

The American University in Cairo
School for Global Affairs and Public Policy

**SPACES BETWEEN:
IDENTITIES OF TRANSNATIONAL PEOPLE EXPRESSED THROUGH THEIR ART
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE**

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Rebecca Malcolm

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Spaces Between:
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Rebecca Malcolm

Supervised by Dr. Agnes Czajka

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the art of six global migrants with whom in-depth interviews were conducted. The thesis examines imposed names and identities of global migrants and the way global migrants respond and interact with those names and identities. It argues that global migrants use their art to create transnational spaces and challenge traditional concepts of community and identity. By addressing issues such as statelessness, securitization, assimilation, and othering in their art, the artists challenge the nation-state system. Likewise, by fusing different cultures and artistic forms together, the artists create transnational spaces that challenge the nation-state system.

Search Terms: Transnational, Art, Global Migrants, Immigration, Identity

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Chapter One: Introduction

States, organizations, societies, and people create and impose identities. This process often creates dissonance and discord, or increases harmony and unity within societies. Collective identities unite people within a society or group, increasing the harmony and unity within the society or group. The same collective identities create dissonance and discord as they exclude or marginalize certain people. While many of minority groups struggle with hardship, global migrants in America face unique challenges, for American society continually question the migrants' identity.

Currently, American culture and art attributes its identity to many people who were not born in the United States. Art creates a plane through which cultures can be analyzed and seen through different lenses. Whether through film, written word, photography or drawing, art facilitates evaluation, recognition and dialogue among diverse cultural groups. Through art, the audience learns the background of the artist and his/her worldview. These artists, through their identity, and experiences expressed in their works, have left their thumbprint.

This thesis examines imposed and accepted identities of global migrants and the way identity is expressed through art. I argue that global migrants create transnational spaces through their art and challenge traditional concepts of community and identity. The thesis addresses two primary questions: Do global migrants express and examine identity within their art? What identities are expressed in their art? This thesis answers these questions through qualitative research and analysis, with a particular interest in how these identities affect and are effected by the nation-state system.

The artists each avoided, reconstructed and challenged interpellation by challenging the nation-state system. Poet Dr. Fady Joudah directly challenges the nation state-system in his

poetry collection, *The Earth In the Attic*, by emphasizing othering, the process of securitization and by creating a transnational space within his art. Likewise, Faroukh Virani indirectly challenges the nation-state system by creating a transnational space in his films *Anjali* and *Slow Burn*. Mr. Virani combines art forms and cultures to create transnational spaces. The transnational space within the art represents Mr. Virani's transnational identity, which challenges the nation-state system.

Renowned novelist Ms. Bapsi Sidhwa indirectly challenges the nation-state system by emphasizing that differences within nations are as prevalent as differences between them in her novel, *The Pakistani Bride*, and she emphasizes the benefits and needs of multiculturalism in her short story, *Defend Yourself Against Me*. Ms. Erum Rani Butt directly challenges the nation-state system by directly addressing issues of immigration, assimilation, neo-racism, and othering in her documentary *Americans 2*. Ms. Sehba Sarwar directly challenges the nation-state system by addressing issues of othering, securitization, assimilation, transnationality, and creates transnational spaces through her novel, *Black Wings*, her short story *Soot*, her film instillation *Why Are You Looking at Me Like That?*, and her essay *No Escaping Violence in Pakistan- or U.S.*

This thesis helps the field understand migrants' views and the way they avoid and reconstruct interpellation within the nation-state system. It emphasizes the significance of the art that global migrants create, and the need for the field to be more attentive to the mediums that global migrants use to express themselves such as art. This introductory chapter reviews the scope of the thesis including geographic location and participants. It then examines the methodology of the research, the gatekeeper organization and ethical concerns. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief synopsis of the rest of the thesis.

Scope

The purpose of this thesis is to understand identities global migrants express through their art and analyze the significance of these identities within the nation-state system. The research focuses on six artists with varying backgrounds, interests and art mediums. This thesis found that all participants construct and reconstruct their identities in relation to, and against dominant identities imposed by the nation-state system. These identities include immigrant, refugee, and outsider (or other). The specific mediums in this research include poetry, written word, film, and digital media. The research was conducted in Houston, Texas. All of the participants are either based in Houston or from Houston.

Houston

When choosing a location to conduct this research, the ideal location was assessed on two imperative factors: the diversity of the city and its art scene. Houston was the locus of the research for many reasons. Houston presented the ideal location to study global migrants and their identities expressed through art because of its cosmopolitan demographics, the vibrant art and culture scene and my personal connections.

First, Houston has the second largest theatre district in the United States.¹ Numerous museums and theaters, with varied events occurring constantly, keep the city bustling and increase Houstonians awareness of art.² Houston has a well developed, mature high art scene with the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, the Houston Symphony, the Houston Opera, and the Houston Ballet, all of which maintain national, and even international recognition. Along with

¹ City of Houston, *About Houston Houston Facts and Figures*, 2011, <http://www.houstontx.gov/abouthouston/houstonfacts.html> (accessed November 5, 2011).

² Dictionary.com, LLC, *Houstonian*, 2011, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Houstonian> (accessed October 8, 2011). It should be noted that the people of Houston refer to themselves as Houstonians.

these organizations, a seemingly endless number of other organizations, many of which receive international recognition, scatter the city.

Second, as the fourth most populous city in the United States,³ Houston is a city known for its diverse population with over ninety languages spoken.⁴ Houston is considered one of “six global cities” that is linked to immigration.⁵ While New York received more immigrants in 1992 than any other US metropolitan area, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, and Houston followed closely behind.⁶ Houston’s location, close to the Gulf of Mexico, diverse companies, beautiful scenery, and largest medical center in the world⁷ make it a location that attracts many conferences, businesses and people of various backgrounds.⁸

The demographics in Houston and the state of Texas are rapidly changing. Houston is often at the center of immigration debate in America because of its centrality in Texas and location to the American-Mexican border. Texas is one of the states in which the Caucasian community is actually becoming a minority. Six key U.S. states - California, New York, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, and Massachusetts - attracted large numbers of international migrants.⁹ In fact, the *Economist* reports that Texas is one of four states that is now a ‘minority-majority’ state, or a state where non-Hispanic whites are in the minority.¹⁰

³ City of Houston, About Houston Houston Facts and Figures, 2011.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino and J. Edward Taylor, "An Evaluation of International Migration Theory: The North American Case," *Population and Development Review* (Population Council) 20, no. 4 (December 1994): 699-751. 726. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2137660>

⁶ Massey et al., “An Evaluation of International Migration Theory: The North American Case,” 726.

⁷ Texas Medical Center, *About TMC*,

<http://www.texasmedicalcenter.org/root/en/GetToKnow/AboutTMC/TMCVideo.htm> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Massey et al., “An Evaluation of International Migration Theory: The North American Case,” 726.

¹⁰ *Economist*, *The New Face of America*, July 9, 2009, <http://www.economist.com/node/13938895> (accessed October 8, 2011).

Since it is my hometown, Houston was a convenient place to conduct research. I know it well, and my knowledge of the town eased my navigation and entrance to its organizations. I could take advantage of previously established connections. Also, my knowledge of the town helped my transportation around town and increased my awareness of current events and the socio-political issues that are important within the town. The culture of Houston allows for an ease of introduction and a relaxed environment. Houstonians are known for their courtesy and friendly manner, thus making my ability to meet and interview people much easier.

Houston's cosmopolitan population, changing demographics and thriving art scene coupled with its friendly, small town feel make it the prime location to conduct research on global migrants and art. As with any city, the spirit of the city is its people. Houston was a prime location for research because of the people available to participate.

Participants

Twelve people were invited to participate in this thesis. Out of the twelve, seven agreed to participate, two declined to participate, and three did not respond. Among the seven who agreed to participate, I interviewed six. I was not able to confirm an interview date with the seventh person. The six people who participated in the interviews have various backgrounds and use different mediums of art. Interviews allow people to recount their personal narratives and make sense of their experiences through the discussion.¹¹ In-depth, personal interviews provide a wealth of information, acting as a way to understand experiences of other people and what they make of those experiences.¹² To many people, six interviews may seem to be a very small number, but the in-depth quality of the interviews focuses on understanding each artist. The

¹¹ Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, Third Edition (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2006).

¹² Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*.

types of artists interviewed include two poets, two film directors, one writer, and one multi-disciplinary artist with whose works include written word, experimental film, digital media, and photography.

While Houston has the third largest Hispanic community and third largest Mexican community in the United States, none of the participants are of Hispanic descent.¹³ According to the 2010 census, Hispanics account for 43.8% of Houston's population.¹⁴ Hispanics receive a lot of media and research attention. For this reason, this thesis focuses on the non-Hispanic community. Four are of Pakistani decent. One is of Palestinian decent, and another is of Indian decent. All of them claimed "American" as their nationality. Even though religion was not a topic or question included in my research, many of the participants spoke of religion. Those who made their religion known were Muslim with the exception of one Zoroastrian. Several participants closely identified their religion as a mitigating factor in their being cast as the 'other,' I will discuss this further in my thesis.

Interviews were conducted with all six participants. Five interviews were conducted in person, and one was conducted via Skype. Three of the participants published their works, while the other three are still developing their skills. Two out of these three are completing their undergraduate degrees, and one is working on a master's degree. All but one participant live in Houston. Even though this last participant is from Houston, he currently lives in Los Angeles and is a M.F.A. Production Candidate at the University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinematic Arts.

One artist wished to remain anonymous. This participant's work expresses identity as it relates to family and interpersonal relationships. While some of the work touches on the artist's

¹³ City of Houston, About Houston Houston Facts and Figures, 2011.

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, *State and County Quick Facts*, October 18, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4835000.html> (accessed November 17, 2011).

identity within the nation-state system, the majority of the artist's work was a deeply personal and intimate reflection of the artist's identity. This artist wished to remain anonymous for the sake of those mentioned within the work. Since this artist's work focuses on interpersonal relationships and intimate aspects of identity, I will not discuss this artist's work in great detail. This decision is not to belittle or disregard this artist's work. Instead, this decision has been made in an attempt to respect this artist's wishes, work and identity.

