another better and learned more and more about the evil potentialities in men. . . They instinctively felt that the idea of humanity, . . . implies the obligation of a general responsibility when they do not wish to assume.” (Essays 131)

### **On Stateless Persons and Navigating through the Evil of Exile**

If people themselves are ordinary and have a definite propensity toward electing evil, and are increasingly unaware of their political nature, then it is no wonder why in exile,

Aristotle's polis so desperately needs resurrecting. Arendt is correct in stating that, "The fundamental political reality of our time is determined by two facts: on the one hand, it is based upon "nations" and on the other, it is permanently disturbed and thoroughly menaced by "nationalism." (Essays 207). Our humanity for Arendt, hinges upon our opportunities to take part and be established and rooted in a political state. To be human is to be political, and it is by virtue of its nature, impossible in exile. The inexorable link between man and politics is mercilessly eroded by the denial of a person's right to belong to a state. As man's political activity is born and matures in polis activity, the absence of such a center effectively nullifies what it means to be human. Without place, without grounds on which to steady ourselves we are but shells of what we should be. The most dangerous aspect of this absence of productive and complete humanity is that without the polis, the banality found in Eichmann flourishes. Evil grows in exile, and exile is formed from lives left unexamined.

Of the migrants fleeing after WWI Arendt states,

[they] "were welcomed nowhere and could be assimilated nowhere. Once they had left their homeland they remained homeless, once they had left their state they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth." (Origins 267)

Arendt herself is an authority on statelessness as it is from this position which she wrote the majority of her work and lived the greater part of her life. In effect Hannah Arendt was both politically and spiritually exiled. In her political exile from

Germany, Arendt took refuge in the United States. From there she wrote and explored those concepts of place which were expressly denied to her. Yet Arendt is more a citizen of the world than most could ever dream of being; with her characteristic ability to see what is not shown and understand the most complex issues with great precision. It is in her spiritual exile that Arendt struggles professionally and personally. Wrestling with what it means to be an exiled intellectual German-Jew, she sees Eichmann and bourgeois people like him as exiled from their humanity.

The manner in which Arendt attempts to navigate out of this spiritual exile is by finding refuge in the academic discipline of politics. Aristotle's polis is painstakingly reconstructed brick by brick in Arendt's work. The polis as central to human life and purpose hinges on man's political nature. The vessel which guided this journey was her deep connection with Karl Jaspers and their years of communication. Arendt created for herself, that which could not be given tangibly, a literary polis. In this place Arendt constructs a methodology for the type of reasoning that is to be done, and establishes how the process of understanding politics is to be approached. It is by expressing herself and being certain that her thoughts are being accepted and validated by Jaspers that Arendt is able to ground herself in a soil all her own. Out of exile Arendt creates existence. This idea of a literary polis is a recurring phenomenon in those who have been politically and physically exiled. The mind's formulations of theories, of possible

avenues from which to understand make a fertile land on which exiled persons may stand.

### **Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility**

*"We are all guilty, nobody in the last analysis can be judged."* (Essays 126)

From the dangerous realm of ideological –isms which are pregnant with hatred and possible catastrophes, come the concepts of organized guilt and universal responsibility. These –isms go hand in hand with blind acceptance of those who are told to believe in them. The most grotesque acts carried out by otherwise harmless people are built on these, *"... race theories and other modern ideologies which preach that might is right. . . ."* (Essays 126). The guilt falls on us all, not only those who specifically carry out evil actions. Inaction and silence are necessary for the success of evil, and are undeniably linked to the exilic experience. Examples of this quiet accomplice in malevolence are seen quite clearly in the men present at the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942 and those who were on board the Enola Gay in August 6, 1945.

The Wannsee Conference was the designated planning center for the Third Reich's final solution to the Jewish question. Reinhard Heydrich headed the meeting where fifteen men decided the fate of thousands of Jews. Fifteen men who knew what the final solution would mean, who were not deceived by the word games previously played in official circles. These fifteen men openly accepted and coordinated the success of the final solution. Not one protested. Not one hesitated. As a very ordinary matter of

course, the plan was drawn up, the minutes meticulously recorded by Adolf Eichmann, and the entire matter settled fairly quickly. Now, Kant would say that these men having been conscience persons, elected knowingly the perverted moral maxim.

History would call these men evil geniuses, who masterminded with sheer malice the extermination of Jews. Yet, actual records and Arendt would disagree. These men, according to Arendt, did not possess Kant's concept of an ill-will, nor did were they endowed with extraordinary qualities or mental capacities. These men simply did not protest and that is all. Their bourgeois banality weighed more than any human connection, or moral maxim.

In parallel, Paul Tibbets, the pilot who flew the atomic bomb carrying Enola Gay over Japan, was expressly aware of what he was doing. His crew knew the nature of the weapon they were carrying and could imagine the havoc it would wreak on Japanese society. They knew a version of the bomb had been tested, and were aware of its magnitude and power. Furthermore the men on board the Enola Gay knew they were dropping this weapon on civilians and not their armed military enemy. They knew, yet they did not protest. Instead they followed orders, they positioned themselves carefully in the history of evil and let "little boy" drop on the people of Hiroshima. In 2005 after a lifetime of explaining and defending his actions, Tibbets said in an interview, "If you gave me the same circumstances, I'd do it again" (BBC News Online). It is difficult to assess another man's reasoning, and impossible to know the depths of his heart, yet the

unrelenting grasp that Paul Tibbets had on his actions even after living long enough to see its disastrous consequences makes one wonder about the possibility of Kant's ill-will in conjunction with Arendt's concept of the banality of evil...

"It is consequently almost impossible for us Jews today not to ask any German we happen to meet: What did you do in the twelve years from 1933 to 1945? And behind that question lie two unavoidable feelings: a harrowing uneasiness at placing on another human being the inhuman demand to justify his existence and the lurking suspicion that one is face to face with someone who worked in a death factory. . . ." (Essays 214)

Oftentimes, after the smoke clears and the reality of what occurred presents itself, we are left with the guilt. Perhaps it is in the same matured generation, but mostly it is the next generation which grapples with the mistakes of those they should have been able to emulate. Post war Germany is highly representative of this phenomenon, of organized guilt. Those who were children, spouses, and even cultural descendants of Nazis often have to learn to draw personal distinctions of the person they knew and loved, and the person who was part of the mass murder that was the Third Reich. Similarly there is a definite weight to be felt when travelling abroad into territories directly affected from your mother country's violence.

Take for example an American, (Hoye), sitting around a dinner table attempting to find common ground with newly acquired Japanese friends and associates, asking



each other casually their family origin or hometown. If the answer is Hiroshima or Nagasaki, the ensuing awkward silence is most likely the product of recognizing that across the table is a descendant of your own country's massacre.

The only hope of combating the moral defeat of entire generations lies in that generation, or individual's decision to resist the temptation to self exempt, and to learn from the past. The thought that one could never be capable of atrocities of that measure and that they would have acted differently without any doubt, denies Arendt's illustration of the banality in evil. If we cannot see that quite possibly, we would not have been much different, that turning into "bourgeois" people makes us capable of anything, then we are gravely mistaken (Essays 132). To fight off organized guilt, people must reconcile themselves to the idea of universal responsibility and hold close the fear in what they could be if they become "bourgeois."

### **Heart of the Matter**

"The proclamation of human rights was also meant to be a much-needed protection in the new era where individuals were no longer secure in the estates to which they were born or sure of their equality before God as Christians. . . . Since the Rights of Man were proclaimed to be 'inalienable,' irreducible to and uneducable from other rights or laws, no authority was invoked for their establishment; Man himself was their source as well as their ultimate goal" (Origins 291).

Based upon careful readings of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*, and an appreciation for the correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers from 1926-1969, it is found that the focus of Arendt's work is the lifetime attempt to understand politics and what it means for humanity. It is this study's conclusion that Arendt's contribution to the attempt at a richer understanding of exile is best explained by Arendt's understanding of the political nature of man, and the inherent need to belong and express himself in a polis. The Aristotelian polis is where politics take place, and where in active engagement man realizes his humanity. The denial of this polis, by way of exile, is the denial of being human.

Exile is the most extreme example of a denial of polis, lack of politics, and corrupted humanity. This great evil is founded upon Arendt's understanding of Kant's notion of Radical Evil, and her contention with the necessary ill-will factor. For Arendt, the application of Kant's Radical Evil does not need a preceding intention to be evil, it actually requires no intention at all. For the most evil of circumstances to be possible, it takes banal, bourgeois people who are not connected with their own political natures. Stripped of their polis, exiled people are left stateless, rightless, and defenseless. As exemplified in Arendt's work, evil can be both physical and spiritual. Arendt herself lived both exilic experiences. Physically exiled from fascist Germany under Hitler, Arendt sought refuge in the United States. Spiritually exiled from her Jewish-German identity,

she sought refuge in the literary polis. This literary polis, which was built bit by bit from the conversations between Arendt and Jaspers, became her place.

Exile is the product of dramatically unprecedented events only possible in banality. Banality breeds itself and flourishes in the “bourgeois” person who does not think. The common man, who goes through life day by day with only the regard and appreciation for those and that around him which directly ail or benefit him. Banality is quiet and dangerous. For Arendt is it the avenue through which the horrors of the Third Reich traveled, and the “bourgeois” man who made them possible. There are lessons to be learned from Arendt’s understanding of politics, as well as evil, and the concept of its banality greatly contributes to a better understanding of exile. By looking at ourselves through the lens Arendt provides for us, we can see ourselves as in danger of losing ourselves to banality. Also we see the awful consequences that arise from that banality when it facilitates evil acts. To understand exile we must learn to see ourselves in Arendt’s mirror.

There is the great but necessary weight that is placed on us as people to find our common denominator with our fellow humans, so that collectively guilt may fall upon our shoulders. Once it does, we are to understand one another as we understand ourselves and feel for one another, what our own flesh would feel. We must see exile for what Arendt explains it to be; which is the denial of a person’s polis, from which their humanity originates. Seeing Exile as the greatest evil, for in essence it is a denial of

a person's place and humanity, we must be aware of the contemporary face of exile, which is most dramatically expressed in Palestine. If there is ever an end to this exiled life for Palestinians, if we ever make it past this evil, we will ask one another as Jews to Germans, "What did you do in the twelve years between 1933-1945?" (Essays 214) It will be our silent question, where were you in all this mess? What did you do with the exiled?

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of exile, by reflecting on the exilic experiences of four political and literary artists and what exile looks like to them. The denial of person's polis is what exile looks like for Arendt. Woven between the threads of her experience with Aristotle, Kant, and Jaspers, we see her understanding of politics. It is politics above all else on which humanity hinges for Arendt. For the clearer understanding of exile, we get politics from Arendt, and the dimensions of her own physical and spiritual exilic experiences. This denied polis will be at the center of this study's understanding of the exilic experiences of three more artists: Suheir Hammad, Max Aub, and Natsume Soseki.

### CHAPTER III

#### SUHEIR HAMMAD: WRITING TO TELL THE FLUID NARRATIVE OF EXILED PALESTINIANS

*it is written  
the act of writing is  
holy words are  
sacred and your breath  
brings out the  
god in them  
i write these words  
quickly repeat them  
softly to myself  
this talisman for you  
fold this prayer  
around your neck fortify  
your back with these  
whispers  
may you walk ever  
loved and in love  
know the sun  
for warmth the moon  
for direction  
may these words always  
remind you your breath  
is sacred words  
bring out the god  
in you*

- *Talisman*, Suheir Hammad

In Arabic Suheir means “lover of the night. The name is derived from an extinct flower that bloomed nocturnally and once fragranced eastern skies.” (drops 48)The poet

Suheir Hammad, like the night flower and the moon, expertly guides her audience into her poetry and invites them to make her words their own. Suheir's sister's name, Sabrine, translates into the Arabic "we will wait," and indeed Hammad and her family have lived a life of waiting. Applied to the topic of exile, both names provide a glimpse into the exilic experience. Living and waiting in darkness are both characteristics of exile; therefore, it would be exceedingly difficult to overestimate the insight Hammad could provide for better understanding the concept of exile. As romantic as the translations of these two sister's names may seem, the realities behind waiting in darkness are much different. For those exiled, the unknown is their everyday and uncertainty is their constant. Darkness implies an absence of light, an absence of hope. In darkness it is exceedingly difficult to navigate though paths that would lead to freedom and independence. It is the challenge of those exiled to either become lovers of the night and attempt to travel through it, or to find a safe spot and wait there for action to be taken. Both names carry with them paths to successful human placement and release from exile, yet are different in their very natures. Perhaps the time of waiting has passed. Perhaps the exiled people who have lived their lives, sometimes for generations, in darkness must now learn to walk through and toward their own place.

### **Blended Cultural Rhythms and the Poetry of Exile**

Suheir Hammad is a Palestinian Poet. She was born in a refugee camp in Jordan on October 25, 1973, and is the child of exiled Palestinian parents from 1967. Both

located in the Tel Aviv area, her father is from Lydd and mother from Ramleh. (Knopf-Newman 73) Hammad describes herself as being, "From Brooklyn by way of Palestine" and writes of her ancestral exile. This self imposed introduction provides the path taken by Suheir Hammad through the darkness of her family's exile. She comes from Palestine and to there she is headed; and the place that props her up and steadies her steps has been Brooklyn. Her poetry is rich with symbolism, has purpose and direction, and is current in all respects. This journey through darkness is fragranced by Hammad's writing. As her poetry moves slowly from her own place in Brooklyn, to her family's ancestral Palestine, the scents of the night flowers provide the quiet certainty that this journey is just and this narrative necessary. Hammad writes in a Brooklyn tongue which is lyrical in nature, and laced with fluid Arabic cultural references.

Often the words she uses when she writes are what would be academically considered slang and her style not grammatically correct or consistent. Her vernacular is that of a Palestinian Brooklynite and the dichotomy of what that looks like. Hammad writes of the street smells of her childhood from Puerto Rican to Middle Eastern foods to sour garbage on New York streets. She also describes dancing to Caribbean and Middle Eastern rhythms which fill her with a home within an immigrant homeland and serve to include her in the cultural moving of often refugee societies. In her poetry Hammad calls out for Palestine and longs for a land she has never felt beneath her feet. Her family's history, her language, and her culture, all breathe the breath of Palestine.