Methodology

In order to capture the nuances of identity, qualitative research was conducted. This section explains the interview process, the gatekeeping organization and reviews possible ethical concerns. The research data obtained was two-fold. One part was from the interviews, and the second part was obtained from the art created by the participants.

Qualitative research was chosen over quantitative research because “much of the North American research literature is devoted to methodological and measurement issues.”¹⁵ Since the American literature on migration is not lacking statistics, my research benefits the academic literature by focusing on developing a conversation around the art that each participant creates. Furthermore, qualitative research done through interviews allows the participants to answer open-ended questions, through which they can discuss complex issues such as identity. Many of the identities within the art reflect complex issues that are not easily captured within a four choice response questionnaire.

The names and contact information of the participants were obtained through Voices Breaking Boundaries, which acted as the gatekeeper organization. Voices Breaking Boundaries provided me with a list of artists that may be interested in participating with my research. I

¹⁵ Massey et al., “An Evaluation of International Migration Theory: The North American Case,” 726.

focused on trying to find artists from the Middle East or South East Asia that use the art mediums of film or written word. The six interviews conducted generated a wealth of information. The research was conducted through individual semi-structured interviews done either in person or over Skype. The interviews lasted anywhere from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes. I analyzed the art by comparing the themes in their art to the themes of the issues discussed by the participants during their interview.

Voices Breaking Boundaries

There are specific reasons for choosing this organization. Diverse membership, styles of art exhibited, philosophical approach to art, and my experience with the organization influenced my decision. Voices Breaking Boundaries weaves socio-political issues into its art shows and exhibits and maintains a diversified membership. The organization exists in two different parts: Art Production and Art Education.¹⁶ The art production season runs consecutive with the academic school year from August to June. This division of Voices Breaking Boundaries focuses on exhibiting and organizing art shows around a variety of different themes and ideas. The art education focuses on educating teachers from low income areas around Houston on how to better help students and use art as a teaching tool within the classrooms. At times, Voices Breaking Boundaries conducts workshops for students. However, Voices Breaking Boundaries made a strategic decision to focus on educating teachers in the hope of affecting the lives of more students.

The organization is unique because it maintains open membership to people of various backgrounds and ethnicities making it one of the most diverse organizations in Houston.¹⁷ Artists within Voices Breaking Boundaries (VBB) vary in many ways. The organization opens itself to

¹⁶ Voices Breaking Boundaries, *History*, 2011, <http://www.vbbarts.org/history.shtml> (accessed November 7, 2011).

¹⁷ Ibid.

“artists, individuals and organizations from a multitude of perspectives, backgrounds and countries.”¹⁸ This type of welcoming environment is more unique than one may think. Many of the organizations in the Houston area focus on certain ethnic or racial groups allowing only those people who fit into their identity to have a chance of expressing themselves. Voices Breaking Boundaries breaks down labels and allows for people of all backgrounds to express their artistic creativity.

While Voices Breaking Boundaries is not an immigrant arts organization, many of its members and participants are global migrants. Many of the artists featured by the organization are migrants or refugees including “immigrants from countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Haiti, and Norway.”¹⁹ Furthermore, many members who may have immigrated do not consider themselves to be migrants. Farnoosh Moshiri, the author of four novels, claims that “VBB is a unique cultural experience that brings...diverse and progressive voices” together, and that “as an exiled Iranian novelist, VBB feels like ‘home’” to him.²⁰ VBB creates an environment that welcomes people despite of what names may be ascribed to them.

The art exhibited by Voices Breaking Boundaries covers a plethora of styles, beliefs and backgrounds. Even though Voices Breaking Boundaries originated through a literary circle of five women, VBB exhibits a great variety of art every season.²¹ The organization consists of artists with varying backgrounds and multiple forms of art. Each exhibit, or show, displays various mediums of art including, film, spoken word, photography, music, poetry, and live art.²² For example, the 2008-2009 season contained several events focusing on Sehba Sarwar’s new

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Voices Breaking Boundaries, *History*, 2011.

²⁰ Voices Breaking Boundaries, *History*, 2011.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Voices Breaking Boundaries, *Year Nine: 2008- 2009 Season*, 2011, <http://www.vbbarts.org/2008-09.shtml> (accessed November 7, 2011).

project, “Pakistan Live Broadcast,” which creates an alternative view of Pakistan.²³ Other events included a tribute reading for Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish, readings of writers from Iran, Palestine and Pakistan, videos, live performance art and much more.²⁴ In the Spring of 2009, VBB hosted Houston’s annual Palestinian Film Festival, which is just one of the many events that focuses on refugees.²⁵ VBB’s art varies from season to season and event to event. The organization attempts to create an environment in which artists of all types may present their artistic capabilities.

Sociopolitical beliefs unify the varying artists, their art and act as a central component to the organization. Voices Breaking Boundaries “weaves art and sociopolitical theory to create a new terrain atypical of most arts organizations.”²⁶ Artists within the organization design their art to have significant meaning. The art created does not exist merely for the “sake of art.” Instead, the art represents political ideas and beliefs of the artists. Therefore, one may decipher the political beliefs of the artists by examining their work. Sehba Sarwar, the founder of VBB, emphasizes that the political beliefs exhibited are carefully selected to support the themes of each show. The political ideas and beliefs within VBB unite the community of artists. For example one show, *un/natural disasters*, focused on natural disasters in Pakistan and the United States. By comparing floods in Pakistan and Hurricane Katrina, the show emphasized the effects of global climate change.

Lastly, Voices Breaking Boundaries (VBB) acted as the gatekeeper organization because of my previous experience with the organization. I interned with Voices Breaking Boundaries in the fall of 2009. During this internship, I met many people that would be crucial to this thesis,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Voices Breaking Boundaries, *History*, 2011.

including some of the participants. Through my internship at Voices Breaking Boundaries, I gained the inspiration for this thesis.

Voices Breaking Boundaries' mandate to create political thought makes it an excellent site to study the construction of political identities. The organization creates an atmosphere, which these issues, especially in relation to migrants and refugees, may be observed and studied. The relevance of Voices Breaking Boundaries to the studies of migrants and refugees begins with the artists themselves. Given that the majority of the artists are migrants and refugees, the organization is relevant to migrant and refugee studies because the artists produce the art and the political beliefs expressed through that art. Art allows one to examine political ideas without speaking with the artists themselves.

Ethical Issues and Concerns

Several ethical concerns exist in relation to this research project including incorrectly assigning names or identities to people, properly analyzing art, bias within the research based on the gatekeeper used to select participants, and conducting research on human participants. One of my main personal ethical concerns is labeling people who are actively trying to shed certain identities that have been assigned to them. One ethnographer asked:

How do ethnographic choices by the researcher and the expectations of communities, influence discussions about identity and representation? When we theorize about ethnicity, nationalism, or 'race' we are also legitimizing or even addressing community concerns about discrimination and racism?²⁷

While I believe that one must be aware of these identities or names, it is only through engaging and discussing them that they can be addressed and understood. However, while other

²⁷ Maria Elena Garcia, "Ethnographic Responsibility and the Anthropological Endeavor: Beyond Identity Discourse," *Anthropological Quarterly* (The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research) 73, no. 2 (April 2000): 89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3317189>

ethnographers are starting to ask these questions “few discussions of these concerns appear in academic writing about ethnography and anthropological research.”²⁸ Therefore, this research is critical in dialogue on identity construction and attempts to learn how the participants choose to identify themselves as opposed to working with the identities that society has given them.

Bias may exist within the research, since Voices Breaking Boundaries was used as a gatekeeper. As previously noted, Voices Breaking Boundaries establishes its identity on its socio-political beliefs. As an author, this concerns me. Voices Breaking Boundaries as a socio-political activist organization, encourages artists to explore identity within their art and challenges current immigration practices and the nation-state system. I believe future readers should recognize the bias that using Voices Breaking Boundaries may have on the research. However, each participant maintains a different association with the organization and many of them have not had their art exhibited in a Voices Breaking Boundaries show.

Since I will be conducting research that involves people, I have made the necessary provisions to ensure that the research complies with the requisite ethical standards. First, and most importantly, as the interviewees are artists, and thus already in the public eye, the research at most adds to their already-existing exposure. Most of the artists I wish to interview have already obtained American citizenship, and their status in the United States cannot in any way be compromised by their participation in the research. Those that have not obtained citizenship, or may confess to past illegality in the United States, will be protected through the anonymity of the interviews.

To ensure that interviewees understand the purpose and parameters of the research, as well as the voluntary nature of their participation, I prepared a written consent form that each interviewee signed. The form is attached in Appendix 1. If the artist felt uncomfortable signing

²⁸ Garcia, "Ethnographic Responsibility and the Anthropological Endeavor: Beyond Identity Discourse," 89-101.

the form, I asked for their oral consent to conduct the interview. If the interviewees wish to remain confidential, I ensure their confidentiality by renaming their interviews in a separate, encrypted Word document. In my thesis, I do not refer to those who wish to remain anonymous by name. I used my computer to record the interviews. This way I am the only one with access to the interviews and to the artists' real names.

Structure

This chapter began by introducing the topic of research, reviewing the scope, participants, methodology, and ethical concerns. Chapter Two builds the theoretical context for analyzing the findings. It examines the theoretical framework for identity construction, art analysis and international relations theory. Once the theoretical framework is laid, the paper moves into an analysis of each artist. The five subsequent chapters analyze the work of the research participants and detail the findings of the research. Each begins with a brief introduction and biography of the artist. After the biography, each chapter provides a brief description and review of each piece of art analyzed as a part of this thesis. Following this section, an analysis section presents the analysis and findings of each artist.

Chapter Three: Statelessness and Transnationality examines and analyzes the work of Dr. Fady Joudah, Palestinian-American poet and author of *The Earth in the Attic*. It argues that Dr. Joudah directly examines the constructs of the nation-state system through his work, such as the 'other,' and statelessness, and creates transnational experiences within his art. Chapter Four: New Spaces examines three films created by Indian-American film writer and director Faroukh Virani. It argues that Mr. Virani challenges the constructs of the nation-state system by creating transnational experiences in his films.