What Hammad's poetry can contribute to the existing conversation on exile is valuable. In the attempt to bring more precision to the understanding of the concept of exile, Hammad should be considered a main contributor as her understanding of the displaced Palestinian experience comes firsthand from her parents, and other family but also her own unique handling of this journey through darkness. Having been born in a refugee camp, her very life began in exile. What different an experience she might have had, had her family not been forced to leave Palestine. Her poetry and prose are still lyrical but perhaps no longer include the street or Caribbean cultures that it does now. How different her life might have been had she grown up in Palestine, instead of Brooklyn. Grown up amongst her family's own olives... Exile has altered Hammad's place in the world. However, through her story and this alteration, Hammad is able to connect with her audience, explain her feelings in such a way as to make others feel as she does. For the missing place in Hammad's life and all the reality and emotions that go with it are uncensored and accessible to anyone who reads her work.

### **Writing the Exilic Experience**

Fluid and free flowing as her own poetry is the metaphor of liquid found in her memoir, *Drops of This Story*. In this work Hammad invites us in to experience the constant reality of her experience. Her story is one which comes in different forms, from different sides, and in different intensities. The liquid narrative is described as large drops that fall like tears, and rain that pelts and mercilessly injures the body exposed to



the elements. It is sheer and only vaguely present at times and at others it is sharp and painful. Through Hammad's narrative, the story of a people's exilic experience is written. In her work *Born Palestinian Born Black* Hammad provides a collection of poems that do not apologize for being political and critical of the exile which Palestinians today face. This poetry comes in connection to Hammad's view of the interconnectedness of people and culture.

*Born Palestinian Born Black* provides an entryway into Palestinian culture without the prerequisite of being ethnically Palestinian. Since through various other plights people are able to move freely, once they understand, from culture to culture whether they be Palestinian, Black, or any other ethnicity. In *Breaking Poems* Hammad describes the brokenness of so many concepts and how they experience their individual wreckages. Titles such as *Break : (her, bayou, vitality, rebirth, for love, water, transition, sister, history, mirror)* all serve as the blueprints to piecing together what has been shattered. At the end of the book Hammad explains that there is, "no resolution at the end. There is no end." (Breaking 62) Consequently Suheir Hammad's work should be read in the way *Breaking Poems* should be. Her work must be understood as a continuous journey, traveling now through the Palestinian people, and perhaps later through others who find refuge in her poems. The story of exile is not exclusive; sadly it is decided inclusive, enveloping in its injustice many cultures and crossing over any temporal boundaries.

### **The Narrative of Exile, and the Story that Must be Told**

“There’s this story that comes down to me all the time, wet. It don’t come down like some big old rain storm, with thunder and lightning. . . .The kind of wet I’m talking about is the annoying, frustrating wet that barely manages to layer the concrete, yet somehow frizzes my hair into one big bush. The kind of teasing wet that seems to serve no other purpose than to let you know it’s there. You know the type. It makes you look stupid to hold an umbrella and has people arguing over whether or not it’s really raining.” (Drops 3)

Like the mist of light rain, the story of Suheir Hammad’s Palestine festers and demands to be told. Born to refugee parents of the 1967 Palestinian Diaspora, Hammad is a direct product of brokenness. Technically not a camp girl, she was born in a state not her own, and raised in a city absent of her ancestry. Tellingly, the first memories Hammad is able to recollect are of explosions in Beirut where her sister Sabrine was born. Exile does just that to families, it brings forth their future generations into strange lands, under foreign skies, and scars their memories with injuries to their very history. It is in these memories marked with death, futures must form. In the scars of displacement people must dig shallow holes in which to plant their lives. But the tales told around family tables are always stained by remembrance of injustice and tinged through the lens of frustration. For Hammad it is the literal displacement from a

people's homeland which is the most precise explanation and has the most severe consequences.

Suheir Hammad's memoir *Drops of This Story* has a constant rhythmic motion, fluid like so many of the forms exile takes. At times the drops that come into contact with Hammad are salted tears, painful side sweeping rain that pelts her body as it were made of bullets and not water. Other times the liquid running down Hammad is warm and iron filled, the blood of Palestine. Everything in *Drops of This Story* is soaked, from Suheir's thick curls to and down to her bones. The wetness enters through her pores and manifests itself in the dreams she has of her past relatives spirits. She is wet by her uncle who bore the family name, Hammad, as his own first name. "My father's wet breath orders me to write a story about my paternal grandfather. He died not even a month after the death of Hammad. Died of a broken heart over the murder of a son. . . I know that his son is with me. Hammad whispers his presence in the night. . . ." (Drops 42)

His memory takes Suheir Hammad into mountains to overlook with him the sea their family swam in. "This is the story I was born to write. The story of my uncle, *ami* Hammad. At eighteen he was killed by Israeli soldiers, like too many other young men. Young men who preferred to die in the name of freedom than live a denied existence." (Drops 33) These overlook the now occupied territories that Soraya, the protagonist portrayed by Suheir Hammad, sees as she sits and tries to imagine herself swimming in

the sea her grandfather did. These incarnations are dramatic for Hammad and provide direction and justification for the writing of Palestine's exilic narrative. (Salt)

The drops travel through the pages as they do through the body. "Colorful drops slip into my ear and travel down to my heart, where they wreck havoc on my system."

(Drops 4) Flowing down into her soul until they reach the hips that sway to melodious, transnational beats; the dancing continues until all that's left is, "a floor that needs to be mopped up with the pages of a book." (Drops 5) Indeed the only material strong enough to absorb the type of liquid humanity that Hammad is describing is the written, tangible narrative. The need for a written narrative runs parallel to Hammad's contribution to the study of exile. As the narrative needs to be physically written and put down on paper by hands who write with purpose, so must a people have a physical place of their own from which to write. The exile Hammad writes about is as literal as it is fluid and as stationary as it is transcendent. People must have a place where they can write poetry about the liquid of their lives, as the denial of this physical place is the equivalent to a spiritual drought and leads to death. Nothing can live without the wetness of narrative, where there is no rain as story; there can be no sustenance, no life.

In the pages of her memoir, Hammad tells of how from very early on she found refuge in reading. She took cover under the pages of books at night during her childhood and savored words ensuring they would still be there molding her years later. She became a writer in essence because she was a young reader. Further inspiration

came when she learned that her favorite writers, authors, poets, were all readers themselves. “Wet my thirst for knowledge as I went through book after book. By the time I graduated elementary school, I’d read most of Shakespeare’s works. . . . I read everything I could get my hands on. Before I knew of Alice Walker and Langston Hughes, I was reading the backs of cereal boxes.” (Drops 50-51) *Drops of this Story* is a written painting of the impact literature has when coupled with ancestry. The liquid that flows through Hammad’s poetry is composed of Abdel-Halem, Audre Lorde, El Hajj Malek el-Shabazz, Malcom X, Tolstoy, and Sam Cooke. This thirst for knowledge and true love of the text makes Hammad one who must write to live. For Hammad, the letters, words, narratives, rhythmic poetry, all must be rooted in a particular place in order to grow.

Within her personal narrative Hammad is writing from a very specific perspective. “So I felt this need to document what I saw and to always do it from this very specific perspective as the daughter of Palestinian refugees, but to understand that my Puerto Rican and Haitian and Italian and Jewish neighbors were part of my story.” (Knopf-Newman 79) In this way Suheir Hammad reflects in part the view of identification also expressed by Hannah Arendt. Arendt states,

“To be perfectly honest, it doesn’t matter to me in the least on a personal and individual level. . . I’d put it this way: Politically, I will always speak only in the name of the Jews whenever circumstances force me to give my nationality. . . I never felt myself, either spontaneously or at my own insistence, to ‘be a German.’ What remains is the language. . . .” (Correspondence 70)

She is in essence mirroring this concept in Suheir Hammad's work that the pin pointing and isolating of a particular framework in order to classify a person does not always fit, and does not in both their cases.

The main difference between Arendt and Hammad here is that Hammad is willing and thoroughly determined to write from a Palestinian woman's perspective. Arendt attempts to escape both labels of Jewish and German, but essentially recognizes that politically she is writing from a Jewish perspective, but the language is all that is left of her German ethnicity or nationality. The blurring of categorical lines in Arendt and Hammad make them experts in pulling in other refugee and displaced groups. "So I didn't have that initial kind of Arab American writer's reality of being in white suburbia or people not really knowing what you were. I was a part of colored kids who were being taught by white teachers." (Knopf-Newman 79)

In her published works, Hammad writes of herself, and her experiences, thoughts and uncensored emotions. She composes her stanzas carefully, artfully, to reflect a particular aspect of Palestinian exile, of human exile. While modest in volume, Hammad's works reveal what exile feels, looks, and tastes like. Reality is not spared and suffering is exposed for those brave enough to read. In *The Gaza Suit* Hammad dedicates five poems directly to Gaza and the situation there. Hammad also has reserved in journals poetry and prose she states will never be published; as these are her most intimate writings. Believing in this privacy Hammad would set fire to her

journals than have them leaked or read even after her death. (One on One) For her, there are aspects of oneself that no one else should ever have access to. Her poetry then is not a form of self medication or public therapy. Having described reading works that are therapeutic for the author as making her feel abused, Hammad writes to explain and explore, not to deal with. In explaining and exploring the topic most centered upon in Hammad's work is Palestine. The beginning of her poem *Argela Remembrance* Hammad writes:

*"we are a people*

*Stood on the edge of the sea*

*Asked her to kiss our toes goodnight*

*She kissed them goodbye*

*We departed. . . ." (Born 38)*

Hammad's story is the story of displaced Palestinians like her maternal grandfather, "who for forty years, refused to buy a home, 'cause he just knew he was gonna go home tomorrow.'" (Drops 41) It is this insistence on resisting the injustice of Palestinian exiles that provide Hammad with the words she needs to tell her people's story. It is her very history which flows from her poetry and that history is drenched in exile. As people from a particular history, for Hammad, the soil of a place creates a human. The lack of soil is a denial of a people's history, of their culture, their language, their custom, cuisine, and very essence. Exile from Palestine is at the heart of Suheir

Hammad's work and at the forefront of what her contribution to better defining exile will be. The forced removal of Palestinians from their homes and consequently their lives is the utmost example of the deepest injury that could be done to humanity, exile. To deny a people a soil is to deny them their humanity. The earth that harbored their ancestral customs, their history and way of life is ripe with the fruit of the persons who labored over it for generations. For Hammad there is no greater insult than exile.

### **Dancing Salsa to an Arabic Rhythm in Brooklyn**

"Colorful drops slip into my ear and travel down to my heart, where they wreck havoc on my system. I tell you I've never been addicted to any type of drug. Ever. I never had to be. I'm addicted to music. I get high off the beat. Any kind of beat. These drops hum Sam Cooke to me, while a Public Enemy riff beats the background of my brain. They order me to write about Abdel-Halem Hafez, and how I finally learned my parents' language at seventeen, just so I could understand his songs. I fell in love with his songs and translations ain't no good. English is deficient in the language of love, translations ain't no good." (Drops 4)

The adherence to music in Suheir Hammad's life can best be experienced by hearing her speak her poetry. On stage, the power of her words booms with the cultural influences that surrounded her Brooklyn upbringing. Her accent, her fire onstage all project from her exiled experience in Brooklyn. Brooklyn itself being a land of immigrants, Hammad grew up smelling the, "delicious stinks of the ghetto," her



“apartment building was always swaying with the smells of the East, the Caribbean and the South” (Drops 6). The uniqueness that growing up in the United States and in the heart of Brooklyn moreover, brings to Hammad’s understanding of exile is undeniable. Living in the tough, diverse urban environment that was Brooklyn contrasted greatly at times with Hammad’s home life. She was raised in a home that was mindful of religion but not strictly orthodox.

Traditional in practice, she narrowly escaped an arranged marriage. Hammad recalls eating typical Palestinian foods while her peers ate what was commonly accepted. “Why couldn’t we just eat pancakes and bacon like everybody else? We had to have olives at every meal and pita bread with everything. I know now that I always loved that food. It’s just hard to be different all the time.” (Drops 51) Suheir Hammad’s father especially played an important role in shaping her poetry and world view. At home she was taught that the Quran is divine poetry and the value of Palestinian national songs. However there was no support in American or Arab framework for a woman poet when Hammad was growing up. Her career choice of being a writer, over the medical doctor her father favored, caused some turmoil, but Suheir Hammad is every bit a literary artist as there ever was.

“These stories are one. Our story. We who believed graffiti was art. We knew our vernacular to be language as sophisticated and romantic as any other. We were fly and knew it, Brooklyn style. We fought and killed each other. Had babies and

got beat up. We were never allowed outside, always under lock down. We ate  
pernil and stuffed grape leaves. Danced salsa and recited Quran for the dead.  
We worshiped Orisha by the church choir.” (Drops intro)

What connects readers to Hammad’s poetry is the personal and what she deems specific. Hammad does not write in general, vague, or opaque terms. Her words are selected carefully, emotionally and politically charged, and deeply personal. It is this connection to her own words that binds her audience to her work. Her poetry, especially when verbally recited, mirrors the beats of hip hop and is layered with the melody of classic genres. It was Hammad’s father that introduced her to the music of Sam Cooke and taught her to appreciate rhythms outside the urban setting of her immediate surroundings. It is for this reason that Hammad was such a success in Russell Simmons’ HBO series Def Poetry Jam. The “Godfather of Hip Hop” must have been so struck by the power in Hammad’s spoken poetry that he featured her on his series on multiple occasions.

Perhaps Hammad’s best known work stems from the time in her life that is forever etched in America’s memory. Her poem titled *First Writing Since* (See Appendix), was written just a week after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the Twin Tower in New York. Hammad was almost not included in Def Poetry Jam because at the moment of casting she did not have a reel to send to producers. However, after *First Writing Since* circled the globe like a wild epidemic, and was translated into 12 languages,

Hammad was featured; reel or no reel. She believes the success of *First Writing Since* came because, “People needed to hear something from America that wasn’t vengeful.” This powerful piece of prose remains as current today as it was in 2001.

The story of Hammad’s exilic experience begins with a refugee birth and grows into a life of longing for her family’s place. In the midst of September 11<sup>th</sup> she was reminded again that she will always be an “other” even in the safe constraints of Brooklyn, she was always an immigrant, and never a resident. Suheir Hammad’s experience with the constant “otherness” that exiles are subjected to reflects her contribution to this study. It is having roots in a particular place where your people’s culture grows that is being denied by exile.