Chapter Five: Cultural Differences examines the work of renowned Pakistani-American writer Bapsi Sidhwa. It examines one novel and a short story written by Ms. Sidhwa in which she explores collective identity and multiculturalism. Chapter Six: Neo-Racism, Immigration and Assimilation examines the work of Pakistani-American Erum Butt and focuses specifically on a documentary she co-directed, *Americans2*. Ms. Butt discusses issues of religion, othering and assimilation within the nation-state system. Chapter Seven: Activist Heart and Activist Art examines a novel, short story, essay and film installation by Pakistani-American artist Sehba Sarwar. She challenges the constructs of the nation-state system by examining the construct of the 'other' and creating transnational experiences within her art. Chapter Eight: Conclusion offers concluding remarks and examines future research questions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter lays the theoretical framework for examining identity construction, the nation-state system and global migration. It provides a broad understanding of the concepts and themes that will be addressed by the artists and their art. It begins with a review of identity construction, then reviews art theory and international relations theory including topics such as the development of the state, globalization, immigration, and transnationalism.

This thesis focuses on identities expressed by global migrants, and their relation to the nation-state system. In order to give theoretical context to these political identities, this chapter reviews the literature on art theory and international relations. It discusses and sets definitions of terms used in the research. Specifically, the subsections explore the history of Westphalia, international relations theory and globalization giving a political context to the identities. The research suggests that many artists use their works to explore their identity. This lays the framework to understand the intersection between theories on contemporary art and international migration. In order to discuss transnationalism, one must first understand the context in which it has been created. Therefore, the following subsection focuses on identity construction.

Identity Construction

Philosophers debate national identity and its associated terms such as nationality and citizenship. Individuals examine their identities when they lack a sense of belonging.²⁹ Jurgen Habermas argued that through self-identity one creates group identity and conversely “through this group identity assert their own self- identity.”³⁰ While Habermas believes identity to be constructed

²⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, 19 (London: SAGE Publications, 1996).

³⁰ Habermas qtd in Rodney Bruce Hall, *National Collective Identity* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999).

top-down and bottom-up, Louis Althusser sees identity as being forced upon individual through a top-down process. Althusser argues that a Subject imposes names upon its subjects.³¹ The state as a Subject has “the power to both recognize difference and to endow difference with political import.”³²

This process of Subjects constructing identity for its subjects is known as interpellation. States interpellate their citizens. Subjects construct ideology for the purpose of imposing categories of identity.³³ States create ideology, and through the private sphere such as school, churches, newspapers, parties, trade unions, and families the state imposes the ideology upon its subjects.³⁴ People accept, resist or deflect interpellation.³⁵

Althusser argues that states as Subjects create and impose identity. However, subjects also create collective identity. Instead of believing that subjects receive their identity from the Subject, Habermas argues that the nation “derives” its identity through “the praxis of citizens who actively exercise their civil rights.”³⁶ As subjects, citizens exercise their civil rights. They create the larger identity of the nation or state. Therefore, the identity construction comes from the bottom up. Habermas believes that identity creates and is created by the larger collective identity. If Habermas’ theory is true, this exercise of identity manifestation through art and relative status in the global system should also raise questions around the collective identity of the United States of America.

³¹ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Verne A. Dusenbery, "The Poetics and Politics of Recognition: Diasporan Sikhs in Pluralist Polities," *American Ethnologist* (Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the American Anthropological Association) 24, no. 4 (November 1997): 738-762. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/646807>

³⁴ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Jurgen Habermas, "Citizenship and National Identity," in *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. Ronald Beiner, 258 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995).

Many of the artists use their art as a medium - or a tool - to explore these complex issues surrounding their identity particularly in regards to definitions of community and belonging. If this is indeed the case, then by examining and engaging their art, one gains access to explore the identities they construct and challenge. This thesis does not attempt to theorize or explain the complex socio-political issues within the United States. However, it does attempt to identify the identities that transnational artists construct and challenge and their political significance. This enables an assessment of how the national collective identity affects and effects the personal identity of transnational artists.

Art Theory

Art creates a plane through which cultural practices can be analyzed and seen through different lenses. Whether film, book, poetry, photography, or drawing, art allows evaluation, recognition, dialogue and communication between cultures. In fact media can create alternative communities and identities.³⁷ The participants in this thesis use art to explore their identities in three ways: through directly discussing issues related to the nation-state system; by creating fusions or transnational spaces within their art; and by using their art to gain agency and assert themselves.

Artists use different mediums such as film and literature to directly explore issues related to the nation-state system. For example, film is “ideally suited to relay the projected narratives of nation and empires,” for the national collective identity “became broadly linked to cinematic fictions.”³⁸ Differing literary forms act as fingerprints to the culture from which they originate. Benedict Anderson argues that through print capitalism the national identity is constructed and reinforced.³⁹ States and nations unite people through stories and printed language.

³⁷ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 347.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York, NY: Verso, 2006).

Art enables the construction, expression and contestation of identities, but it also affects the societies from which it is created. Art has always been considered a political medium. Art creates awareness that results in cultural and political participation, for “both art and politics rely on changes in perceptions based in our imaginations.”⁴⁰ This is not to say that all art is political but that art can, and does, express political beliefs and ideas. Some films tell stories and narratives about colonialism from the colonizer’s perspective. For example, the Lumière brothers’ *Le Musulman Rigolo* (The Funny Muslim, 1902) and *Ali Bouffe á l’Hile* (Ali Eats with Oil, 1902) through Tarzan and even Indiana Jones (1981, 1984, 1989), films reinforce the collective identity and support dominant discourses of colonizing powers by idealizing and romanticizing colonialism.⁴¹ Likewise, artists use film to challenge dominant discourses.

However, recently, the political academic community has recognized that film both affects and effects politics. This is to say that art plays an active role in shaping and redefining politics. One can understand more about the political situation of migrants and refugees by examining the political art they produce. Perhaps more importantly, one can examine the ability for migrant artists to affect politics. “Art is well suited to shaping political ideas,” as art allows for the “elaboration of existing political ideas and the birth of new ones.”⁴² The same qualities within art, such as its publicity, cognitive advantage and emotions, which make art a conduit for political ideas, also enables political ideas to evolve into new ones.⁴³ If migrants and refugees create political art, then they may also be creating new political thoughts.

⁴⁰ Anne Bray, "The Community Is Watching, and Replying: Art in Public Places and Spaces," *Leonardo* (The MIT Press) 35, no. 1 (2002): 16.

⁴¹ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994).

⁴² Girma Negash, "Art Invoked: A Mode of Understanding and Shaping the Political," *International Political Sciences Review* 25, no. 2 (April 2004): 185-201. p188.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Artists create transnational spaces through their art. Art by people of multiethnic backgrounds create interesting fusions and subtexts that allow for commentary about multiple cultures. For example, in Joseph Beuys's performance art, *Coyote, I like America and America likes(?) me*, the coyote symbolized, "the animals and the native American people and their values, which were threatened with extinction by capitalist materialism."⁴⁴ This piece combines traditional Native American concepts with the colonial American collective identity. Another example is how artists Sherrie Levine and Henny Holzer used photography and text to express multiple identities such as the 'Other' and challenge dominant discourses.⁴⁵

Art defies boundaries. It allows people to express themselves, for it is "all about speaking one's mind."⁴⁶ It creates alternative social structures of support and agency.⁴⁷ Artists share their very soul because artists are "the soul of society."⁴⁸ Through art, people break boundaries and understand themselves and the world around them. Indeed, the subject of modern art tends to be the artists' identity and discourse with society.⁴⁹ Artist Joseph Beuys claims "Man is only truly alive when he realizes he is a creative artistic being."⁵⁰ While art explores its creator's identity, one cannot forget that the identity is a part of the larger society.⁵¹ Art also enables people to access power.

⁴⁴ Paul Wood, Francis Francina, Johnathan Harris and Charles Harrison, *Modernism in Dispute Art Since the Forties* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press in association with The Open University, 1994), 220.

⁴⁵ Sam Hunter and John Jabobus, *Modern Art*, Third Edition, ed. Daniel Wheeler (New York, NY: Princeton Hall, Inc., 1992), 395.

⁴⁶ Bray, "The Community Is Watching, and Replying: Art in Public Places and Spaces," 15.

⁴⁷ Blake Stimson, "The Promise of Conceptual Art," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), xxxix.

⁴⁸ Sehba Sarwar qtd. in *Voices Breaking Boundaries*, directed by Faroukh Virani, 2007.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbYYqUvEsfo>

⁴⁹ Fineberg, *Art Since 1940 Strategies of Being*, 14.

⁵⁰ Beuys qtd in Fineberg, *Art Since 1940 Strategies of Being*, 349.

⁵¹ Dan Graham, "Art workers' Coalition Open Hearing Presentation," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), 94.

Artists use art as a way to gain agency. Transnational people particularly create unique literature that not only defines their multi-cultural backgrounds but also their position within said cultures. Since the 1960's, many art theorists "have shifted to 'critical theory' and 'cultural studies' using works of art as illustrations of cultural constructs and sociopolitical forces."⁵² Artists interrupt the flow of representations, interpellation and the construction of identities in an attempt to challenge the mechanisms of identity construction and, play a part in liberating people.⁵³

Whether an artist explores identity by creating transnational spaces or by gaining agency, art expresses both opinions of the artist and of their society. In fact the most important art offers a unique truth and embodies "an individual's struggle to come to terms with his or her inner thoughts and identity in relation to the constantly changing facts of existence in the world."⁵⁴ Art by transnational artists, therefore, has the unique capabilities of commenting on multiple identities and societies. It also enables individuals who view the art to confront "their own xenophobia, misogyny, militarism and commercialism."⁵⁵ The identities expressed within the art may represent the relations between multiple societies.⁵⁶ This has considerable implications, for the art may be able to impact both societies' views of the 'other' and may even carry significant weight for the relations between multiple societies or different states. For example, Pakistani authors enlighten their readers about Pakistan's rich history and offer a different view of their home state than the current view offered by American media. These differing views have the

⁵² Jonathan Fineberg, *Art Since 1940 Strategies of Being* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1994). 18

⁵³ Wood et. al, *Modernism in Dispute Art Since the Forties*, 221.

⁵⁴ Fineberg, *Art Since 1940 Strategies of Being*, 472.

⁵⁵ Anne Bray, "The Community Is Watching, and Replying: Art in Public Places and Spaces," *Leonardo* (The MIT Press) 35, no. 1 (2002): 17.

⁵⁶ Michele G. Alexander, Shana Levin and P.J. Henry, "Image Theory, Social Identity, and Social Dominance: Structural Characteristics and Individual Motives Underlying International Images," *Political Psychology* (International Society of Political Psychology) 26, no. 1 (February 2005): 27-45.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792498>

ability to impact the relations between Pakistan and the United States, because the literature develops understanding between the two societies.

International Relations Theory and Westphalia History

In order to analyze political identity, one must first look at the structures in which said identity was created. The following section reviews international relations theory and the concepts surrounding political identity in relation to the state. It starts by examining the current concept of the state, as it was formed out of the Peace of Westphalia signed in 1648. Until recently, the nation-state anchored a stable international world.⁵⁷ The concept of the state is so ingrained into our idea of stability and political order that many people believe chaos is equivalent to a world without states.⁵⁸ After examining international relations theory in regarding the development of the state, the next section discusses globalization and the increased pressures it places on the state.

Current international relations theory stems from the state structure originally shaped through Westphalia, but it lacks the vocabulary and theoretical framework for the change that stems from globalization and mobility.⁵⁹ In other words, the field needs new theories. Without them, international relations theory lacks an explanation for the shift currently taking place in the international community.⁶⁰ The rest of this section explores the historical progression of the nation-state system.

⁵⁷ Yosef Lapid, "Identities, Borders, Orders: Nudging International Relations theory in a New Direction," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press).

⁵⁸ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, "(B)orders and (Dis)orders: The Role Of Moral Authority in Global Politics," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid, 73-90 (Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ Lapid, "Identities, Borders, Orders: Nudging International Relations theory in a New Direction," 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Nation - State

While Westphalia has been the dominant starting point for international relations theory, the concept of the state has gone through several different phases since the mid-1600's. Yet the Westphalian system and the concept that states are the building blocks of society frames our understanding of states, sovereignty, society, and community.⁶¹ Historically, society considers the state the building block of society. The concept centers on the idea of territorialization, or organization based on territorial control. The basis for said control and authority changes over time, which causes shifts within the theory. For example, originally, the state derived its authority from God, whereas later the state derived its authority from the nation.⁶² Yet in both instances, the original concept and political organization is based on territorialization. The only difference lies in the origin of political control.

It is only recently that the state has been separated from the term nation. Mathias Albert and Lothar Brock define the nation as “a uniting of people living on a state’s territory as a community of citizens with certain rights and duties but also with feelings of solidarity, vis-à-vis the state and fellow citizens.”⁶³ The nation bases its identity in how its members are different from others, and as the basis of the nation-state, the state bases its authority on the nation. Benedict Anderson argues that the nation is “imagined as limited because even the largest . . . has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.”⁶⁴ While a nation’s identity is based on members’ differences from other communities, likewise, the state’s identity is also about difference, but it does not consider that its members constitute a nation. When the state and

⁶¹ Ibid., 25.

⁶² Lipschutz, "(B)orders and (Dis)orders: The Role Of Moral Authority in Global Politics," 81.

⁶³ Mathias Albert and Lothar Brock, "What Keep Westphalia Together? Normative Differentiation in the Modern System of States," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 35.

⁶⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

nation overlapped, then the nation represented the collective identity of the state. With growing migration and the increase of diasporic populations, the state ceases to be ‘the one compulsory community,’”⁶⁵ and groups and individuals begin to maintain multiple identities and affiliations. As the nation-state comes to an end,⁶⁶ “we find cultures and civilizations in sharp contrast and relief to the nation-state.”⁶⁷ As the split between the nation and state grows, theorists are finding that many communities have existed within the practice of the nation-state. Since they existed in contrast with the nation-state concept, these minority groups did not previously receive adequate attention from theorists.

State

One of the main aims of the state is to perpetuate its existence. As described by Ronnie Lipschutz: “The state serves to protect itself and its citizens against external enemies and to defend the sanctity of contracts and property rights from internal ones.”⁶⁸ Historically, external factors constituted the concept of a threat to the state. The borders maintained by the state constituted the boundaries by which one determines the difference between “us” and “them,” or “us” and the “other.” Currently, the focus of protection has changed from monitoring external threats to monitoring internal threats, for “military people are now surveilling the internal territory and immigrants.”⁶⁹ As increased migration and globalization challenge states’ identities, states internalize the concepts of “us” versus “them.” Therefore, immigration plays an active role

⁶⁵ David Jacobson, "The Global Political Culture," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid (Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 173.

⁶⁶ David Newman, "Boundaries, Borders, and Barriers: Changing Geographic Perspectives on Territorial Lines," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid (Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 138.

⁶⁷ Jacobson, "The Global Political Culture," 177.

⁶⁸ Lipschutz, "(B)orders and (Dis)orders: The Role Of Moral Authority in Global Politics," 76.

⁶⁹ Didier Bigo, "The Mobius Ribbon of Security(ies)," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 103.

in the discussion of the security of the state. However, its actual relevance to the security of the state remains undetermined.⁷⁰ The securitization that emerges as a result of globalization attempts to protect the state's existence through emphasizing what makes it different from other states: its identity. A state's legitimacy and identity are constituted internally.⁷¹ Marx Weber refers to the relationship between society and the state as the concept of legitimate social order that drives sense of obligation or duty.⁷² The identity that constitutes and drives "the sense of obligation or duty"⁷³ is based on otherness not sameness.⁷⁴

States create borders not to keep citizens within them, but to keep people who are different outside. Resistances to difference, not commonality, bring people together. The idea that the group differs from other communities unites members and creates community boundaries.⁷⁵ For example, a moral community, like the state, "does not connote agreement about a particular moral or ethical code, but rather the belief among members that they are obligated to treat one another on the basis of reciprocity of obligations."⁷⁶ Identity is about difference, and borders are about maintaining these differences.⁷⁷ Society and order supposes order based upon what is included and excluded.⁷⁸ Borders focus on excluding those that are different as opposed to uniting those who are similar.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Richard W. Mansbach and Frankie Wilmer, "War, Violence, and the Westphalian State System as a Moral Community," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid, 51-72 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁷² Rodney Bruce Hall, *National Collective Identity* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999). 39

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Richard W. Mansbach and Frankie Wilmer, "War, Violence, and the Westphalian State System as a Moral Community," 51-72.

⁷⁵ Chris Brown, "Borders and identity in International Political Theory," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid, 117-136 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁷⁶ Richard W. Mansbach and Frankie Wilmer, "War, Violence, and the Westphalian State System as a Moral Community," 54.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Lapid, "Identities, Borders, Orders: Nudging International Relations theory in a New Direction," 13.

Citizenship stems from community of the state. Identity theory shows that the concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’ is bases for political action.⁷⁹ Identities defining us versus them were originally tied to territorialized states, and citizenship gradually took precedence over local and nonterritorialized identities.⁸⁰ The United States citizenship laws are based on *jus soli*, the concept that citizenship is based on place of birth in the country or through naturalization instead of *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship by blood ties.⁸¹ While citizenship offers inclusion into the political system, it does not offer inclusion into society.⁸² This is the assumed political identity for anyone born or naturalized in the United States. However, citizenship requires the receiver to renounce their previous nationalities or other citizenships.⁸³ The United States Oath of Naturalization requires the person to say:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen.⁸⁴

While there are no legal ramifications for maintaining dual citizenship, the oath and the social expectation of assimilation drive the collective identity. The concept of citizenship is restrictive and does not accommodate for the identities that many immigrants want to retain and express.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 54.

⁸⁰ Richard W. Mansbach and Frankie Wilmer, "War, Violence, and the Westphalian State System as a Moral Community," 59.

⁸¹ Norman Ravitch, "Your People, My People; Your God, My God: French and American Troubles Over Citizenship," *The French Review* (American Association of Teachers of French) 70, no. 4 (March 1997): 515. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/398240>

⁸² Halfmann, "Citizenship Universalism, Migration and the Risks of Exclusion," *The British Journal of Sociology* (Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the London School of Economics and Political Science) 49, no. 4 (December 1998): 513. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/591286>

⁸³ Ravitch, "Your People, My People; Your God, My God: French and American Troubles Over Citizenship," 515.

⁸⁴ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America*, March 8, 2010, <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=facd6db8d7e37210VgnVCM10000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=dd7ffe9dd4aa3210VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD> (accessed November 17, 2011).

Since there are many bi-national and multinational citizens, citizenship changed, for it does not define allegiance to a specific state, or another identity exists that has yet to be properly defined.

International relations theorists currently debate the national collective identity and its transformation. In order to fully analyze and understand the climate in which the political identity of immigrants is created, it is important to understand the perspective of global migrants. By engaging these dialogues as they relate to identities expressed by global migrants, this thesis hopes to shed light on the larger collective identity of the United States of America for the purposes of understanding the state's current socio-political crises.⁸⁵

Globalization

In the following section, the discussion turns from the evolution of the state to the larger international community and the relevance of globalization. Whether good or bad, globalization is the irreversible fate of the world.⁸⁶ Therefore, states must learn to evolve and reap the benefits while mitigating the risks of globalization. Globalization is described broadly as the “social economic, cultural, and demographic processes that take place within nations but also transcend them.”⁸⁷ As an international political economic practice, globalization can be described as “the extension of economic liberal principles as a process that would expand the international economy.”⁸⁸ Economic liberal principles originally drove globalization through transnational

⁸⁵ Rodney Bruce Hall, *National Collective Identity*, 42.

⁸⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998). 1

⁸⁷ Michael Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Annual Reviews) 24 (1995): 548. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2155949>

⁸⁸ David N. Balaam and Michael Veseth, *Introduction to International Political Economy*, Fourth Edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2008), 50.

corporations (TNC).⁸⁹ Transnational corporations spur globalization, but globalization is larger and impacts the international community in many different ways.