### **Writing in the Context of Refugees**

In writing herself and the Palestinian people into existence Hammad must also confront her own privileges. Having in her possession an American passport gives her pseudo access to her homeland. She may visit the place of her family’s birth, albeit with some difficulty, but she may enter. Having read Western works and having an Eastern framework from which to understand them, she is a unique link between today’s America and historical Palestine. Hammad also recognizes the privilege that comes from having a New Yorker accent and not an Arabic one. Also, she is not veiled. This she acknowledges in her interview with (One on One) as a real separation from Arabic women who by veiling cannot have the liberty she has. For Hammad her poetry and

work opens doors. Never having thought she'd even leave Brooklyn, and now she is a traveling political activist with a focus on feminism, human rights, and above all the plight of the Palestinian people. In her travels she insists you must, "go with undiluted poetry" (One on One) as it is in the personal connection with the art that it succeeds in penetrating the audience's world. Unfortunately Hammad's travels have also reiterated her place of "other" within the United States. She recalls leaving the states, and no longer having to brace herself to defend her ethnicity.

The all too common and current issue of Islamaphobia in the United States serves to isolate Muslim communities in which many identify with their ancestry and with being Americans. If there is a demonization of an entire group it is easier to close one's eyes to their plight. In the denials and misunderstandings, cultures become lost in translation. "I don't think it's an inherent deficiency in the English language as much as I think it's the horrific abundance of true fear, authentic fear that we're living with [something] that no language has words for." (Knopf-Newman 75) There are no words equivalents in today's America's immediate recollection of anything like dispossession. Hammad recounts a story of meeting a well meaning woman who asked her, in order to clarify, if there was a word in Arabic for "Thank you". She had been told that there was no such word in the Arabic language. Floored by the questions and by their even farther reaching implications Hammad says, "...this idea that within our own languages we do

not have compassion or civilization. That's what it comes down to: who is and is not civilized and what civilization means." (Knopf-Newman 75)

As Jews in Nazi Germany and in circulating propaganda were dehumanized and made to look more like criminals and animals than people, so are Arabs today. They are seen as suicide bombers, terrorists, and extremists first and not people with lives that contain love, art, politics, or anything else which would make them like us. As a people they must be exiled from the realms of civilized human behaviors in order to be cast away and successfully forgotten. They cannot be us. They must be the others. Over there cannot be over here. "The first time I heard the word intifada. How beautiful it sounded rolling off my tongue. Ain't no word in English equivalent to this one. Intifada means fever. The type of fever which releases a long sickness." (Drops 59)

There are times when the language of the host country in which exiled people live is deficient. Where there is no common "ground" or place, little understanding can be had easily. One has to search the word's history and meaning, cultural usage and symbolism. In America today, intifada sounds like dangerous Arab holy wars, violence, and extreme demonstrations of rebellion. There is not a word for this type of fever, because America today does not reconcile itself to the idea that exile is interconnected and not something foreign and obscure. Common within this context of refugees,

Hammad also zeros in on the failed American response to its own catastrophe, Hurricane Katrina. In her poem *On Refuge and Language* Hammad writes:

I do not wish  
to place words in living mouths  
or bury the dead dishonorably  
I am not deaf to cries escaping shelters  
that citizens are not refugees  
refugees are not Americans  
I will not use language  
one way or another  
to accommodate my comfort  
I will not look away  
no peoples ever chose to claim status of dispossessed  
no peoples want pity above compassion  
no enslaved peoples ever called themselves slaves  
what do we pledge allegiance to?  
A government that leaves its old  
to die of thirst surrounded by water  
is a foreign government  
.  
.  
.  
.  
I think of my grandparents  
and how some called them refugees  
others called them nonexistent  
they called themselves landless  
which means homeless  
before the hurricane  
no tents were prepared for the fleeing  
because Americans do not live in tents  
tents are for Haiti for Bosnia for Rwanda  
refugees are the rest of the world  
.  
.  
.  
.

In the continued aftermath of Katrina, many of America's own became refugees. Those who looked away made them nonexistent. Left landless and homeless these people were exiled without having left the boundaries of the country exiling them. For

Hammad, this tangible absence of place is exiles' most crippling characteristic. When one thinks of exile, domestic occurrences are often not what comes to mind. In keeping with Hammad's view however, exile is present wherever there are people with no place. When uprooted from a particular place, people cease to be complete people. They are incomplete in their lack of a soil on which to steady their feet.

Also Hammad uses the Katrina disaster as a method of demonstrating the failed nationalist state. Suheir is calling into question the traditional definitions of a Nation-State, particularly the governments within. Questions of legitimacy decorate Hammad's poetry. "We need to rethink what we think are nation-states and what nationalism is." (One on One) If injustice is rampant and governments uphold and protect it, or worse look the other way and ignore it, then they are for Hammad foreign governments. A legitimate political structure would reserve the right for people to be grounded in a particular place, which is the opposite of exile. Legitimate governments could not be bystanders to exiled persons. Hammad also calls for the questioning of Nationalism. Nationalism implies an exclusive oneness and single experience of a whole. This does not align with Hammad's outlook; for her there, "is no monolithic experience, even in Ramallah. " (One on One)

This critique of nationalism is also an echo back to Hannah Arendt's prototype of the "bourgeois man." In a blind nation-state filled with people who adhere to restricted nationalism art cannot flourish. With no place poetry cannot be written, and, "on an

individual level people aren't dancing. . . . You live your life on a daily level with only a percentage of your creativity used. So this idea that within Israeli, Palestinian, American society, we are all trying to make ends meet, keep our children safe, get an education that will give us the upper hand, you know, in any situation, and we are losing our souls." (Knopf-Newman 87) In accepting exile, humanity ceases to be human, to dance and souls are lost.

### **Holding Reflections Responsible**

"I fundamentally believe an artist holds up a mirror to her societies." (Knopf-Newman 85) In *On Refuge and Language*, Hammad is doing just that. In the whole of her work she is holding up a mirror to humanity, not specifically Americans or Jews or the international community as a vague whole. She calls us to be a collective "us" and take responsibility over one another's exile. The two points of correcting Islamophobia, and apathy in our society today comes at a time when Hammad is urging her audience to look beyond the checked boxes of ethnicity. Speaking of the sheer magnitude in comparison with the Warsaw Ghetto Wall, the structure around the Palestinian city of Abu Dies near East Jerusalem separates them from the Israeli municipalities that surround; Hammad says, "It's two o' clock in the afternoon and there's no light. There's no horizon. I mean, you just think about kids who are growing up with no horizon. What does that mean? And what happens when that Wall comes down? Who



are those kids going to be? And who are they going to be to you? And most importantly, to your own safety, who are you going to be to them?" (Knopf-Newman 86)

The impact of exile can be felt, as Suheir Hammad is an example of, for generations. The loss of a place does not disappear with residence in a new one. The new location will be forever foreign, and you a foreigner. Growing and maturing in the exilic experience has no option but to alter dramatically the formation of young lives and fuels resentments. Children of the camps that grow with the knowledge that they are in a temporary structure are never able to create or attach themselves to any roots. Poets are hard to come by when survival is at the forefront of your family's agenda. The very nourishment taken in by displaced bodies is foreign. They did not grow this food. They did not plant or harvest any grain. For how can one harvest with no soil?

### **Growing One's Own Olives**

*"I clean cucumbers and mint in the rivers that carry this story. Wash the mint for tea, and the cucumber for salad. My hands decorated with henna in the design of figs and mangos. Wash in the rivers that carry to the mouth of the earth. The center of the universe. God. Woman. The rivers carry the monthly blood of the earth, cleansing herbs and vegetable, flowing from my bloodstream. That which cleanses me." (Drops 52)*

In the film, *Salt of this Sea* we follow the protagonist Soraya, played by Suheir Hammad on her journey from Brooklyn to Ramallah. We watch as she is harassed and

humiliated in Israel's airport. We learn that her Arab name Soraya Tehani, weighs much more than her American passport. We also follow Soraya into her family's Palestine, or what is left of it. Soraya is asked in the airport scene, "where was your grandfather from? Why did he leave?" Frustrated she responds, "What answer would you like to hear that would allow me in?" For these Israeli airport employees it seems that descendents of 1948 Palestinians are a threat to their own narrative. Soraya gathers throughout the film that while descendents of 1967 Palestinians are also a threat, they do receive a sort of different treatment.

The Arabic name Soraya gives reference to the Pleiades Constellation, and in the film she could be viewed as a star in the night of Palestine's sky. Soraya's character is overcome throughout the film with conflicting emotions of love for the land she is in and indignation that she is only permitted to enter carved out spaces of it. What Soraya struggles for in *Salt of this Sea* is the right to experience. Her family was born in the land she visits and although she finds their actual home still standing it is occupied. She falls for a Palestinian man named Emad, which translates into the Arabic pillar or support. Emad explains to Soraya that she will never be allowed in, that "they" have won. She will only ever be a tourist in her own country. Hence, both Soraya and Emad are living exiled lives. Soraya's visa shortly expires, preventing her to stay because she has no legal Palestinian passport. Emad lives exiled in Ramallah, as being caged in to the city limits. The world has forgotten them both.

Freedom of movement is characteristic of exile, as is longing. Suheir Hammad expresses her desire to grow her own olives through Soraya's adherence to Palestinian soil. Palestinian oranges, grown under Palestinian skies do not taste as sweet on the lips of those exiled than they did on their past generations. This love for Palestine is as strong in Soraya as it is in Hammad. "I write of longing for a land I have yet to feel under my feet. . . .The call to and from Palestine and her love, that is the command that automatically straightens my back and refuses anymore of my tears. . . .I wonder if I'll live long enough to write the million or so pages needed to explain this love of land." (Drops11-13) Exile takes its most painful pose as a denial of an actual homeland. At 25 years old, Hammad finally visited the land of her parents and grandparents, "there's something about the feel of Palestinian sun on my skin that makes me feel closer to the ancient somehow." (One on One)

### **The Artist as Political Theorist**

Suheir Hammad is an expert in helping to define exile as she has her own exilic experience to draw on, while always trying to show that exile is not exclusive but wildly inclusive. She believes the Tigris and Mississippi rivers mourn together. She can relate the loss of Palestine to many other refugee populations and has linked the type of exile she endures to other groups of displaced people. In particular Hammad has drawn attention to the sheer chaos that was hurricane Katrina, placing some of America's own refugees in perspective. During the aftermath, Hammad traveled to New Orleans to help

people to fill out paperwork needed by FEMA. A large portion of the people left homeless by the storm were poor and illiterate; even those who were literate could not comprehend the labyrinth of forms that were demanded by government agency bureaucracy. While meeting person after person Hammad found a way to relate to their experience and found another way she could assist even more. In connecting she told them she was a poet and time after time she, “got something that was festering from them.” (One on One) As an artist people assumed she would see the tragedy of their tale and understand. These people needed to share their stories. They needed to tell their own narratives.

People relate to Suheir Hammad on so many different levels. It is her urban dialect, her nostalgic lyricism, and above all her realness which come through in her poetry. Her readers have a choice to make after finishing her poems. They will stand with life or against it. Overwhelmingly, Hammad is moving people to affirm life. In June Jordan’s Poem *Moving Towards Home* the last line reads, “I was born a Black woman/ and now / I am become a Palestinian / against the relentless laughter of evil / there is less and less living room / . . . / It is time to make or way home.” (Knopf-Newman 77) This is the type of inclusion that Suheir Hammad’s poetry brings to her audience. She captivates with rhythmic prose and opens eyes with unapologetic truth. She calls exile what it is, the denial of place. For Hammad there is no life without an actual place. There must be a home to return to. Her poetry does not end statically, but electrically

charged with the call to act; the call to actively move towards home and make a path for others to follow you there. For Hammad, you must decide to resist exile. You must be a part of dissent.

### *What I Will*

*I will not dance to your war drum.  
I will not lend my soul nor my bones to your war drum.  
I will not dance to your beating. I know that beat. It is lifeless.  
I know intimately that skin you are hitting. It was alive once and hunted stolen stretched.  
I will not dance to your drummed up war.  
I will not pop spin break for you. I will not hate for you or even hate you.  
I will not kill for you. Especially I will not die for you.  
I will not mourn the dead with murder nor suicide.  
I will not side with you or dance to bombs because everyone else is dancing.  
Everyone can be wrong.  
Life is a right not collateral or casual.  
I will not forget where I come from. I will craft my own drum.  
Gather my beloved near and our chanting will be dancing. Our humming will be  
drumming. I will not be played. I will not lend my name or my rhythm to your beat.  
I will dance and resist and dance and persist and dance.  
This heartbeat is louder than death.  
Your war drum ain't louder than this breath.*

### **Suheir Hammad's Contribution to the Exilic Narrative**

Hammad's greatest contribution to the study of exile is the understanding that people need a particular place to be human. They need a safe place from which to tell their narratives. They need a place to sustain themselves and grow their own olives. They need a place to learn from their history and create new memories. Exile is the denial of all this. Exile is the denial of the right to return. Exile is the denial to be from where your history is from. Exile is the denial of your right to be human. There are

histories that can only come from particular soils. There are stories that can only be told in the context of the place they were created and instead they are being told from a refugee status. For Hammad understanding the need for a particular place brings responsibility. It requires a decision of how each individual will act. It calls for individual narratives planted in resistance to violence and exile.

What this study can take most from Suheir Hammad is how people have histories. They have arts, and love, and faults all their own. People have narratives that must be told. Exile denies all of this, by denying people a place. Lastly, the drops of Hammad's story must not be wiped clean and ignored. She calls for action and recognition of these human necessities. She calls for individual decisions to uphold life or contribute to further exile.

## CHAPTER IV

### MAX AUB: WRITING TO BE REMEMBERED

#### **A Life in Exile**

Max Aub Mohrenwitz was an exiled Spanish literary artist. Born on June 2, 1903, in Paris, he lived in the time of Francisco Franco, and Spain's civil war, which were both prime themes in his writing. After Franco came to power in Spain via a military coup in 1939, the republican government structure in Spain fell. German Nazism and Italian Fascism both found a place among the conservative leaders who now ruled the country. Famously, Franco was a close ally to Hitler, and had much faith in his victory. Having remained neutral for the First World War, Spain now took Nazi Germany's side in the Second World War. Consequently thousands of Spanish intellectuals fled Spain, having been labeled leftists, and dangerous to the Franco regime. Among these exiled intellectuals were Américo Castro, José Ortega y Gasset, Francisco Ayala and Max Aub. It is known that many of these exiled thinkers fled to France where they were met with hostility and forced into concentration camps. Those who remained in Spain were subject to Franco's firing squad at the hands of the Gestapo.

Aub's ancestry and occupation placed him in the perfect place for displacement and punishment under Spain's fascist government. His father, Friedrich Wilhelm Aub was German, his mother Suzanne Mohrenwitz Aub a French citizen of German descent.

Aub's immediate family were all Agnostic Jews. As a young child Aub spoke both German and French. At eleven he began to learn Spanish after his family fled at the outbreak of WWI to Valencia. This marked Aub's life as his first experience with exile as the family allegedly fled France with the fear that Aub's father would be targeted. Aub was apparently not even aware he was Jewish until the age of eighteen. While in Spain, Aub and his parents became Spanish citizens.

The early part of Aub's life was spent traveling through Spain, *"Durante los primeros años, el negocio de joyería de su padre le permite viajar por todo el país. En esos viajes empieza a identificarse con su nueva tierra, a su vez entra en contacto con el mundo intelectual del momento. . . ."* (Sainz Ruiz 3) *(During the beginning years, his father's jewelry business permits him to travel around the entire country. In those travels [Aub] starts to identify with his new land and at the same time comes into contact with the intellectual world of the moment. . . .)* Having come of age during these travels, Aub joins the Spanish Socialist Party, the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, in 1929. This new political stance, coupled with publications written by Aub, *Poemas cotidianos*, *Caja*, *Narciso*, *Fábula verde*, served to give him a reputation for being a communist, which followed him to France and even later, Mexico. (Sainz Ruiz 3) Aub had officially become an enemy of the Franco regime.



### **Spanish Homeland, Vacant Roots and Getting Lost in Translation**

For the rest of his literary career Max Aub was to be known as a Spanish writer in exile. In fact most of his works have not even been translated from their original Spanish into any other languages. Much research has been done on Max Aub, but relatively few focus on the concept of exile within his work, and those that do are recent in their studies of Aub and still not numerous. Even within the category of Spanish exile, Aub has traditionally been marginalized in Academia. It is this study's contention that living and writing in exile dominated Aub's work and cast a heavy shadow on his literary voice, making him a chief contributor in the search for a more concise understanding of exile. (Garcia 58)

Moreover, to read Aub today is to read the narrative of a particular exilic experience. The Spanish Civil War, and the consequential displacement of Aub and his contemporaries, marking his work as it forever marked his life. For the purposes of studying exile, Aub is central to the use of writing and *"la memoria y la tradición como forma de resistencia cultural"* (Romero Marco 1) <memory and tradition as forms of cultural resistance.> Just as Suheir Hammad writes so that the Palestinian people will be proven to exist, and their narrative distributed, so Aub wrote in order to retain his adopted Spanish culture and the memory of the time before Franco. Aub wrote in essence to be remembered, so that his outer exile would not also be the end of his life's work; so that his words would cement him in history.

In terms of the scholarly community's access to his writings, Aub's work was largely ignored during his lifetime and continues to be poorly published. Aub was a prolific writer yet only two of his many works have been translated into English. The first to be translated was *Jusep Torres Campalans* (1958) and the second, *Field of Honor* (1943) translated in 2009. *Jusep Torres Campalans* is a fictional biography so realistic that it is often cited as an actual biography. It deals with a fictional painter who moves to Mexico with the intention of spending the latter part of his life there, after leaving Paris where he had been a co-founder of the cubist movement. The novel was a literary scam of sorts and has been thought of contemporarily as a semi-auto biographical portrayal of Aub himself in light of the many details that interlace the two histories. His many other novels, however, including the series, *El laberinto mágico*, *The Magic Labyrinth*, which contains six distinct works written from 1943-1967 would be a literary goldmine, yet has been left largely undisturbed. For a writer who presumably wrote in order to not be forgotten, the fate of his work is tragic.

### **Intellectual Exodus, Mass Exile**

1939 brought about a mass exodus of Spanish intellectuals who fled the incoming Right-wing government who would be led by Francisco Franco. "*Como en todo conflicto civil, la consecuencia ineludible es el exilio, espacio impuesto para los contendientes, del bando perdedor, los intelectuales*" (Sainz Ruiz 1) *As in all civil conflicts the ineludible consequence is exile, the space imposed on the contenders of the losing*

*body, the intellectuals.* This mass exodus would impact Spain greatly as before the start of the Spanish Civil War, the universities had been entering an *Edad de Plata, a Silver age*. Similar to the flight of the German emigrate scholars, such as Hannah Arendt, Albert Einstein and so many more, Germany lost a great wealth of her scholarly community.

Spain was left academically devastated after the rise of General Franco, and its intellectuals were left dispersed to various concentration camps in France and Northern Africa, most would never return.

*“Para la sociedad Española una de las consecuencias más trágicas del desenlace de la guerra civil fué la destrucción del incipiente sistema científico que con la llamada Edad de Plata había comenzado a edificarse en España.”* (Otero Carvajal 1)

For Spanish society one of the most tragic consequences of the outcome of the civil war was the destruction of the incipient scientific system with which said Silver Age had begun to build itself in Spain.

The purpose of including an understanding of Spain’s historically stunted intellectual growth is to provide a richer understanding of not only exile in and of itself, but to illuminate the detrimental effects exile has on society. José Ángel Sainz Ruiz poses a similar hypothesis in his 2001 dissertation also concerning Max Aub in relation to exile:

*“Finalmente, éste estudio intenta probar que la diáspora intelectual de 1939 merece un lugar adecuado en el canon de la literatura e historia*

*española como primer paso para reparar la memoria de los muchos que tuvieron que hacer de tierra extranjera un segundo hogar y que con el tiempo, se les ha olvidado e ignorado” (Ruiz 5).*

Finally, this study attempts to prove that the intellectual diaspora of 1939 deserves an appropriate place in the cannon of Spanish literature and history as the first step in repairing the memory of the many who had to make a second home of foreign land and who with time, have been forgotten and ignored.

It is perhaps through the disenfranchised legacy of Max Aub that exile may be placed at the forefront in the quest to better understand the consequences of a denied homeland. Exile for Max Aub, was more than physically isolating. In essence it denied his existence as a person and subjected him to a position in the most removed and forgotten of intellectual places. To be forgotten then, is the most heinous of exile’s consequences, as it effectively erases and denies one ever existed.

Exile is much more than a loss of land, however traumatic. For those intellectuals exiled from Spain in 1939, including Max Aub, much can be learned about the far reaching consequences of exile. Jose Lopez Portillo is referenced in Sainz Ruiz’s work for his description of these consequences:

*El destierro és siempre una mutilación de la parte del ser humano que más duele: una mutilación [ha] el sentido de la biografía individual y de la historia colectiva. El refugiado pierde sus asideros con la realidad, abandona las señales de sus antepasados, se desata de la red de significaciones que sus prójimos habían*

*tejido en torno suyo, desde antes que él naciera, y se pone a la mitad del mundo, sin tierra propia bajo sus pies, y con recuerdos – y nada más que recuerdos – como únicas señas entrañables de identidad. (Sainz Ruiz 21)*

Exile is always a mutilation of the part of the human being that hurts most: a mutilation [of] the meaning of the individual biography and collective history. The refugee loses their grip on reality, abandon the signs of their ancestors, the network of meanings that their neighbors had woven around him, since before he was born breaks, and [are subjected to only] half of the world without their own land underfoot, and memories - and only memories - as enduring signs of unique identity.

Exile then, ought to be thought of and studied as what this description calls it: a mutilation of humanity. The breaking of ties with ancestry leaves those exiled without a history, without an acceptable narrative. They are no longer unique and an end in themselves but rather operate on only the vestiges of lives left over to piece together their personhood. Writing from a place of exile left Aub's portrait of his own humanity as something incomplete; a mixture of subhuman attributes. In his tragic play *San Juan*, Aub gives a human portrayal to many of the inhumane facets of exile. Further on, this study will look at the play, and suggest that the primary question posed by Aub in its interior is not a direct reference to the actual characters at all, but a question with which he wishes to haunt a world that allows exile.

## **Labyrinth of Residential Complications**

Aub's experience with the Spanish exile of 1939 is in accordance with the experience of many other exiled Spaniards of the time. In this his journey was not unique. In the banality of his experience exile shows itself to be a common denominator in the fate of those caught on the wrong side of regime changes, or those whose veins circulate the incorrect blood. In fleeing Franco's regime, Max Aub first traveled to neighboring France. There he, and most of the other exiled intellectuals, were met with disdain and apathy from the French government and people. Spanish refugees in France were seen as second class and less than welcome. (Gale 6) While in France Aub wrote his famous, *Campo Cerrado*. "Publication of the work was delayed when Aub was arrested by the French police in April 1940 on charges of being a Communist. . . .he spent the following two years in concentration camps. . . ." (Gale 7)

Aub was imprisoned in Le Vernet Internment Camp for one year. There under the horrid circumstances that characterized the concentration camps in WWII, Aub wrote prolifically. Each of the exiled artists within this study have all found refuge in writing. It is as if the act of putting words from your own mind down on paper could transform those words into a more solid reality than that which they are facing in that moment. Certainly for Aub, writing proved to be a valuable outlet and indeed a tool for survival. After leaving the Le Vernet camp, Aub was transferred to another French concentration camp in Djelfa, Algeria, where he was forced into more intensive and

useless hard labor. While imprisoned Aub continued to write, “he wrote poems and ideas for novels and short stories on scraps of paper that he kept in his pockets; some of the poems were later published in *Diario de Djelfa*”. (Gale 7) After leaving Djelfa, Aub moved quickly to Casablanca where he stayed for three months. In this time period he drafted his piece, *Campo Francés*. Aub, as many before and after him, used Casablanca as the port from which to go to a new “homeland.” This adopted homeland for Aub was Mexico. Aub spent the remainder of his days in Mexico, and even obtained Mexican citizenship. The influence of Mexican writers and journalists gave Aub, as an exile, shades of acceptance and inclusion. After a long separation, Aub was joined by his wife and three daughters in Mexico.

### **San Juan, the Boat and Aub’s Experience through Character Portrayal**

It is important to realize that for all the damage exile does to a person, it fails time and time again to rob them of their interior affinity for their denied homeland. Exile crushes and distorts many aspects of humanity, yet is not capable of seizing memories which linger and are passed from generation to generation as a form of remembrance. Exiles never forget the place they were exiled from. On the contrary, more often than not the denied land plants roots in the hearts and minds of those exiled. In reading exilic works, it becomes apparent that the denial of land does not equate itself with the forgetting of land. Yet much of Max Aub’s works have been left to the realms of the disregarded and forgotten. His work is a treasure chest of ideas and

valuable historical references seen from a particularly interesting vantage point. A jewel in Spain's literary canon is left largely unread. It was only after the fall of Franco's regime that Aub's work has become increasingly recognized in Spain. Unfortunately Aub's death in 1972 preceded the death of Franco in 1975, successfully maintaining Aub in exile from Spain. (Gale 5)

As the primary focus for centering in on Max Aub's definition of exile and his contribution to this study, the play of *San Juan* shall be consulted and examined. The play is set on a boat close enough to be, but not docked on the coast of Asia Minor in the summer of 1938 and spans only from 2pm to sunset of the following day. (Aub 31) In the opening scene of Act 1 we meet a comical yet representative group of children. They are led by a boy who is called *Comodoro*, commodore. He is a small tyrant of sorts, ordering each child to their place in the hierarchy. Some are prisoners, some pirates, but none have a choice. It is shortly after that Efraín and Raquel are introduced as the epitome of star crossed lovers. Having been living on the boat for three months by this point, people are running out of patience and food. The couple pledges their love to one another, despite Efraín being "*más pobre que las ratas que corren por aquí, porque esas, por lo menos, no le hacen asco a roer lo que no es suyo*" (Aub 41), *poorer than the rats that run around here, because those, at least, do not get nauseous from taking what is not theirs.*"



### **Aub's Reflection in Carlos and the Banal Businessman**

It is Carlos, Raquel's brother on which the plot thickens. Carlos is the roughest, least sympathetic or humane of the characters. He is harsh, his words biting, yet his proclamations all ring true in the end. His sister Raquel, when describing her intended future with Efraín proclaims that her day will come, because this, their confinement on the boat, will end. To that Carlos retaliates stating:

*"Jamás. Es una idea tan vieja como el mundo. Acabará cuando acaben con nosotros. Creen en el poder purificador de nuestra sangre. Bonito regalo de renegados, cómo no podía menos de suceder. Creen de verdad que somos elegidos. Nos matan por rencomios de inferioridad. La mejor manera de burlarnos es acabar con nosotros mismos. ¿No has pensado nunca en suicidarte?" (Aub 45)*

"Never. It is an idea as old as the world. It will end when they finish with us. They believe in the purifying power of our blood. Nice gift for renegades, as could not fail to happen. They really believe that we are chosen. They kill us because of inferiority complexes. The best way for us to mock them is to destroy ourselves. Have you ever thought about committing suicide?"

From the start, Carlos can see there will be no hopeful end, no one who will step in on their behalf; there will be no avail. The boat on which they have spent three months of their lives and on which they will conclude their time on Earth is hovering just a mile or so from land they will not step on. They will not die from lack of interest however, nor because of total inaction. The "business man" on board who correlates

well with Hannah Arendt's description of the "bourgeois man" tries to inform the captain of the ship time and again that he is of importance, and possesses a measure of prestige and financial resources which should be able to get him off the boat. Frustrated the business man Bernheim verbally assaults the captain saying,

*"! Qué peligro representamos para la humanidad! ¿Eh? ¿Qué peligro para América? ¿Qué peligro para Inglaterra? ¿Qué peligro para Turquía! Seis constables, ciento cuarenta comerciantes, cincuenta y tres abogados, dos rabinos, veinte agricultores, ciento y pico dependientes de comercio, tres directores de escena, seis periodistas, doscientos viejos y viejas que ya no pueden con su alma, treinta y cinco niños...! ¿Es que el Brasil no es bastante grande? ¿Ya no cabe nadie en Palestina? ¿Qué peligro estos huidos de los Nazis ?. . . ¿No le parece a usted un crimen que yo, con el dinero que poseo, tenga que ir por estas costas dando bandazos como todos estos pobrecitos que no tienen a donde caerse muertos?" (Aub 54)*

"What danger do we represent for humanity? Eh? What danger to America! What danger to England! What danger to Turkey! Six constables, one hundred forty merchants, fifty-three lawyers, two rabbis, twenty farmers, a hundred or dependents on commerce, three stage directors, six journalists, two hundred old men and women who can no longer handle even their souls, thirty-five children ...! Is Brazil is not big enough? Does no one else fit in Palestine? What danger from these Nazis fugitives! . . . Do not you think it a crime that I, with the money I have, have to go bouncing around these coasts like all these poor things that have nowhere to even drop dead?"