Globalization continues to impact the international community and states. Globalization leads to “activities that cannot be neatly ‘packaged’ within the confines of self-contained nation-states or in relations between states.”⁹⁰ Globalization also refers to globalism or the ideology that supports liberal economic policies and international integration.⁹¹ As globalization becomes more influential, people turn try to focus on local politics. Global migration links the interplay between globalism and localism.⁹² Both globalization and global migration lead to debates on the fate of sovereignty.⁹³ Through globalization, states face challenges in maintaining collective identities as national boundaries play a diminished role in producing objects and ideas.⁹⁴ Simultaneously, states allow deterritorialization as they engage in international institutions.

Globalization causes local cultures to be undone by technological advances, consumption, housing, and entertainment.⁹⁵ Some argue that the traditional concept of state borders is likewise being undone through increased trans-state networking.⁹⁶ However, it should be noted that the center of the disappearance of boundaries thesis lies heavily in North America and Europe. The increased migration flows and permeability of these states leads theorists to argue the undoing of borders.

⁸⁹ Peter Dicken, *Global Shift The Internationalization of Economic Activity*, Second Edition (New York, NY: The Gulford Press, 1992), 47.

⁹⁰ Jacobson, “The Global Political Culture,” 167.

⁹¹ Balaam and Veseth, *Introduction to International Political Economy*, 37.

⁹² Heisler 225

⁹³ Albert and Brock, "What Keep Westphalia Together? Normative Differentiation in the Modern System of States," 38.

⁹⁴ Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Szanton Blanc, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," *Anthropological Quarterly* (The George Washington University for Ethnographic Research) 68, no. 1 (January 1995): 49. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3317464>

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

David Newman believes that Europe and North America are at the center of this discourse because borders in these regions are increasingly permeable.⁹⁷ However, Yosef Lapid argues that this vacillation as an indication of a borderless world is not the case.⁹⁸ He quotes Etienne Balibar, who states that, “Less than ever is the contemporary world a ‘world without borders.’”⁹⁹ Even though many believe that globalization is tearing down borders, states are becoming more aware of their porous borders and attempting to tighten their control over the movement of people between them. For example, as globalization increases the international community’s interconnectedness, increased mobility spurred by globalization forces states and international organizations to recognize its significance.

Immigration

This section examines the shift in the nation-state system by reviewing globalization’s link to immigration and thus the concept of transnationalism. Immigration existed before globalization. However, globalization increased and transformed immigration as it increased mobility and communication across borders. As previously discussed, the traditional interpretation of citizenship is in a state of crisis because of immigration.¹⁰⁰ Norman Ratvich believes that the core of the discord between the collective identity and immigrants does not stem from the immigration of people but from the immigration of Muslim people.¹⁰¹ He argues that Christianity forms one of the key aspects of collective identity in states such as the United States and France.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Yosef Lapid, "Identities, Borders, Orders: Nudging International Relations theory in a New Direction," in *Identities Borders Orders Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press).

⁹⁹ Ibid. 25

¹⁰⁰ Ratvich. "French and American Troubles Over Citizenship."

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Therefore, people feel the collective identity to be threatened by people of differing religious beliefs particularly those of Islamic backgrounds.¹⁰²

States argue that immigrants and the mobility of people are the largest threat to the nation-state system, and require controlling territory through passports. The main way that states rectify the perceived problem of immigration through naturalization.¹⁰³ States maintain control of their territory through the control of its people. When a person naturalizes said person is assumed to cease allegiance to their previous state and is assumed to be loyal only to their new state. Indeed through naturalization immigrants are “shedding their ‘old’ cultural practices and political loyalties.”¹⁰⁴

However, Didier Bigo argues that states make immigration appear to be a problem to justify the politicization of every day life and increased securitization.¹⁰⁵ Immigration does not threaten states and their identities. However, globalization and increased mobility of people is a reality to which states must adjust, for global migration is no longer a choice; instead it is a way of life.¹⁰⁶ While international community traditionally assimilated and dealt with global migrants through naturalization, global migrants use technology, social media and other tools of globalization to maintain their connections to both states.¹⁰⁷ Many states still hold to the principle that “those who voluntarily apply for naturalization should be prepared to give up their previous citizenship.”¹⁰⁸ Increasingly, states allow bi-nationals and multinationals to maintain ties, but the expectation within the collective identity remains that global migrants should break

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Hammar, "Dual Citizenship and Political Integration," 438-450.

¹⁰⁴ Guarnizo, et. al, "Assimilation and Transnationalism: Determinants of Transnational Political Action among Contemporary Migrants," 1211-1248.

¹⁰⁵ Didier Bigo, "The Mobius Ribbon of Security(ies)," 100.

¹⁰⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity," 21.

¹⁰⁷ Tomas Hammar, "Dual Citizenship and Political Integration," *International Migration Review* (The Center for Migration Studies of New York, Inc.) 19, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 440. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2545849>

¹⁰⁸ Ibid 442

these ties. States need to engage in these discussions and learn to adapt to the pressures of globalization.

While globalization allows for the movements of goods and economic flows, the movement of people remains hindered and difficult. The nation-state system prevents the easing of the movement of people.¹⁰⁹ States maintain control of their territory through the use of passports and regulation access to the territory.¹¹⁰ The nation-state model is underpinned by the notion that states retain control over their territory, which places an emphasis on the ideas of borders.¹¹¹ Traditionally, “inclusion of a person into society was channeled through just one type of social organization—the guild or estate to which one belonged.”¹¹² Indeed the relation to the passport and state autonomy is an everlasting example of the control that a state exercises over its territory.¹¹³

As previously stated, the nation-state system is based on autonomy and territory, and much of its power is exhibited through the control of borders and the movement of people.¹¹⁴ As many observe the effects of globalization, the state appears to becoming obsolete and the nation-state system is coming to an end.¹¹⁵ However, this is probably not the case. Principles of the nation-state system have been transgressed previously, states choose to adhere to certain principles, including human rights, minority rights, democracy, communism, and fiscal responsibility.¹¹⁶ What is more, as Ong notes, the realignment of the nation-state system is:

¹⁰⁹ Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

¹¹⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹¹¹ Krasner, "Compromising Westphalia," 115-151.

¹¹² Halfmann, "Citizenship Universalism, Migration and the Risks of Exclusion," 513-553.

¹¹³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹¹⁴ Krasner, "Compromising Westphalia," 115-151.

¹¹⁵ Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

not necessarily a process of ‘win or lose,’ whereby political borders become ‘insignificant’ and the nation-state ‘loses’ to global trade in terms of its control over the affiliations and behavior of its subjects.¹¹⁷

There are many positive aspects to this new space that immigrants create. Instead of bringing about the end of the nation-state system, global migration increases transnationalism. Global migration is another aspect of globalization to which states must learn to adapt.

Transnationalism

When trying to find a term to describe immigrants’ identities, many turn to the idea of transnationalism. The term emphasizes the cultural and political projects of nations and states, whereas globalization does not reference nations.¹¹⁸ Transnationalism transcends boundaries, but it also references and considers collective identity.

This thesis uses the word transnational in relation to global migrants. Some scholars refer to these people as transnationals, and others as transmigrants. However, the description of each remains the same. For example, “Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state.”¹¹⁹ While this definition implies the same thing as transnational, transmigrant also refers specifically to people whereas transnational refers to a process or context. This thesis uses the word transnational because it is broader and includes people who have not migrated, such as second and third generation migrants.

Some immigrants neither assimilate nor resist assimilation to hold on to their previous location. The traditional procedure of naturalization no longer applies to the new immigrants.

¹¹⁷ Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*.

¹¹⁸ Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," 548.

¹¹⁹ Schiller, et. al, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 48.

Many immigrants maintain cultural, economic and political ties with their previous state.¹²⁰ Many migrants today live lives of “cultural bifocality,”¹²¹ in which, their “life-worlds are neither ‘here’ nor ‘there,’ but are once both ‘here’ and ‘there.’”¹²² While migrants take on the nationality of their new state, they often do not cease to identify with the national and cultural practices that exist in their previous state of citizenship. Instead, they maintain ties within both states and live in between the two places creating a new space of existence.¹²³ Through globalization, borders become irrelevant to expressing and maintaining collective identity and effectively render global migrants borderless.¹²⁴

The unique climate of globalization causes people to live dual, or even multiple lives. As globalization weakens the boundaries of states, “identities have spilled increasingly across borders, and national discipline has come under both internal and external threat.”¹²⁵

Transnationals exhibit Thomas Friedman’s theory that *The World is Flat*. Friedman argues that, globalization provides tools to individuals, and in the future people will use these tools to drive globalization and political change. He argues that these tools “flatten” the world giving similar opportunities for success to all people.¹²⁶ While the world is far from “flat,” it is certain that individuals are starting to drive globalization through the use of social media and technology.

Migrants are seen as agents of change when they maintain political and social ties and loyalties with their home state. At times, they are continually politically connected and allied

¹²⁰ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 15-33.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Michael Peter Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," *Social Text* (Duke University Press) 39 (Summer 1994): 16. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466362>

¹²⁵ Lipschutz, "(B)orders and (Dis)orders: The Role Of Moral Authority in Global Politics," 76.

¹²⁶ Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 215.

with their home state.¹²⁷ One might imagine an epic battle enraging between globalization and the notion of the nation-state. In which, the state attempts to maintain control of its territory through the control of its borders and globalization continues to break down the barriers between states easing the passage between them.

Therefore, “migrants move from country A to country B and either settle for good (i.e., become ‘immigrants’) or move back home after reaching their economic objectives (i.e., become ‘sojourners’).”¹²⁸ These loyalties are threatening to their adoptive state, for the old allegiances are viewed as contradictory and threatening to their new state. For this reason, immigrant and emigrant states view these connections and the maintained allegiances very differently.¹²⁹ Emigrant states view these ties as an opportunity for development, while immigrant states view them as a threat and a hindrance to assimilation.¹³⁰ However, states recognize that global migrants offer unique skills and benefits to the collective identity. Instead of being threatening, collective identity may be strengthened through transnationals.