### **Guilt and Complicity in Loss of Place and Legitimacy**

This confusion as to what it is that they had even done to merit this treatment and what if any danger they represented for the rest of the world, circulates throughout the play. Aub is using Bernheim in this frame to highlight the resentment he feels and the blame he places on the international community for buying into Nazi propaganda about the supposed dangerous Jews and their failure to act despite being aware of the Jewish plight. The dehumanization of exiled Jews went so far as to portray them as a sub-species. In an era of high racism, Aub uses a black man to portray the confusion surrounding the Jewish people. Hopping aboard the man looks all around and finds the elderly Sara doing some sewing on deck. The man asks her if she is a Jew, she responds that she is. Confused and distressed the man confesses that he has lost a bet to those who told him that Jews looked like everyone else. The man could not believe that if they looked like everyone else they would not be let off the boat. Sara then questions him about what he thought they would look like.... Ashamed, he answers that he thought they would be black (Aub 58). This statement concludes the first act.

The second act of *San Juan* revolves around attempts to escape. Raquel learns that Efraín planned to escape with a group without consulting or alerting her. Enraged she tells him to go and uses guilt to get him to stay and he relents. We learn that Carlos has escaped as well. He returns battered and beaten, his spirit broken. The most bitter monologue yet, has Carlos ranting to the Jews on board spewing his disgust in them.

*“¿Qué?! Ahí estáis todos, como borregos! ¿ Os vais a dejar llevar de nuevo al matadero? Porque vamos a llevar anclas con el día. Si no lo sabéis, os los digo yo. Ningún país quiere nada con nosotros. El mundo es demasiado pequeño. No hay sitio. . . .Estáis todos muertos, montón pestilente. Cadáveres hediondos, putrefactos...¿Hasta cuándo? ¿No hay nada en vosotros de la semilla de los hombres? ¡Judíos habíais de ser, despreciables!. . . !Puercos, alzaos! ¡Gritad, incapaces! ¡Muertos impotentes! ¿Tanto os pesa vuestro Dios que no os podéis mover?” (Aub 74)*

"What? There you all are, like sheep! You're going to let them take you back to the slaughterhouse. Because we are to anchor in the day. If you do not know, I will tell you. No country wants anything to do with us. The world is too small. There is no room. . . . You are all dead, a stinking pile. Stinking corpses, rotting ... Until when? Is there nothing in you of the seed of men? You had to be Jews, despicable!. . . .Rise pigs! Shout, you incapables! Impotent dead! Does your God weigh so much that you cannot move? "

Carlos puts the blame of inactivity on the Jewish people as a whole. He is utterly disgusted with them, and revolted by their compliance. The vicious insults are hurled at the crowd, which also contained Carlos' mother, in a fit of rage. He pushes the Jewish passengers to act, riles them up in hopes of reviving in them the anger necessary to move out of this place of international exile. Carlos ends with the final blow of mocking the Jewish dependence on their God. For Carlos, who grew up in a secular home in which religion was never discussed; this God is nothing more than the anchor holding

them in place on that wretched ship. The audience is made aware that the reason for Carlos' bruises are a beating he received from some men in a bar as in a drunken stupor he began to proclaim that there was no reason for him to be aboard as he was not Jewish. As the crowd accepted these proclamations, they began to heckle and insult the Jewish people. Carlos then switched narratives and began to defend the Jews fiercely. This conclusion and apparent misguidance on his part toward the others present landed him a sound beating and then a solitary place aboard the ship. (Aub 71)

Many parallels can be drawn between Carlos the character and Max Aub the author. Interestingly enough Carlos is described as being only half Jew. He is athletically built, of a light complexion, with colored eyes. Carlos matches the Nazi description of what the Arian man would look like, not the subhuman Jew. The audience is made known that Carlos was not even aware that he in fact, was a Jew until very late in life when his exilic experience began. (Aub 73) It is this study's contention that Max Aub uses Carlos as a character to portray his own life in light of the familial parallels as well as the anger and action Carlos takes. Aub uses Carlos as an assault weapon against both Jews who did not fight hard enough, in his view, and Spaniards who accepted the rule of Franco while they watched their comrades banished. In Carlos there are shades of Aub.

### **Faith and Action**

Desperate in the third act, Carlos takes on the ship's most active Rabbi. The Rabbi attempts to bring Carlos into a gentler place where he would cease to live in so much

bitterness and rely instead on the Jewish faith for comfort. Finding he has hit a brick wall with Carlos, who has thoroughly exasperated him, the Rabbi asks Carlos how old he is.

His response,

*“Los mismos que usted. Los mismos que todos. Los suficientes para morir. . . No me convencerá usted. Habría que ser más que Dios. Escrito esta, ¿no?, que Dios castigara a los malos. Y nosotros hechos a su semejanza, ¿hemos de perdonarles? ¿Presentar la otra mejilla so pena de perder el cielo? Ni Dios, padre, o como le llamen La URSS <note: Union de Republicas Socialistas Sovieticas, the Spanish equivalent to the USSR, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics> no admite más que comunistas, Francia, Inglaterra, América nos cierran sus fronteras a canto y lodo.” (Aub 96)*

The same as you. The same as everyone else. Sufficient age to die. . . . You will not convince me. You would have to be more than God. It is written, is it not? That God would punish the evil. And us made in his image, should we forgive them? Turn the other cheek so as to not forgo heaven? Not God, father, or however they call him! The URSS does not admit communists, France, England, America have closed their frontiers to us by and by.

As this is not the first instance where Aub has mentioned the countries France, England and the United States in particular, it is fair to assume he placed a certain level of blame for the death of so many Jews and perhaps even his own exile.

The international community's failure to respond to the humanitarian crisis of the Jews in WWII and the ensuing exile of thousands Spanish intellectuals is unforgivable for Aub. This rancor would plague him the rest of his life.

San Juan ends where it began, at sea. The ship has begun to sail, having raised its anchor after being certain the passengers aboard would not be allowed to disembark. The crew and captain know the ship will sink, as they have sailed into a storm that thrashes it on all sides and has ruined the carbon used for light and heat. At the moment the audience is made aware of the pending peril, the elderly Esther is made aware that her pregnant daughter has just given birth. Hurrying to her side, and seeing the new born she says, *"Es un niño! Un niño! ¿Ustedes se dan cuenta? Yo siempre creí que sería una niña. Nunca me pude figurar otra cosa. . . .Porque tenía la seguridad de que dentro de veinte años la violarían."* (Aub 104) It's a boy. A boy! Do you all see that? I always believed it would be a girl. I could never figure anything else. . . .Because I had the certainty that in twenty years they would violate her."

In bringing a child into the drama, almost as an aside, Max Aub has presented the hope for exiles as only a transitory possibility which will never be allowed to grow and mature. This newborn baby boy was born in the in between, the limbo that was San Juan. Drawing a parallel to the exilic experience, one may take away that the exile, however close to optimistic expectations for the future he might get, the ship which carries it will inevitably sink. With no place to harbor, the child cannot live; it must die in the storm. There can be no future life in exile, as exile is the denial of life.

Yet the sex of the child born to Esther's daughter matters greatly. The child is a boy, therefore cannot hope to ever carry life inside it. The future has stopped on board,

with the birth of the child. Had he been a little girl, Esther believes in some twenty years or so, she would be violated. The child would be born as less than human, less than respectable. The violation later in life, would be certain for her, there is no escape. This type of assurance in the violation of women in a group gives reference to war tactics so commonly used. In war, the women of the enemy must be violated, and violently raped. This must be, in order to ensure the breaking of the enemy's spirit. The greatest injury that can be done to the enemy camp is to destroy the integrity of the family structure, as all civilized life builds itself around these familial entities. A child born an exile then can only expect to be violated, as the very humanity they would have possessed had they been born to a land their own, is nonexistent. Exiles can only expect to be broken in the ways that war breaks people, as they are the international enemy camp. There is nowhere to seek refuge, nowhere to appeal for the righting of wrongs. Exilic humanity must be violated in order for exile to be tolerated by otherwise rational persons. As hope is born on ship, and new life brought on board the sinking vessel, the Rabbi begins to read Job 9: 2-12:

*¿Y cómo se justificará el hombre con Dios? Si quiere contender con él, No le podrá responder a una cosa de mil. El es sabio de corazón y poderoso de fortaleza*  
*¿Quién se endureció contra él, y quedó en paz? Que arranca los montes con su furor y no conocen quien los trastornó: Que remueve la tierra de su lugar, Y hace temblar sus columnas: Que manda al sol, y no sale; Y sella las estrellas, El que*



*extiende solo los cielos, Y anda sobre las Alturas de la mar: El que hizo el Arcturo,  
y el Orion, y las Pleyadas, Y los lugares secretos del mediodía: El que hace cosas  
grandes e incomprensibles, y maravillosas sin número. He aquí que él pasará  
delante de mí y no lo veré; Y pasará, y no lo entenderé. He aquí, arrebatará;  
¿quien le hará restituir? ¿Quien le dirá, qué haces? (Aub 105)*

I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble . Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Behold, he taketh away , who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Aub's final appeal to the audience before the curtains draw resonates with the desperate remarks made by Carlos previously noted. Where is the God who the Jewish exiles on board should appeal to? Surely God is not aware of this injustice, and if so, surely relief will come soon. Yet this great God described in the Rabbi's reading of Job does not save the Jews on the ship, just as the Spanish exiles were not redeemed for their wrongs suffered. If Aub does not find apparent refuge in a deity who is all knowing and all powerful, he must have wrestled with where he could in fact find refuge. The concept and activity which best harbors exiles, is politics.

### **The Politics of Remembrance**

Throughout Max Aub's work the roles of the intellectual and the writer are described as being political. Politics is for Aub the main objective for writing, but not as a politician. Intellectuals should have opinions on and take part in politics, but primarily in moral terms. Writing politically from a position of exile, and for a moral purpose, all enhance the importance of the contributions of Max Aub within the search for defining Exile. Authors and playwrights must be active in the political world and maintain a realistic attitude and view of the world around them. Aub's participation in politics landed him very early on in his life and career in the realm of suspicious persons and potential enemies of the state. Yet, "For Aub, such engagement did not mean submitting his material to the dictates of a political party; instead, it implied a profound

commitment to realism—to recording and explaining social and political reality with the goal of changing that reality for the better.” (Gale 6)

Aub struggled with his political identity throughout his exilic experience.

Confused as to his own loyalty to Spain versus his physical tie to Mexico, he examines his own problem of identification.

*“¿Qué soy? ¿Alemán, Francés, Español, Mexicano? ¿Qué soy? Nada. ¿De quién la culpa? ¿Cómo culparme? Y, sin embargo, latente, ésa punzadura, ése veredicto: culpable. . . . Si fueses poeta, novelista, lo que fuera, serías español, mexicano, francés, o alemán. Como no lo eres no eres nada, nada, nada. . . . ¿De qué te quejas? – Siempre se es a medias, --No: siempre fuiste a medias, y esa es la muerte.”* (Diarios 273)

What am I? German, French, Spanish, Mexican? What am I? Nothing. Who is to blame? How should I blame me? And, nevertheless, awake, that throbbing, that verdict: guilty. . . .If you were a poet, novelist, whatever, you would be Spanish, Mexican, French or German. Yet since you are not you are nothing, nothing, nothing. . . . What do you complain of? –It is always partial, --No: you were always partial, and that is death.

The term which resonates with the search for a more precise definition of exile, is what for Aub is *a medias*, the partial, the almost, the not quite. Aub lived in a state of constant in between, just as Carlos and the rest of the San Juan passengers did; almost

to shore, but not quite. Permanence for Aub is forever just out of reach. His biological ethnicity was out of his reach from childhood. His adopted yet beloved identity as a Spaniard, stripped from him, and his residence and political acceptance in Mexico, but not spiritually or culturally. Aub lived a life of almos which plagued him and saturated his writing.

In the search to understand exile and what it does to humanity, Max Aub presents a sturdy look at a biography characterized in every era by exile. Aub cannot be said to have ever not been an exile, therefore his exilic experience is particularly relevant to this study. Max Aub's narrative is categorized as being expressly political and exilic in its very nature. The world as presented by Aub in his writings is seen through the lens of a man who did not have solid ground under his feet for any meaningful period of time. His characters, namely Carlos, are constructed in his image, as he charges that the Jews were constructed in the image of their God which failed to save them. It seems that Aub fails to save himself in Carlos as well. He is tormented by the reality that he is not completely any one thing, yet feels an affinity for so many identities. As Carlos could not find escape from the ship that would eventually drown him in foreign waters, Aub never finds acceptance in the fashion he wishes for in any place. His experience throughout his temporary countries is only partial. Exile forced Aub to live a life *a medias*.

Woven within Max Aub's narrative is the preoccupation with memories and forgetting. He wrote in order not to be forgotten, yet his own reality as it shifted so continuously was problematic. By the nature of the experience, exiles struggle with the shaping and reshaping of their own narratives.

*"Los recuerdos, para el exiliado, se convierten en alivio y tortura a la vez. Mantienen viva una realidad que ya no es y a la vez con el tiempo atentan contra la realidad alterándola, distorsionándola. El exilado, ambivalente ante sus recuerdos, a veces los busca procurando aquellas cosas o sensaciones que los revivían dándoles nuevo vigor. . . . Otras veces trata de relegarlos a lo más hondo de su alma por el dolor que causan al abrir viejas heridas nunca bien cicatrizadas."* (Garcia 135)

"Memories, for the exile, become torture and relief at the same time. Keeping alive a reality that is no longer yet over time undermining reality making alterations, and distortions. The exile, ambivalent about their memories, sometimes seeks the sensation of those things that revived and gave them new vitality. . . . Other times he tries to relegate them to the depths of his soul for the pain they cause to old open wounds which never healed right "

What could have been of Max Aub, had he been recognized and respected during his lifetime, haunts his modern day admirers. His work has yet to be explored for its intricacies and subtle meanings in either his beloved Spain or in the international community as a whole. This lack of inclusion among the canon of exilic work and studies, significantly hinders the progress of the discipline, in its current quest for growth.

## Faded Memories and the Necessary Spanish Exilic Narrative

As an exilic writer Max Aub shares many of the same facets of exile both internal and external as other exilic artists. Yet there are qualities that remain expressly his; namely the preoccupation with being forgotten, as if to be remembered would place him on the solid ground he did not have. In this study of exile, there is a direct and poignant correlation between Max Aub's exilic experience and those experiences of Hannah Arendt and Suheir Hammad.

*“Por tanto la historia y la memoria son en sí mismas, una entidad maleable, (re)creable, abierta a muchas posibilidades aunque siempre sujeta a la postura de los vencedores que silencia la de los vencidos. Precisamente el exilio plantea una respuesta alternativa si se recupera su legado, si no se permite que sea víctima de un olvido institucionalizado y cuando menos maquillada se rebela Max Aub y por ende, toda firma intelectual exiliada.” (Sainz Ruiz 200)*

For both history and memory are themselves malleable entities, able to be recreated, open to many possibilities although always subject to the posture of the victors silencing the vanquished. Indeed, exile plants an alternative if the legacy is recovered, and not allowed to be the victim of institutionalized neglect and at least made up as rebel like Max Aub and thus all exiled intellectuals.

In this call for a permeable exilic narrative, and the politics of the victors writing the history of those they have triumphed over, shades of Hannah Arendt are seen. In the rewriting of reality, and allowing for the reality to be molded into a shape that

satisfies truth in itself and not an individual interest, Aub and Arendt share the love of realistic truth. The world for Aub and Arendt is not fair, nor is it orderly and simple to comprehend. Reality takes time, and one who wishes to examine it thoroughly must be willing to do the kind of investigative and meticulous research which characterized Arendt's work. In the conscience remembering of exiled writers instead of banishing them into oblivion and the realm of the forgotten, Aub and Arendt both attempt to keep exiled persons at the forefront of their work.

Max Aub's artistic ability of expressing himself through various mediums such as poetry, theatrical work, novels, and diaries, links him to the qualities possessed by Suheir Hammad. Hammad, first and foremost expresses herself as a poet, yet is not confined to that form of communications. She has been the protagonist in at least one film, *Salt of this Sea*, and has participated in the play *Orientalism*. Hammad, like Aub, documented her own narrative in *Drops of this Story*. As previously explored this intensely personal and purposeful work lays bare Hammad's unique vantage point. Her passion for the remembrance and recognition of the Palestinian narrative is almost all consuming. For Hammad, Palestine cannot be forgotten just as the exile author cannot be forgotten for Aub.

*"Solo ellos son quienes recuerdan, lo cual no es de extrañar habiendo pagado y sacrificado tanto por ese pasado en función de un futuro que no resultó."* (Garcia 146)  
*Only those remember which should not be surprising, as they have paid and sacrificed so*

*much for that functioning past and a future that did not come about.* The nonchalant denial of the importance of what occurred to exiled Spanish intellectuals under Franco in his time as in modern day Spain, for Aub is inexcusable. Exile then for this unforgettable playwright, author, and poet, is the denial of a place in history.



## CHAPTER V

### NATSUME SOSEKI'S ERODED CORNER AND EXILIC HARMONY

*“Approach everything rationally, and you become harsh. Pole along in the stream of emotions, and you will be swept away by the current. Give free rein to your desires, and you become uncomfortably confined. It is not a very agreeable place to live, this world of ours.”* (Soseki 12)

The purpose of this study is an attempt at better defining the concept of exile. The blueprint for this undertaking, hinges on the importance of place and the interpretation of its role in a person's life; in accordance with an interpretation of Natsume Soseki's novel, *Kusamakura*, (*The Grass Pillow*). Soseki was a literary artist and critic of the philosophy of writing. Soseki was born in 1867 in Tokyo, Japan. The focus on Chinese classic texts versus emergent Western thought in Meiji Restoration Japan served to differentiate Soseki's work from many of his contemporaries. Soseki is most respected in his native Japan for insisting on the purity of Japanese essence in the literary traditions and on critiquing the modern societies which threaten this purity. He wrote unscathed by the west's influence.

It is this untainted literary focus on preserving the Japanese society which propelled him, critic as he was, to favorable heights among the Japanese people. In 1892 Soseki graduated from the department of literature at Tokyo Imperial University, where he met Masaoka Shiki. Shiki was, “the greatest name in the revival of Haiku

(Hokku) poetry at that period. This friendship undoubtedly exercised a profound influence on his writing, for although he is principally famous as a novelist, the Haiku with which he often intersperses his prose are a mark of the essentially Japanese quality of his work, and are of great literary merit.” (Soseki 11)

The aim of interpreting what Soseki means by the erosion of a corner, and the life led by those who live in the triangle that is left, will serve to better illustrate what the literary artists intend to do with their writing. *“An artist is a person who lives in the triangle which remains after the angle which we may call common sense has been removed from this four-cornered world.”* (Soseki Dedication) Quite literally, literary artists such as those referenced in this study: Hannah Arendt, Suheir Hammad, Max Aub, and Natsume Soseki, are charged with the daunting yet necessary task of holding mirrors up to their respective societies.

Interpreting one of the pivotal corners of Soseki’s world as place, this study attempts to place exile in perspective so as to better define it as a concept. To accept the portrait revealed by the artists’ work, society must be ready to detach itself from mundane cares and center its attention on what it is seeing from afar, as if it were an observer and not a participant. Soseki advises,

*“Before even committing our thoughts to paper, you will feel the crystal tinkling, as of a tiny bell, well up within you; and the whole range of colours will of their own accord, and in all their brilliance, imprint themselves on your mind’s eye, though your canvas stands on its easel, as yet untouched by the brush. . . Even*

*the poet whose thoughts have never found expression in a single verse, or the painter who possesses no colours, and has never painted so much as a single square foot of canvas, can obtain salvation and be delivered from earthly desires and passions.” (Soseki 13)*

### **Meaningful Characters Giving an Artistic Voice**

According to Soseki the world in which the artist lives is described as three cornered because *Joushiki*, or commonsense, has been eroded. Etymology is needed here to apply translations, and imagination is necessary to see beyond the ordinary so that this complex Japanese term can be applied to this study’s focus on exile. The Japanese word *Joushiki* is comprised of two characters: *Jou*, meaning common and *shiki*, meaning sense. (Hoye, Exile 5) *Jou* can be interpreted as meaning the whole of Japanese people, and consequently people as a whole. Within the framework of this study then, *Jou* is intended to be taken as referencing a particular group of people. The groups of *Jou* operate under certain societal norms, yet as a species, these groups of people must have specific points of communal reference which make their unity successfully cohesive.

In interpreting Soseki’s work *Jou* comes to represent those persons whom have been separated from the secondary part of their word, as in *Joushiki*. These persons, whose common place in this term is severed, represent exiled persons as a particular group. Many of their attributes vary from group to group. Their languages change, their

absent home soil ranges, and their cultural dynamic are variable. However, despite their many differences exiled persons share common statelessness, and the same struggle to *resist and persist*, as Suheir Hammad would say.

The second part of Soseki's analytic portrayal of life in a world lacking common sense, is the term for sense itself, *shiki*. Dissecting the term *shiki* into its four parts reveals the Kanji meaning: *to Say, to Stand, the Sun, and the Tasseled Spear*. (Hoye, Exile 5) These are integral parts of the argument for the necessity of place in one's world. It is these four corners which constitute the human experience. To be truly human, one must be able to stand, willing to defend the place of speech where light shines.... When one of these corners is sanded down, chipped away at or eroded over time, the triangle that is left is a maze of incompletes. To stand best represents what is lost when a person is forced to live in exile. When the corner of soil is taken away right from under the feet of a people there is no solid ground for them to continue building their lives, nor any earth for them to plant their histories for future generations to cultivate.

### **Exploring the Artist's Life in a Three Cornered World**

It is here that the artist resides; in this complex, yet very simple skeleton of a world. What is missing is glaring, and yet the artist is more often than not the only person in the immediate surrounding who realizes that the corner is gone and feels great interior pressure to push the corner back out, to furiously build it back up. In this struggle to make right the missing wrong, the artist pours himself into the task of

illuminating the glaring absence to his peers. In the case of exile, the artist transforms this work into that of actively explaining to the outside world living on solid ground, what it is like to live a transient, demi life; and forming into a presentable narrative the story of the exile.

### **To Say**

Recognizing that one must work with the tools at hand, the artist utilizes the remaining three corners from which to build upon their fourth corner workshop. To Say represents the collective culture as well as society (Hoye, Personal). In the Say corner, what this society or group of people say about justice and consequently, the place of one another within created cultural boundaries is pivotal to the group's understanding of itself and its inhabitants. The speaking corner is what makes us human. It is our language which effectively separates us from all the other life forms on Earth. Speech makes us different, it makes us, us. How society bands together to define concepts of what is acceptable and not acceptable is all included in the Say corner. To speak well about things that matter is what society's purpose is. Great philosophers throughout the reasoning world's ages have swum in the speech sea. Articulation is the very cosmic materialization which is solid enough to house Aristotle, Socrates, Al-Furabi, and the persons who once belong to their ranks. Expressing oneself is a particularly human attribute which when missing, hinders severely mankind's developmental process.

Arguably, the literary artist works in this corner, using the medium of writing to speak and enter into society's conversation. The literary artist who is aware of the necessity for reconstruction in their world, and of their unique ability to navigate through people's consciousness with language are the ones who should be paid specific attention to as they have seen what is missing and may be able to serve as guides. The methods of guidance employed by the literary artist range from artist to artist, as their particular gifts and persuasions often lead them in different paths to the same end goal of rehabilitating their societies.

Hannah Arendt employed reason and philosophical breakdowns of highly political human concerns and necessities. She wrote and gave speeches on those aspects of people's political activity which were most fructiferous and what the best type of participation would look like practically. For Arendt, politics is the most important aspect of a person's humanity. Therefore, the corner where speech is exemplified best personifies Arendt's spirit. Suheir Hammad, in contrast to Arendt uses poetry and spoken prose to give life to the Palestinian narrative. It is the glaring absence of a tangible place which forces Hammad to rectify the lost corner for her people. Though the aim that Hammad is pointing her words too is quite literally the Palestinian state, the material she uses to address this issue is dripping with transcendence. The soul of the Palestinian people is laid bare with her words.

## The Sun

Transcendence itself encompasses a corner in the world of humanity. The Sun corner represents wisdom, transcendence, the good, and God (Hoye, Personal). In this corner the recognition that there is something sacred that is more than ourselves exists. The eye of the mind is this Sun corner. Soseki here blends with this corner as the greatest transcendent element in *Kusamakura* is nature. Ever maintaining Japanese integrity in his novel Soseki writes,

*“Western poets in particular take human nature as their corner stone, and so are oblivious to the existence of the realm of pure poetry. Consequently, when they reach its borders, they come to a halt, because they are unaware that anything lies beyond. They are content to deal merely in such commodities as sympathy, love, justice and freedom, all of which may be found in that transient bazaar which we call life.”* (Soseki 19)

Instead of succumbing to western influences and writing around the center point of man, Soseki makes a break with this way of life and insists on incorporating the harmonious balance with nature on every step of the journey.

For humanity, the experience of transcendence is transformative. The cosmic questions of humanity’s purpose, intended direction and natural essence, are all funneled into transcendent avenues. Divinity in all its forms manifests itself in the Sun corner. This niche of human existence serves to join the physical with the spiritual battling natures in man. The secular, or profane life of man, must be balanced out by

the sacred or it is not able to hold up to humanity's cosmic demands. According to Mircea Eliade, "Life is not possible without an opening toward the transcendent; in other words, human beings cannot live in chaos. Once contact with the transcendent is lost, existence in the world ceases to be possible. . . ." (Eliade 34) Interestingly enough, this idea of chaos not accommodating human nature is quite representative of the nature of the human v. natural world balance.

As people we require cosmos, not chaos; (Hoye, Personal) and further still, an adequate place with order suitable to the group's particular cosmic position. Transcendence for Eliade, and for Soseki, does not necessarily imply a divine being, or god. Yet there is a cohesive line of reasoning in both authors which relies on the assumption that mankind needs connections outside of itself to be complete. The sacred must be in reach of the profane, or at the very least, believed to be. "Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane. To designate the *act of manifestation* of the sacred, we have proposed the term *hierophany*. It is a fitting term, because it does not imply anything further; it expresses no more than is implicit in its etymological content, i.e., that *something sacred shows itself to us*." (Eliade 11) These manifestations of the sacred are pivotal in providing Soseki's Sun corner. It is this natural force, sacred manifestation which illuminates humanity and bestows the proper chemical balance to provide for life



itself. Without the transcendent corner, there is no cosmic world possible in which mankind could unfold or even survive in.

Nature is the transcendent element in Soseki's work, as made explicitly clear by its personification. Nature has its own agenda, its own prerogative.

*"You can smooth the soil out flat, but the stones will stick up. You can break the stones into pieces, but not the rocks. There is nothing you can do about getting rid of the rocks. They sit atop the mound of broken earth unconquered, and with an almost contemptuous air of self assurance. There is nowhere here where Nature will yield us a road without a struggle. Thus since our opponent is so unaccommodating, and will not step aside, we must either climb over, or go round."* (Soseki 15)

In this portion of the journey in *Kusamakura*, Nature is given a pronoun's place in the text as well as obstinate and resolved human features. Nature does not yield, nor does it accommodate. Nature has manifested itself in the clearest hierophany possible for Soseki, that of rocky earth who will not step aside for any man's journey, but requires the respect of being left unadulterated. We must go around nature, for we can never bend the sacred to our will.

### **The Tasseled Spear and Japanese Bushido**

This place where human's can speak about manifestations of the sacred, and can come together to discuss transcendent experiences must be defended. Moreover, to be

complete people, civilizations must have the ability to designate protectors of their collective lives. The Tasseled Spear corner represents courage and the willingness to fight for one's place in the cosmos (Hoye). In a civilized society the consensus seems to be that the inhabitant of that group must have the ability to protect themselves as well as their loved ones and livelihoods. Choosing those who protect the place is a task in itself, yet there are astonishingly similar characteristics that range across geographic points and historical time periods.

In Plato's *Republic* lies a discussion of who should guard the intended ideal city. These persons must first and foremost possess at minimum, the animalistic instinctual ability to recognize friend from foe. This ensures that the protected do not come to fear their protectors. The guardians of the city must be both gentle in nature and spirited. In combining these two elements, the canine example is given. "When a dog sees someone it doesn't know, it gets angry before anything bad happens to it. But when it knows someone, it welcomes him, even if it has never received anything good from him." (Plato 51) The guardians in order to be sufficiently balanced must be lovers of learning. "Philosophy, spirit, speed and strength must all, then, be combined in the nature of anyone who is to be a fine and good guardian of our city." (Plato 51)

The Japanese had Plato's guardians incarnated in their Samurai warrior class. The Samurai were extensively skilled in writing poetry, particularly the traditional haiku; which Soseki himself regards so highly. The Bushido ethical system was handed down

from generation to generation and still permeates the collective culture of Japanese society today. “Chivalry is a flower no less indigenous to the soil of Japan, than its emblem the cherry blossom; nor is it a dried up specimen of an antique virtue preserved in the herbarium of our history.” (Nitobe 2) Parallel to the guidelines given in the *Republic* for those characteristics which ought to be sought after in the guardian class is the corresponding Japanese word, Bushido. “*Bu-shi-do* means literally Military-knight-ways—the ways which fighting nobles should observe in their daily life as well as their vocation. . . .” (Nitobe 3) There is then a constant running through both philosophical requisites for guardianship. Our guardians must not be ruthless fighting and killing machines incapable of reasoning without a direct order from the chain of command. They must be authors and poets and artists, who wield swords for the protection of their place.