There are many positive aspects to the “cultural bifocality” that transnational peoples bring. Among them is the ability for immigrants to bridge cultures. Since transnationals are based in two or more societies, transnationals offer a way to bridge cultures and increase multiculturalism.¹³¹ As Schiller says:

transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state.¹³²

¹²⁷ Guarnizo, et. al, "Assimilation and Transnationalism: Determinants of Transnational Political Action among Contemporary Migrants," 1211-1248.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Hammar, "Dual Citizenship and Political Integration," 438-450.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," 547-565.

¹³² Schiller, et. al, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 48-63.

It is not that the immigrant remains loyal only to their state of origin. Instead that person maintains a unique position in which he or she claim affiliation and loyalties to both states. Roots are becoming increasingly irrelevant. As Kearny explains “it is not just that increasingly, many people have no roots; it’s also that they have no soil. Culture is becoming increasingly deterritorialized.”¹³³ Therefore, people create a cultural space in between states which bridges states. As Smith argues, the “global space is a space of flows” in which there are new cultural productions.¹³⁴ States can harness this increased global migration and transnationality by using transnationals’ connections to build cultural bridges between states and use their knowledge of both to assist them.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the academic literature and theory that frame the discussions of identity created by global migrants. First, it reviewed crucial concepts of identity construction such as interpellation. Then it reviewed the theoretical foundation for examining identity and politics in art. After that, the chapter reviewed the geo-political context for this thesis and its’ relation to global migrants.

The following chapters explore how global migrants examine, challenge and reconstruct their identities within their art addressing issues of the nation-state state and nation constructs. Other times, global migrants combine these different aspects to create transnational experiences in their art. All of these techniques challenge the traditional concepts of community and identity. The next chapter specifically reviews the work of Dr. Fady Joudah. He creates transnational spaces within his poetry. Also, he examines and challenges traditional concepts of the nation-state system by challenging the categories and hierarchies constructed by the nation-state system.

¹³³ Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," 547-565.

¹³⁴ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 15-33.

Chapter Three: Statelessness and Transnationality

The previous chapter laid the theoretical framework for the analysis of the participant's work. This chapter applies those concepts to review and analyze the transnational aspects of the poetry written by Fady Joudah, M.D, and examines how he engages with identities imposed from the nation-state system. It begins with a brief biography of Dr. Joudah, and then provides a brief review of Dr. Joudah's book *The Earth in the Attic*. It concludes with an analysis of his work and the research findings from interviews with the artist and an engagement with the art itself. Dr. Joudah actively explores issues related to the nation and state within his art and creates transnational experiences within his art. He also addresses issues of statelessness and 'othering' that stem from traditional concepts of the nation and the state. Othering is process by which groups exclude people.

Biography

Fady Joudah was born in Austin, Texas, but was raised in various locations throughout the Middle East. During his childhood, he lived in Bangazi, Libya, and then in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He completed his university education and medical school in the United States, and worked with Doctors Without Borders on two missions. He is a Palestinian, and his family is originally from the city currently known as Ashdod, Israel. He and his family have been refugees since the 1949 war. He rarely visited Palestine as a child and has not returned since 1986. When interviewed, he had spent half of his life in the Middle East and half of his life in the United States. He works in Houston, Texas as a doctor.

Art Review

The Earth in the Attic is a book of poetry collected from a variety of sources that previously published Dr. Joudah's work. The book, published in 2008, contains poems and slightly altered versions of poems previously published elsewhere. The book was well received upon publication and won of the Yale Series of Younger Poets competition.

In the book Dr. Joudah engages with themes such as nationality, human rights, violence, war, and statelessness. The poetry takes the reader through time and space on international journeys. At times, the reader seems to be in Africa, then in Palestine and then in the United States. Dr. Joudah takes his reader through his story and invites the reader to explore the world through a lens that challenges traditional concepts of war, violence and the nation-state system. The poems express his life experiences as a Palestinian, a doctor with Doctors without Borders and as a man.

Analysis and Findings

As previously stated, Dr. Joudah actively challenges the nation-state system as he explores issues related to the nation and state within his art and creates transnational experiences within his art. This section examines the ways he directly engages these issues within his art. It then proceeds to interpret the ways he creates transnational experiences within his art. Dr. Joudah's particular poetic style looks at the hierarchies of power, politics and interpellation.

In particular, Dr. Joudah examines how states categorize and impose identities upon people. He directly engages the mechanisms of classification imposed by ideological state apparatuses.¹³⁵ Ideological state apparatuses are technologies the state imposes and enforces

¹³⁵ Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster.

ideas about people. He believes that poetry reflects the world around him, and places great importance on resisting interpellation within art.¹³⁶ He says:

I think that there is no other way of performing art other than primarily performing what one perceives to be one's identity, or representation of that identity. I know that there's probably a knee jerk reaction that one wants to say to that question: well, it's because it's one way of proving who I am, of making sure I continue to exist, that I don't disappear off the map. That it's a document, a witness, so forth.¹³⁷

Dr. Joudah uses his art to actively engage with the ideological state apparatuses to affirm or reconstruct his identity. Dr. Joudah views poetry as the medium through which he can assert his identity, existence and belonging in this world. These concepts tie into discussions of dominant discourses, insoluble dilemmas, and a discussion of categories and hierarchies.¹³⁸ The following section explores how is poetry is preoccupied with categories and hierarchies of the nation-state system by examining issues of statelessness and othering.

Dr. Joudah's work is particularly important and relevant to the issue of identity construction and the concepts of statelessness. His work reflects the dominant social discourses and the national dilemma.¹³⁹ In the following poem, "An Idea of Return," Dr. Joudah describes an experience between himself and a patient that shows that he is not among his people:

Then said: I know your people.
They're good people, they
Have suffered enough,
And the city is theirs -
[...]

Like the city that is only mine
When I'm confused with another.
-An Idea of Return¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Louise Glück, "Foreward," in *The Earth in the Attic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Fady Joudah, *The Earth in the Attic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

His patient in this poem recognizes him as Jewish saying “I know your people./They’re good people, they/Have suffered enough.”¹⁴¹ It is only through the patient mistaking him that he receives recognition of his homeland.¹⁴² Dr. Joudah’s political identity leaves him with no soil and outside the confines of the nation-state system.¹⁴³ It is in the absence of a homeland only language remains and is “the single means by which tradition and history (the constructs in which the personal is rooted) can be kept alive.”¹⁴⁴ Since the constructs of the state force Palestinians into existence as vagabonds, or a stranger who “can never be ‘ the native’ , the ‘settled on’, one with ‘roots in the soil’,” Dr. Joudah establishes his existence, his home through language and poetry.¹⁴⁵ Through poetry and language Dr. Joudah challenges the nation-state system by creating his own identity. He takes ownership of his identity, not allowing it to be imposed upon him by state or society.

Dr. Joudah explores his forced existence as a vagabond and directly addresses issues related to the state and nation, such as statelessness within his art. An example of one of the hierarchies and insoluble dilemmas that Dr. Joudah addresses in his art is the connection between politics and identity, for by definition the nation-state system links politics with identity.¹⁴⁶ In his poem “The Proposal”, Dr. Joudah writes “I sing, in a tongue not my own:/We left our shoes behind and fled.”¹⁴⁷ Dr. Joudah’s identity as a Palestinian is an example of how “just as there were states without nations in the pre-nation-state system, there are going to be nations without

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ King qtd. in Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," 557.

¹⁴⁴ Glück, "Foreward," XV.

¹⁴⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 28.

¹⁴⁶ Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Joudah, *The Earth in the Attic*.

states.”¹⁴⁸ Dr. Joudah’s interest in the concept of insoluble dilemmas reflects Benedict Anderson’s arguments in *Imagined Communities*. Anderson argues that nations are constructed through language, customs and a shared history and through the use of written language the concept of the nation is imagined.¹⁴⁹ Dr. Joudah challenges the nation-state system through his identity as a vagabond and stateless person.

Statelessness often causes subjects to be cast as the ‘other.’ Along these lines, Louise Glück describes Dr. Joudah’s book *The Earth in the Attic* as a “book of exile.”¹⁵⁰ Bauman states that rulers portrayed the Vagabond as the ‘other’ to impress upon people the need to be settled and to be established in a single community.¹⁵¹ Therefore, those with communities not recognized by the nation-state system, or with allegiances to multiple communities, evoke fear of anarchy within traditional establishments, such as the state. Dr. Joudah engages his identity in his art in a “direct matter through the familiar narrative, or familiar memory, which includes my personal memory in it.”¹⁵² He engages his own experiences, memory and identity:

At a desk made of glass,
In a glass walled - room
With red airport carpet,

An officer asked
My father for fingerprints,
And my father refused,

So another offered him tea
And he sipped it. The teacup
Template for fingerprints

-The Tea and Sage Poem¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Albert and Brock, "What Keep Westphalia Together? Normative Differentiation in the Modern System of States," 31.

¹⁴⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁵⁰ Glück, "Foreward," x.

¹⁵¹ Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 28.

¹⁵² Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

¹⁵³ Joudah, *The Earth in the Attic*.

In this poem, the concept of exile is intertwined with the idea of being the 'other.' Here the increased securitization of the state leads immigration officials to see Dr. Joudah's father as a threat, and therefore, they need his fingerprints. Dr. Joudah's father, an immigrant, is considered "as a risk is based on our conception of the state as a body or a container for the polity."¹⁵⁴ As a global migrant, states view him and his father with suspicion and as a threat to the state. By refusing to give fingerprints to the officer, Dr. Joudah's father resists the brand of 'other.' Dr. Joudah observes that his father still must succumb to the nation-state system. However, he does so while maintaining his own individuality. Dr. Joudah challenges the nation-state system through maintaining an individual identity.

Dr. Joudah also explores the existence of the 'other' that stems from statelessness within the nation-state system through the experience of other refugees. Through this, he deals with political issues of statelessness through exile and by examining others who stateless such as refugees.¹⁵⁵ For example, the following poem, "The Humanitarian Man," Dr. Joudah explores the concept of the 'other':

He came, the humanitarian man, and
In the solitude of giving, he befriended
A stray dog as mirror.