The weapon which Soseki designates as appropriate to be housed in the corner of defense is a flagged spear; meaning that there is cause in the struggle, and not simply weaponry (Hoye, Personal). This seemingly unimportant detail contains a key component for the element of place which brings the discussion of Soseki’s novel back into the perspective of Exile and the search for a better understanding of it. This tasseled spear symbolizes a recognized governmental structure to which the guardians as well as the other inhabitants adhere to. The inhabitants of the city speak, seek manifested transcendence, and defend. Yet it is imperative that they do this in the name

of their particular region, state, or nation. As persons come together, procreate, and enlarge themselves within a cultural boundary, they are in essence cementing their place in the cosmos.

### **A Place to Stand**

What is worth defending, as the housing structure for people's political speech and transcendental experiences is the last corner, "to Stand". For the purposes of this study, Place will serve as the culmination of the other three corners. It is the elusive corner of Place which is attacked in the exilic experience. The very essence of exile is the lack of place. "To Stand", in a particular place is to have a particular soil under your feet. It means to be somewhere, to have a proper place in the cosmos. In this place society forms, and communicate collectively about justice and transcendence. This place is the foundation of a person and his/her world. Such an important place should be defended with a tasseled spear from invasion, and actively protected from erosion. In exile, Place serves as the eroded, undefended corner. Those literary artists who attempt to restore and in turn defend the eroded corner through their writing are saying things that matter because they believe in transcendence. Their writing is their tasseled defense of their own eroded place, and their voices a way of combating the elusiveness of statelessness and dehumanization of exile.

## **Mono No Aware in Exile**

In reading *Kusamakura* everything from the wording, to the character development, to the tale in itself is dripping with traditional Japan. Soseki brings the connection to nature into every aspect of his protagonist's journey. Consider the in between stage the traveler finds himself when moving between the conscience world and the world of sleep. In restful pose the man drifts off into a state found in nature and not any imagined man-made structure.

*"Nobody can be conscious of himself when he is fast asleep, just as no one can ignore the world around him when he is wide awake. . . .Imagine the bright colours of Nature shaded off until they almost, but not quite, fade into a dream; or this clear-cut world adrift in a sea of mist. Use the magic hand of sleep to smooth off all the sharp corners from reality, and then set it, thus tempered gently pulsating."* (Soseki 52)

Getting to where our place is requires undeniable patience and a dedicated practice in balancing desires with outside reality. The artist's journey to place is paved with bricks of hardship and littered with stumbling stones of intolerance. For those exiled, the journey for place requires the eroded corner's restoration.

*"Why, I wondered, had I felt so peculiar last night. It was extraordinary, I thought, that just crossing the boundary from day into night should cause the world to fall into such utter confusion."* (Soseki 53) The time boundary crossed by the traveler in Soseki's novel causes him some distress because of the confused blending between fantasy and reality that occurred. Similarly, the realities of people who have been in

exile are also blended into indistinguishable realities. Nights and days become distorted as the rhythm of one's life loses the necessary balance to maintain its grounding. Soseki weaves together his novel, *Kusamakura* with the glaring omission of a clear cut story line. The plot of the novel is genuinely irrelevant. Purposefully done, Soseki has shunned western story lines.

*"I find it very trying to be subjected to repeated doses of stimulants designed to evoke these emotions when I go the theatre, or read a novel. I want a poem which abandons the commonplace, and lifts me, at least for a short time, above the dust and grime of the workaday world; not one which rouses my passions to an even greater pitch than usual."* (Soseki 19)

The beauty in Soseki's novel comes undiluted and unfiltered. It is a beautiful novel because of the aesthetics of the detailed journey, because that is the way the author wrote it, independent of the readers own feelings and bias. The corrosiveness of exile on the human soul is parallel to the beauty in Soseki's novel. Exile damages, independent of any efforts to counteract the harm caused. Exile destroys independent of any other qualities possessed by the person exiled. Exile strips a person bare and unbalances them by eroding the fundamental corner they live in. This effectively denies their existence. The transcendent quality which runs through page by page of Soseki's novel, and the traveler's journey inside of it, is certainly the uncompromised Japanese

aesthetic element. Contrasted by the ugliness, destroyed chaos that unravels lives, is exile; the two qualities are made of distinct organic materials which can never be joined.

### **Living a Harmonious Exilic Experience**

Understanding Soseki's novel involves understanding the traditional Japanese focus on the harmony found in the balance between beauty and pain. Blooming cherry blossom trees are the quintessential example of this cultural philosophy in that these trees bloom and blossom into natural works of art in April. Their resurgence marks the beginning of spring, the academic year, and many other cultural markers. People gather throughout Japan to view the cherry blossom trees while they are still up, in a practice called *Hanami*. (Hoye, Personal) The glory given to these truly beautiful trees comes from the certainty that their beauty will not last. In Japanese culture, as in Soseki's work, beauty is fleeting. Understanding this point is vital to the Japanese way of life. One must realize that even tempers and open eyes are the ideal, as they are unclouded by overwhelming emotions which hinge upon uncontrollable elements of one's world.

*" . . . just as light and darkness are but opposite sides of the same thing, so wherever the sunlight falls it must of necessity cast a shadow. . . .In the depths of joy dwells sorrow, and the greater the happiness the greater the pain. Try to tear joy and sorrow apart, and you lose your hold on life. Try to cast them to one side, and the world crumbles." (Soseki 13)*

Yet, there is no beauty in exile. There is no humanity in exile. While the concept of Mono No Aware fits wonderfully into Soseki's work and Japanese culture, there is not a beautiful aspect one can balance inside the horrors of exilic life. Exile, to be uprooted from a place where transcendence can occur and it can be spoken about and defended, is the exact opposite of natural Japanese harmony. For Soseki, to be human is to cultivate a very delicate balance in every aspect of one's life. Life must be aesthetically pleasing, and this beauty approached with the certainty that it cannot last and therefore must be enjoyed and appreciated in the moment of its bloom. To be human is to take part in the *hanami* of life. For Soseki, to be human is to encircle oneself in the harmonious balance found in the Japanese understanding of Mono No Aware. Therefore, humanity according to Soseki cannot survive in exile. Exile exemplifies the most unbalanced of possible human lives. It denies culture, transcendent experiences, and a proper location to facilitate philosophical discussion. Exile is the complete contempt for Japanese Mono No Aware.

### **The Journey to Place**

It is this study's contention that the application of Soseki's harmonious depiction of a traveler's journey in his novel, *Kusamakura*, provides a blueprint for the replacement life of exile. Exile does not leave space enough for harmony, therefore the traveler's journey provides us with an example of what life would look like if it were not subjugated to exile's distortion. The traveler's journey in Soseki's novel also gives a



formula for finding your place again, should one find themselves in exile. The journey back home for Soseki hinges on the ability of a people to travel harmoniously. He gives his reader the method he believes necessary to find oneself again and get to work rebuilding the missing corner of their life.

Life as explained by Soseki is ripe with difficulty. The path the traveler walks along is neither smooth nor easily journeyed through. In fact the rocks that riddle the pathway are too large to even move, one must walk around them; veering off from our original direction and perhaps struggling to get back on. To navigate the path more successfully, Soseki suggests limiting overtaking emotions as they cloud the senses, and block one's appreciation for the natural world.

*I wonder why this should be? I suppose the reason is that, looking at the landscape, it is as though you were looking at a picture unrolled before you, or reading a poem on a scroll. The whole area is yours, but since it is just like a painting or a poem, it never occurs to you to try and develop it, or make your fortune by running a railway line there from the city. You are free from any care or worry because you accept the fact that this scenery will help neither t fill your belly, nor add a penny to your salary, and are content to enjoy it as scenery. This is the great charm of Nature, that it can in an instant, discipline men's hearts and minds, and removing all that is base, lead them into the pure unsullied world of poetry. . . .In order to appreciate the poetry, you must put yourself in the position of an onlooker, who being able to stand well back, can really see what is happening. It is only from this position that a play or novel can be enjoyed, for*

*her you are free from personal interests. You are only a poet while you are watching or reading, and are not actually involved.” (Soseki 18-19)*

In the sense of detachment, peace can be found. When you are in the middle of the storm, it is impossible to see with clarity the foreseeable ending. Yet, those who observe the storm from afar, are equipped with the tools necessary to judge the best way to start doing damage control, and can predict where the storm will move to next so they may prepare its future destination, and aid the place just ravaged by it. This experience with a devastating storm is parallel to the experience of exile. In exile, it is all one can do to remain spiritually standing, while the world around them closes and the surrounding hearts harden. It is the artist's distinct responsibility then to detach from the exact exilic experience, and be able to see the situation clearly. The artist is the only hope of those who are exiled. Only they can provide the avenue arriving again at the lost corner of Place. With a calm, yet focused and determined eye, they must hold up carefully crafted mirrors to those who banish and dehumanize others. The mirror image must reflect the situation of those exiled, simple and organic. The image must reflect the natural world the exile lives in, free from overcharged emotions.

### **Following the Artist Back Home**

The four cornered world which the artist tries actively to reconstruct is missing the corner designated to place, in the case of exile. In the effort to better understand what the concept of exile truly means for those whose lives have been consumed by it,

Soseki's novel provides extraordinary insight. This insight rests on the notion that the most effective way for the artist to be able to guide their people back to the path leading to place is to show them to navigate through a world which does not sympathize with their dilemma or cause. Those exiled must learn to go around the rocks in their respective lives, and detach themselves from the exilic experience. To survive those exiled must exile themselves from their current reality in order to see more clearly the options and actuality of the situation. They must look at their temporary places as poets looking at the horizon or painters natural green space. They must see it, yet not attempt to control the uncontrollable. They must be able to survive exile.

For the part of the artist, they must walk with those exiled and experience the rocks and hardships littering the way to Place. They must understand those exiled persons and be able to observe with unclouded vision the exilic experience. With this clearer vision, they are to provide the source for getting back to Place. They must teach those exiled to live in harmony, as everything on Earth provides humans with the possibility for great pleasure, as well as tremendous pain. The artist must understand the exile's path, and know their charted course. They must be the example for living harmony. It is in this fashion that artists rebuild eroded corners. When they link themselves with harmony they add breadth to the malnourished exilic experience. For Soseki, exile demands the rebuilding of the eroded corner of place, by conscientiously

and actively engaging in detaching from outrageous, westernized emotions. It is through achieving harmony with nature that the eroded corner of Place can be rebuilt.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION: BETTER UNDERSTANDING EXILE

#### **Understanding Exilic Studies Within the Scholarly Community**

The larger purpose of this study has been to gain a clearer understanding of the concept of exile. The concept in itself has been left largely unattended, and many times those affected by exile have been forgotten. In order to take away a clearer understanding of the exilic experience, steps have been taken to systematically comprehend this concept. The etymological breakdown of the word in itself stems from the French term, *Exil*. Its origin is the Latin *Exilium* meaning banishment, or place of exile. The banished person or *Exul*, then becomes the object of this studies attention. As *Exul*, four literary artists are taken to be explored individually. Careful analysis was done of the individual exilic experiences described by the four *exul*. These *exul* are for this study representations of literary artist. Literary artist routinely hold up mirrors to their respective societies in order to combat inhuman degradation in the form of exile.

The four literary artists explored were Hannah Arendt, Suheir Hammad, Max Aub, and Natsume Soseki. These artists were chosen in order to support the claim that exile is a non-discriminatory evil. Exile is found globally, and therefore is a systematic problem which must be better understood by academia, and the population as a whole. The global range of the artists chosen spans from the Middle East, middle of Europe,

Latin America, and East Asia. Each artist brings a particular experience to light. Each has a central point and definitive explanation of what exile is for them. Yet, these experiences are not separate entities as each contains the common thread of lack of place. The lost corner of Place permeates throughout each artist's narrative and brings the study back to tie into exile as a concept.

### **Understanding the Artist's Exilic Experience**

The search for a better understanding of exile began in this study through the lens of academia and the problems within the discipline of exilic studies as a branch of political theory. Sebastiaan Faber was referenced as the scholar who best illuminated three problems of the field. While in agreement with the recognition of these three problems of the field, it is this study's contention that there is a very basic problem that is being overlooked. In an attempt to address just one of the questions posed by Faber within the problem of Delimitation, I feel we should, "attempt a careful definition of exile" (Faber 16). The problem of defining what it means to be exiled is troublesome, and has been left largely untouched by the scholarly community. Busying themselves with categorizing and sorting the prospective scope of exile, the exilic experience has been underestimated. The venue for illuminating this experience can be clearly examined in the work of those who live in the triangle of exile themselves. The work of literary artists should be strongly considered as they have recognized the erosion of place in the world we live in. The question which the scholarly community should be

asking is: “What can the literary artist offer in an effort to perhaps limit the scope of exile, without excluding persons who should be included?”

Taking into account the work of Hannah Arendt and Max Aub, an understanding of political exile should be included in the proposed definition. The act of leaving one’s homeland for reasons which include the rebellion in thought from the regime in charge; either in voluntarily protests, or out of fear for one’s safety is an exilic experience. Political writing in direct connection with the departure should not be excluded from exilic literature. In fact, it is these personal experiences which molded both the essays Hannah Arendt wrote in her work, *Essays in Understanding: 1930-1954 Formation, Exile and Totalitarianism*. The work of Max Aub, primarily his diaries compiled by Manuel Aznar Soler, deal specifically on how Aub felt as an exiled Spaniard living the remainder of his life in Mexico, after fleeing Spain under Franco.