Everyday after the long arduous hours
Of the humane, he would come home
To be consoled: the dog

Waiting inside the door,
Wagging and panting, in a rave.
He named him

Something foreign to the population
So as not to offend anyone.
He trained him

¹⁵⁴ Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a critique of the Governmentality Unease," *Alternatives* 27, Special Issue (2002): 65.

¹⁵⁵ Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

To sit on the cheap sofa
One finds in places of conscious exile.
And the dog got to know the front seat of the car,

His tongue licking the air, hair
Blowing, children cheering barefoot.
Then it was time

To make the dog part of his family
Of the dogs back home, but the cruel
Government of the wretched refused:

There was no identity card
And no mirror inside the mirror
Could console the dog, slumped by the door

In hunger strike until it died.
He came, the humanitarian man,
He came and loved, then he went.

-14.¹⁵⁶

The dog is a metaphor for the people that humanitarians help. Like the dog, humanitarians help people then leave. The Humanitarian Man carries the “the harshness that” an animal must be used to humanize and build empathy with a human population, “and the sorrowful tenderness in the tragedy of it all in the paradox.”¹⁵⁷ The poem captures the beauty of the relationship between humanitarians and the people they work for, the imbalanced power between the two groups and the idea of the ‘other.’ The concept of the ‘other’ becomes so ingrained that the nation-state system, at times, come to “regard sets of people themselves as wrong, out of place, their very existence in need of rectification.”¹⁵⁸ Dr. Joudah challenges traditional concepts of community and identity by humanizing the ‘other’ in his poetry.

¹⁵⁶ Joudah, *The Earth in the Attic*.

¹⁵⁷ Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

¹⁵⁸ Wolf qtd in Heyman 636

Dr. Joudah continues to explore the concept of the ‘other’ by examining his own identity and the parables that define other people’s communities. Dr. Joudah says “that the use of the political in my poetry is a matter of point of view from which power imposes itself upon others.”¹⁵⁹ Althusser describes this process as interpellation.¹⁶⁰ Dr. Joudah’s poetry confuses underlying hierarchies, which creates a unique fabric and example for international art.¹⁶¹ As Dr. Joudah says his poetry reflects the world around him.¹⁶² Dr. Joudah uses his work to discuss the constructs in the world. The way the world is defined and questions why it is so. One of the hierarchies that he addresses in his work is the concept of “us vs. them”

If you believe the hoopoe
Is a good omen,

The driver says,
Then you are one of us.
-Atlas¹⁶³

In this poem, a driver shares a fable of his people and concludes his story by informing the travelers of how to become one of “us.” States use ideological state apparatuses to impose community identity.¹⁶⁴ In this poem, the fable acts as an ideological state apparatus imposing the communities’ boundaries. Dr. Joudah explores identity within the nation-state system.

The previous sections explored how Dr. Joudah challenges the nation-state system through exploring statelessness and the concept of othering. In addition, the poetry Dr. Joudah creates transnational spaces through motion and mobility. Dr. Joudah addresses issues of social order and belonging that create “exclusive and inclusive spaces in a world of transboundary

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster.

¹⁶¹ Glück, "Foreward."

¹⁶² Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

¹⁶³ Joudah, *The Earth in the Attic*.

¹⁶⁴ Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster.

movement.”¹⁶⁵ Relating to the idea of motion and mobility, Louise Glück attempts to place the occurrence of some poems in Darfur, but notes that it is “impossible to be certain since the place, or places, are not names.”¹⁶⁶ Likewise, Dr. Joudah says the following about his work: “I realize by doing that or engaging in that that I am performing a motion a transnational moment if you will.”¹⁶⁷ In the following poem, “Immigrant Song,” Dr. Joudah creates a transnational space:

In the kitchen in the afternoon, peeling oranges and splitting cantaloupe gut,
All that is left is storytelling.

the one-radio, on-coffee-shop village now an almond field
And caution-brochure ruins besieged by grass.

Everyday around noon a boy on a mule, the men out in the fields,
Bread fresh out of the brick-oven, wrist deep in olive oil, elbows dripping.

The one-radio, one-coffee-shop village without an ink-line on paper,
Now spilled like beads out of a rosary.

Not what they would have grown.

We the people in god we trust.

We the people in god we trust everyday around noon a mule.

We the people dream the city: Ooooh you give me fever.

Oooh you give me fever so bad I shake like beads out of a rosary.

Fever so bad it must’ve been malaria.

Hey doctor! You mule-ride away, you cost the rest of harvest.

Hey doctor, the city’s a medicine cabinet.

We plant tomatoes, okra, squash instead.

And a fig tree that won’t grow in Tennessee frost.

Trees die standing.

¹⁶⁵ Newman, “Boundaries, Borders, and Barriers: Changing Geographic Perspectives on Territorial Lines,” 139.

¹⁶⁶ Glück, “Foreward,” xiv.

¹⁶⁷ Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

One-cantaloupe, one-rosary kitchen.
-Immigrant Song¹⁶⁸

Dr. Joudah takes the reader to several different locations in this poem. He starts the poem in a “one-radio, one-coffee shop village” and ends the poem in Tennessee. Throughout the poem he juxtaposes American phrases, such as “we the people in god we trust” with scenes from a traditional village found in places such as Palestine. Likewise, he juxtaposes politics commentary and American pop culture. For instance, he places phrases and words from a popular American pop song, “you give me fever”, in conjunction with malaria, a tropical disease in the Eastern African countries in which he worked with Doctors Without Borders. Dr. Joudah creates transnational spaces within his art.

Through this, Dr. Joudah asks his reader to step outside the confines of national boundaries and national identities the boundlessness of human existence.¹⁶⁹ His art transcends the nation-state system and creates a “fluidly bounded transnational or globalized social space.”¹⁷⁰ Dr. Joudah’s art is a transnational experience because of its fluidity and mobility. He explains this himself, saying:

It is very interesting for me to have been cognizant from that from a linguistic aesthetic standpoint, and to realize that I am taking this lyric, aesthetic in its own particularity through another language or into another language or style, and I realize by doing that or engaging in that that I am performing a motion a transnational moment if you will.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Joudah, *The Earth in the Attic*.

¹⁶⁹ Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

¹⁷⁰ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 15.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

The art creates a work and exemplifies a life lived in both places simultaneously.¹⁷² Dr. Joudah challenges traditional concepts of community and identity by creating transnational spaces through his art.

The art allows the reader to become familiar with Dr. Joudah, for “contemporary literary fantasies tell us something about displacement, disorientation, and agency in the contemporary world.”¹⁷³ Dr. Joudah’s work tells us something about the displacement of location and falling outside of the confines of a state, disorientation and the nation-state system. Likewise, in regards to identity art allows artists to engage in the process of learning about themselves.¹⁷⁴ However, the confines of the nation-state and interpellation creates problems “of national identity, where people are for the most part fixated on the idea of self whereas in art it’s almost an antonym to art or of art this idea of a national entity is almost an antonym of identity in art.”¹⁷⁵ Dr. Joudah argues that the nation is an antonym of art because it creates an imagined community that confines and limits the art.

Dr. Joudah argues that unless states allow art and artists to transcend to the confines of the state the longevity and significance of the art will diminish.¹⁷⁶ Nations and states confine artists to their collective identity. In order for art to flourish, the art needs to transcend the state and cross across national collective identity reaching “the boundlessness of human existence, and anyone who has been able to do that in their art we know so far have survived the test of time.”¹⁷⁷ In order for art to maintain its significance, art must be universal and rise across states.

¹⁷² Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 17.

¹⁷³ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large Cultural Dimension of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 58.

¹⁷⁴ Hunter and Jabobus, *Modern Art*, Third Edition, 401.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Fady Joudah, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, Houston, TX (July 5, 2010).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

Conclusion

Dr. Joudah's poetry exhibits transnational qualities through several means. Dr. Joudah's poetry is considered with categories and hierarchies in relation to the nation-state system. He directly engages with issues related to the nation-state system within his art. For example, in the "Tea Sage Poem," Dr. Joudah challenges the nation-state system by focusing on the increased securitization of immigration and othering. He continues to focus on othering in his poem "The Humanitarian Man." In which, he uses the allegory of the a dog to humanize the 'other.' His art examines his identity within the nation-state system, the process of securitization and the concept of the 'other.'

Through his art, Dr. Joudah also examines the identity of other refugees and the impact of the nation-state system on their lives. He challenges the nation-state system by humanizing the traditional concept of the 'other,' exploring his identity as a stateless person and creating his own homeland through his art. His work also creates transnational experience by combining his Palestinian and American identities and exploring the identities of other people in the international community.

Likewise, film producer and director, Faroukh Virani, uses his art to create transnational spaces. While Dr. Joudah creates transnational spaces in his poetry by exploring different themes, and transcending time and space, Mr. Virani creates transnational spaces in his films by combining cultural and artistic styles. Dr. Joudah directly addresses issues of identity related to the nation-state system, whereas Mr. Virani exemplifies the transnationality that global migrants live.

Chapter Four: New Spaces

Similar to Dr. Joudah, Farkouh Virani challenges traditional concepts of community and identity by creating transnational spaces within his art. Mr. Virani's films reflect the processes of globalization that allow people to simultaneously maintain ties and live in multiple places. While not all of Mr. Virani's work challenges the nation-state system, several of his films challenge the nation-state system by creation a transnational space. The chapter begins with a brief biography of Mr. Virani, followed by a review and analysis of his work. Mr. Virani does not focus on any specific issues related to the nation or state, instead he creates transnational experiences by combing or fusing cultures and art forms.

Biography

Faroukh Virani is of Indian descent. His parents migrated to the United States in the 1970's. He has spent most of his life in Houston, Texas and considers the city to be his home. Currently, he attends the University of Southern California where he is pursuing a Master in Fine Arts in the university's School for Cinematic Fine Arts. His family is a part of a sect in Islam called Ismali, a modern form of Islam.¹⁷⁸

Art Review

The following sections give a brief description of the films *Anjali* and *Slow Burn*. Mr. Virani completed several documentaries with Sehba Sarwar for Voices Breaking Boundaries. These documentaries are not included as a part of the work because they reflect Voices Breaking Boundaries more than they reflect Mr. Virani's identity. The films reviewed here are much more personal to Mr. Virani because he made them for himself instead of Voices Breaking

¹⁷⁸ Faroukh Virani, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 2, 2010).