For Suheir Hammad, the forced displacement of Palestinians, among other refugee populations, is exile as well. For those who have been born of these exiled refugees, many times there is great internal conflict over their identity. If exile would never have occurred to their families, these products of exile may have had very different lives. As in the case of Suheir Hammad, having lived a life in Brooklyn, New York yet being raised by displaced Palestinian parents has had a significant impact on her version of exile. This too should be considered in the scope of the study of exile. Living the exilic experience in this manner, listening to oral history and stories of loss has

unquestionably shaped Hammad's writing and poetry. "I write of longing for a land I have yet to feel under my feet. This tale is part of them all, and it never whispers its urgency; it shouts it in song. The call to and from Palestine and her love, that is the command that automatically straightens my back and refuses anymore of my tears" (Drops 11). The urgency to speak, and tell the story of her parents, and her people, make Suheir Hammad's work pivotal to this study's look at the clearer understanding of exile as a concept and experience.

Understanding why exile is important in the first place and why the study of the concept of exile is a worthwhile and significant endeavor is Natsume Soseki's understanding of the world containing four pivotal corners of existence. "The Sun", "to Say", "Tasseled Spear", are all the corners that literary artists have still to work within. The eroded corner is, for the purposes of this study, Place. The erosion of Place is exile. "To Stand" is to be in a particular place, in a particular time. It is not existential, nor spiritual but physical. The physical presence of the place where the artist comes from is the basis for the creation of key aspects of their belief systems and personalities. The negation of this stability to a people makes them less steady in the rest of their corners.

### **Understanding Exilic Narrative and Defining Exile**

Each of the four consulted artists have brought with them a plethora of meaningful contributing materials in this endeavor to better understand exile. Yet, it is their narratives as a whole which have best charted the course for getting at the artist's



experience in a three cornered world. Each has culminated in a single and distinct area of exile and used it from which to lance the rest of the arguments in their work. By zeroing in on their particular definitions of exile through their individual narratives, exile comes to be better defined.

For Hannah Arendt, what it means to be human is the Aristotelian focus on the polis and human political activity. Politics makes us human. To contribute to society's conversation is in essence what defines us as human beings. Among Arendt's theories of the banality of evil and the bourgeois-man, the ever flowing current remains politics. For Arendt we exist because we are political animals which innately yearn to speak well about things that matter. Arendt personifies the corner of to Say. Exile then for Arendt is the most detrimental of tragedies which could occur to a people. To strip them of a place in which to participate politically dehumanizes them. Isolating them from the polis is in itself the most awful aspect of exile.

Max Aub's narrative has a focus on history and remembrance. Getting forgotten, lost in hazy memories, and overlooked is the direct consequence of being exiled. When people are exiled, their very existence becomes debatable. When you are no longer part of the larger narrative, you are marginalized and more than likely forgotten. You slip away to the place where no one knows you, and your thoughts do not matter. Historically you did not happen. Aub's narrative is best categorized by the anger seen in the character Carlos aboard the ship San Juan. Carlos rejects any efforts to be reasoned

with as he is acutely aware that on the boat, he does not exist; he never did, and no one remembers him. This anger which flows through Aub's work personifies the essence of the Tasseled Spear. Aub ferociously defends the need to keep the memory of those exiled alive. We must remember the exiled. We must wrestle with forgetting, and bring the pain and plight of those who the world insists on forgetting, to the forefront of our lives.

Palestine quite literally is the focus of Suheir Hammad's work. Her poetry is characteristically lyrical, and her object the ever exilic experiences of Palestinians. For Hammad, exile, without any opaqueness, means the physical denial of a person's place. As beautiful as Hammad's poetry is, there is no beauty in exile. In a place of one's own, there may be political conversation, the seeking of transcendence, and tangibly the growing of one's own olives. These cultural references to foods, music, beats, mark Hammad's poetry with humanness. There is liquid that flows through Hamamd's work. Sometimes it is cleansing like rain, other times it is painful like hail. Sometimes this fluid is sorrowful like tears or desperate and in pain like blood spilled. Yet it is always exiled. The liquid flowing through Hammad's poetry is exile from a particular place. Her prose calls out for a literal Palestine under her feet.

Exile then has taken the unique forms of politics in Arendt, Remembrance in Aub, and Palestine in Hammad. For Soseki however, there is something which must be understood in order to understand exile. One must be able to survive it, despite its

horrors. The most awful part of exile for Soseki is the isolation from Nature and the innate disconnection from harmony. The balanced corner of the Sun is reflected in Soseki's narrative of transcendence. Humanity's harmonious relationship with nature is what keeps us human. This is also our saving element. Exiled people must understand that they cannot move the stones which Nature puts in their way, they must go around. Exiled people must be able to see the Mono No Aware elements of exile, and detach themselves from over emotional exilic responses in order to survive. Soseki's *Kusamakura* is a map of how to navigate through the treacherous waters of Exile without drowning.

One must have a balanced in order to remain human. Exile has no balance. One must have a place from which to speak politically and to defend as this is the place where transcendence can be experienced. We must articulate our need to defend the place in which the sacred manifests itself to us. To lose this balance is altering, and over time these alterations take their toll on those exiled. The triangle that is left is where Arendt, Hammad, Aub and Soseki reside, is the concept of exile. Therefore, in the search for a more precise definition of the concept of exile, we are searching for a richer understanding of Place, and its significance for humanity. Searching ought to be done within the work of exiled literary artists. As a field of study, academia should rely on the four corners of a balanced human world to guide the exploration of exile. Narratives are

imperative, and there is no better venue for an exilic narrative to manifest itself than in the work of literary artist.

## WORKS CITED

- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a report on the banality of evil*. New York, New York: Penguin Classics, 2006. Print.
- . *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*. 1st ed. New York, USA: Schocken Books, 1994. Print.
- . *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1998. Print.
- . *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, USA: Harcourt, Inc., 1968. Print.
- Arendt, Hannah, Lotte Köhler, Karl Jaspers, and Hans Saner. *Hannah Arendt Karl Jaspers: Correspondence 1926-1969*. Mariner Books, 1993. Print.
- Aub, Max, and Manuel Aznar Soler. *Diarios, 1967-1972*. 3. University of Michigan, 2008. Print
- . *San Juan: Tragedia*. 1st ed. Barcelona: Editorial Anthropos, 1992. Print.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. U.S.A.: Harcourt, Inc., 1959. Print.
- "Exile." *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 1th ed. 2003. Print.
- "Exile." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Summer 2002 ed. Print.
- "Exile Studies Certificate Program." Florida International University. December 2010. Web.

- Faber, Sebastiaan. "The Privilege of Pain: The Exile as Ethical Model in Max Aub, Francisco Ayala, and Edward Said." *Journal of Interdisciplinary Crossroads* 3.1 (2006): 11-32.
- Forsdyke, Sara. "Exile, Ostracism and the Athenian Democracy." *Classical Antiquity*. Vol. 19. No. 2. (2000): 232-263. Print.
- Garcia, Daniel J. *El Exilio En La Obra De Max Aub*. Diss. University of Maryland, 1982.
- Hammad, Suheir. *Born Palestinian, Born Black & the Gaza Suite*. 1st ed. Brooklyn: Upset Pr Inc, 2010. Print.
- . *Breaking Poems*. 1st ed. New York, New York: Small Pr Distribution, 2008. Print.
- . *Drops of this Story*. 1st ed. New York, New York: Writers & Readers, 1996. Print.
- . "First Writing Since." *Middle East Report*. 221. (2001): 2-3. Print.
- . *One on On: Suheir Hammad*. Dir. Riz Kahn." Al Jazeera English: 2009, Web.
- . "Poetry." *Affilia*. 21.240 (2006): 240-243. Print.
- . *Salt of this Sea*. Dir. Annemarie Jacir." Augustus Film: 2008, Film.
- "Hiroshima Bomb Pilot Dies Aged 92." *BBC News Online* 01 November 2007: n. pag. Web.
- Hoye, Timothy. *Exile and Anamnesis in Selected Works of Natusme Soseki*. Texas Woman's University. Southwest Political Science Association annual convention. Albuquerque, New Mexico. 14-17 March 2007.
- . Personal Conversations and Interviews. Texas Woman's University. September 2009 – May 2011.

- Huang, Hsuan. "Kant's Concept of Radical Evil." *Against Doing Nothing: Evil and it's Manifestations*. Ed. Shilinka Smith, Shona Hill. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2010.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. New York: Harper, 1960.
- Knopf-Newman, Marcy Jane. "Interview with Suheir Hammad." *MELUS*. 31. (2006): 71-91. Print.
- Levy, David B. *The Shoah as a Manifestation of Radical and Banal Evil: The (Holocaust) in the Thought of Arendt and Fackenheim and the Legacy of Immanuel Kant*. Diss. Baltimore Hebrew University, 2002.
- "Max Aub." *Gale Literary Databases*. Texas Woman's University Library, 2010. Web. 3 May 2011.
- Nitobe, Inazo. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Indiana: Teibi Pub. Co., 1908. Print.
- Otero Carvajal, Luis Enrique. "La Destrucion de la Ciencia en España. Las Consecuencias del Triunfo Militar de la España franquista." *Historia y Comunicacion Social*. 6. (2001): 149-186. Print.
- Plato. *Republic*. Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Rev. C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992. Print.
- Romero Marco, Alvaro. *Max Aub, Un Ciudadano Mexicano en el Exilio*. University of California, Santa Cruz.
- Sainz Ruiz, Jose Angel. *La Saga/Fuga de Max Aub: Vueltas y Revueltas de un Exilio*. Diss. University of Maryland College Park, 2001. Dissertations & Theses: Full Text, ProQuest. Web. UMI 3035823
- Soseki, Natsume. *The Tree Cornered World (Kusamakura)*. Trans. Alan Turney. New York: G. P. Ptman's Sons, 1982. Print.
- Wilson, Emily R. *The Death of Socrates: Profiles in History*. U.S.A.: Harvard University Press, 2007. Print.

### Works Consulted

- Faber, Sebastiaan. *Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico, 1939-1975*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002. Print.
- Fackenheim, Emil L. "Kant and Radical Evil." *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments*. Vol. 3. Ed. Ruth Chadwick. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Hammad, Suheir. "Directing My Pen Inwards." *Scheherazade's legacy; Arab and American women on writing*. (2004): 79-83. Print.
- Hoye, Timothy. *Race, Ethnicity and Politics: Voeglin's Early Concerns*. Texas Woman's University. 2010.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. New York: Harper, 1960.
- Plato. *The Apology of Socrates*. Trans. D.F. Nevill. Harvard: F.E. Robinson & Co., 1901. Print.
- Ring, Kenneth, and Ghassan Abdullah. *Letters from Palestine: Palestinians Speak Out about Their Lives, Their Country, and the Power of Nonviolence*. Tucson: Wheatmark Inc, 2010. Print.



## APPENDIX

### First Writing Since

**First Writing Since**

there have been no words.  
no poetry in ashes south of canal no prose in trucks driving debris and dna.  
evident out my window is an abstract reality.  
sky where once was steel. smoke where once was flesh.

please god, let it be a mistake, the pilot's heart,  
the plane's engine god please, don't let it be anyone who looks like my brothers.

i do not know how bad a life has to break in order to kill.  
ive never been so hungry that i willed hunger  
never been so angry as to want a gun over a pen.  
not really. even as a woman, as a palestinian, never this broken.

ricardo on radio said in his accent thick as yuca, "i will  
feel so much better when the first bombs drop over there.  
a woman crying in a car parked and stranded in hurt.  
i offered comfort, a hand she did not see before she said,  
"we're gonna burn them so bad," my hand went to my  
head and my head to the dead iraqi children, the dead in nicaragua. in rwanda  
who vie with fake sport wrestling for america's attention.  
people saying, this was bound to happen, lets not forget u.s. transgressions,

Hold up, i live here, these are my friends and fam,  
me in those buildings, and we're not bad people,

do not support america's bullying.

can i just have half a second to feel bad?

thank you woman who saw me brinking my cool and blinking  
tears. she opened her arms before she asked "do you want a hug?" a  
big white woman, her embrace only people with flesh can offer.  
"my brother's in the navy," i said. "and we're arabs".

"wow, you got double trouble." word.

one more person ask me if i knew the hijackers.  
one more motherfucker ask me what navy my brother is in.  
one more person assume no arabs or muslims were killed.

*assume they know me, or that i represent a people.  
or that a people represent an evil. or that evil is as simple as a flag and words on a page.*

*we did not vilify white men when mcveigh bombed oklahoma.  
give out his family's address or church or blame the bible or pat fucking robertson.*

*networks air footage of palestinians dancing in the street,  
no apology that hungry children are bribed with sweets that turn their teeth brown.  
correspondents edit images. archives facilitate lazy journalism.*

*and when we talk about holy books, hooded men and death,*

*why never mention the kkk?*

*if there are any people on earth who understand how new york is  
feeling right now, they are in the west bank and the gaza strip.*

*bush has waged war on a man once openly funded by the cia.*

*I've read too many books, to believe what im told.*

*i don't give a fuck about bin laden. his vision of the world dont represent me or those i  
love. But I've signed petitions for years trying to out  
the u.s. sponsored Taliban. shit is complicated, and i don't know what to think.*

*but i know who will pay. women, mostly colored and poor.*

*will have to bury children, support themselves through grief.*

*in america, it will be those amongst us who refuse blanket attacks on  
the shivering. who work toward social justice, and opposing hateful policies.*

*"either you are with us, or with the terrorists" –*

*meaning keep your people under control and resistance censored.*

*meaning we got the loot and the nukes.*

*never felt less american and more brooklyn, than these days.*

*the stars and stripes represent the dead as citizens first, not family, not lovers.*

*my skin is real thin, my eyes darker. the future holds little light.*

*my baby brother is a man now, on alert, praying five times a  
day the orders he will are righteous and will not weigh down his soul in the afterlife.*

*both my brothers - my heart stops when not a beat to disturb my fear.*

*Muslim gentle men. both born in brooklyn and their faces are of the arab man,*

*all eyelashes and nose and beautiful color and stubborn hair.*

*what will their lives be like now?over there is over here.*

*across the river, burning rubber and limbs rescuers traumatized.*

*skyline brought back to human size. no longer taunting gods*

*i cried when i saw those buildings collapse on themselves like a broken heart.*

*i have never owned pain that needs to spread like that.*

*there is no poetry in this. causes and effects symbols and ideologies.*

*mad conspiracy here, information we will never know.*

*there is death here, and promises of more.*

*there is life here. anyone hearing this is breathing, maybe hurting,  
but breathing for sure if there is any light to come, it will  
shine from the eyes of those who look for peace and justice after the  
rubble and rhetoric are cleared and the phoenix has risen.*

*affirm life.*

*Affirm life*

*we got to carry each other now.*

*you are either with life, or against it.*

*affirm life.*