Boundaries. Also, many of Mr. Virani's other works are more personal and representative of Mr. Virani's identity.

Anjali¹⁷⁹

Anjali was written and directed by Faroukh Virani and produced by FangYi Xu in 2011. This film follows a classic Indian dancer and her attempt to gain recognition in her class. The film opens with a young Indian woman putting on jewelry and preparing for her dance class. She enthusiastically dances with excitement. She then arrives late to class as her teacher lectures about discipline and posture within dance. The teacher lectures the students to prepare for an upcoming solo. The teacher instructs them to perform a specific dance, and the students, Anjali included, execute a very strict, rigid dance. The teacher asks Anjali to show the class the dance. When she performs the dance on her own, she is less rigid and moves freely. She performs well, but she enjoys mixing in different styles of dance and deviating from the traditional steps. In her attempt to express herself, her dance teacher denies her the opportunity to do a solo dance at an upcoming recital. At the recital, the teacher recommends that she leave because she is not ready to perform. The film ends as Anjali dances the recital dance in her apartment while her classmate executes the dance on stage.

Slow Burn¹⁸⁰

This film takes place in a hospital and follows the story of a chronically ill woman. It begins next to her hospital bed as a doctor explains that the medical treatments have been exhausted, and there is nothing else the medical community can do for her. Her son returns from the cafeteria after this discussion to find her upset, and she expresses her intention of going home. She disconnects her IV and gets up to leave. Music begins as she and her son discuss what should be

¹⁷⁹ Faroukh Virani, *Anjali*, directed by Faroukh Virani, 2011. <http://vimeo.com/23501181>

¹⁸⁰ *Slow Burn*, directed by Faroukh Virani, 2010. <http://vimeo.com/14108169>

done through song. Meanwhile, in the background nurses, medical staff and other patients dance to their song. Their conversation is concluded after another patient breakdances and symbolically dies in front of them.¹⁸¹

Analysis and Findings

Overall, Mr. Virani states that he does not want to focus on politics in his art. As noted, none of his films focused on politics, globalization or the nation-state system. Instead, Mr. Virani wants his films to be escapes from life and some of the things that are occurring.¹⁸² He grew up in a household that tried to deemphasize politics. However, his family would still discuss politics and religion. Mr. Virani claims that “Cultural identity issues, they can be separate.”¹⁸³ While Mr. Virani argues that cultural and identity issues are separate, he then claims “my identity and political issues I guess they have to be joined.”¹⁸⁴ This contradiction arose when Mr. Virani contemplated multiculturalism in India and the increased scrutiny of Muslims in America since 9/11. This contradiction may stem from the process of interpellation.¹⁸⁵ While Mr. Virani does not want to combine politics and identity, he recognizes the political forces combining the two. Likewise, while Mr. Virani’s work does not address politics, his pieces are political because of the way they combine identities and transcend boundaries and states.

While Mr. Virani does not focus on making Indian films, he does try to draw on his Indian culture. As previously stated, he struggles with his identity. Shile grew up in America, he still draws on his Indian culture and background to create his films.¹⁸⁶ Much of Mr. Virani’s

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Faroukh Virani, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 2, 2010).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster.

¹⁸⁶ Faroukh Virani, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 2, 2010).

work deals with his trouble of not knowing “what to identify with.”¹⁸⁷ A person addresses concepts of identity and identity construction when they are unsure of how to identify themselves.¹⁸⁸ Mr. Virani claims producing and directing films is a learning process for him.”¹⁸⁹ Recently, Mr. Virani has started incorporating more of his Indian heritage and identity into his work. He is starting to embrace Bollywood more and his goal is to produce Bollywood type films in America that are Indie film but with musical sequences.¹⁹⁰

Through his work, he creates transnational and trans-state moments. Michael Peter Smith argues that global migrants currently live their lives “neither here nor there” but at the same time both here and there.¹⁹¹ Smith argues that global migrants no longer assimilate in traditional terms. Instead, they lead lives in both places. Through globalization, global migrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than on nation-state.”¹⁹² In his article, Smith claims that global migrants create spaces that accommodate both of their identities. Through these spaces, global migrants simultaneously express identities of multiple states and nations.

For example in another film that he directed, Mr. Virani combines his American identity with his knowledge of Bollywood to make an interesting film. While it does not look like a traditional Bollywood film, the concepts and ideas definitely harken to his Indian identity. The film is not an escape of romantic fantasy filled with comedy and a romantic undertone. Instead, it is a mournful discussion between a mother and her son in which, they discuss her decision to

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity," 19.

¹⁸⁹ Faroukh Virani, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 2, 2010).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 15-33.

¹⁹² Schiller, et. al, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 48.

give up on treatment for her medical condition. As the discussion begins, the mother breaks into a song (see image 2). Mr. Virani fuses cultures and art forms to create an alternative community and identity.¹⁹³

Mr. Virani says that he is starting to express his identity more by combining music and dance in his film. This reflects Mr. Virani's state of inbetweenness and cultural bifocality.¹⁹⁴ Mr. Virani's mix of art forms reflects globalization, as it "breaks the neat lines that distinguish the inside from the outside" and "creates new lines, new connections."¹⁹⁵ Mr. Virani does not simply place Indian music and dance into his films. The music does not reflect a fun, happy, or classical Indian song. Instead, the music carries undertones of classical European music. The actresses' European classical training adds an air of formality to the film, and the sounds of violin draw on the mournful undertone of the film. He combines his knowledge of American culture, music, and dance to create a unique experience within the film. The film creates "trans-statal" space that conflict with the nation-state system by showing that as a global migrant both India and the United States influence and maintain Mr. Virani's allegiance.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, 347.

¹⁹⁴ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 15-33.

¹⁹⁵ Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion*.

¹⁹⁶ Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," 547-565.



Image 1¹⁹⁷

As the film continues, the hospital staff acts as background dancers. Again, their dance reflects a classical European training. With straight lines and symmetry that builds on the tone of formality. The formality reflects the serious conversation between the mother and her son about their family's future. This film draws on his American culture in dance and music. As Mr. Virani says, "I'm able to call on so many American culture that I've grown up with, and like it's a different style of film making here." Mr. Virani's work is neither Indian nor American, it is a fusion of the two cultures. As Smith argues global migrants are neither here nor there, Mr. Virani's work is neither here nor there.¹⁹⁸ Instead it creates a unique space in between. Mr. Virani challenges the nation-state system by creating a transnational space.

Mr. Virani does this again as the film progresses. The music transitions into a hip hop tone, and another patient breakdances. Mr. Virani combines different American sub-cultures, such as high art and low art as well as his Indian background within his work.

¹⁹⁷ Faroukh, Virani, *Slow Burn*, directed by Faroukh Virani, 2010.

¹⁹⁸ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 15-33.



Image 2¹⁹⁹

The mother, son and hospital staff watches in shock as he dances. In this film, Mr. Virani incorporates the Bollywood theme of musicals, song and dance, while drawing on his American culture, knowledge of music, dance and cultural issues. In which, the audience views artistic expressions and cultures from the “high” culture in the United states through the formality of the classical music and dance, the “low” culture in the United States through the hip hop and breakdance, and an understanding of Bollywood film through the use of music, dance and song that the characters use to express themselves and work through their problems. Again, Mr. Virani fuses his American and Indian identities to create a transnational space, challenging the nation-state system.

The transnational experiences created in *Slow Burn* challenge traditional concepts of community and identity. In this film Mr. Virani creates a transnational space that reflects “the

¹⁹⁹ Faroukh Virani, *Slow Burn*, directed by Faroukh Virani, 2010.

fluid social space of the transnational migration stream.”²⁰⁰ Mr. Virani’s work reflects that in this era of globalization and global migration “people can’t be separated by physical obstacles or by temporal distance,” and the concept of *here* and *there* no longer means anything.”²⁰¹ This conflicts with the traditional notion of community defined by the nation-state system.²⁰² Mr. Virani’s work reflects an identity that transcends boundaries of the state and challenges the concept that allegiance can only be given to one state.

As a second-generation migrant, Mr. Virani still explores his Indian identity. Multiculturalism is a part of Indian culture. Mr. Virani states that the multiculturalism in Indian society provides him with a vast cultural and art history that he can study and reference.²⁰³ The diversity of Indian culture predisposes Mr. Virani to a multicultural system. Mr. Virani argues that “you have to come to terms with who you are especially since 9/11 you aren’t engaging yourself and wondering about religion and seeing where you fit in the spectrum of Islam I have to [examine identity].”²⁰⁴ Mr. Virani does not directly examine political issues within the majority of his art. However, he does still examine his political identity, and his political identity is still apart of the work he creates by creating transnational experiences within his art. While Mr. Virani does not address political issues in his art, his art is political because he challenges the nation-state system by creating transnational spaces.

As a second-generation migrant, Mr. Virani also challenges traditional Indian concepts. In another film, Mr. Virani focuses on Indian classical dance. In this film, an American class of Indian classical dancers prepare for an upcoming recital. One young woman incorporates pop

²⁰⁰ Michael Peter Smith, "Postmodernism, Urban thnography, and the New Social Space of Ethnic Identity," *theory and Society* (Springer) 21, no. 4 (August 1992): 493-531. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/657707>

²⁰¹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998), 17-18.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁰³ Faroukh Virani, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 2, 2010).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

styles into her dance and receives ridicule from the students and her teacher. The student claims she has gone “Bollywood” (see Image 4). As Mr. Virani explains that some people view Bollywood as stupid or silly, but he notes that there are reasons Bollywood exists.²⁰⁵



Image 3²⁰⁶

In this film, Mr. Virani explores the different complexities and nuances of Indian identity in the United States, and the idea that the classical Indian arts are not accepting of change even if it comes from within their own culture. This is similar to art in the United States and the divide that exists between high culture and low culture. By addressing this in the video, Mr. Virani tries to bring this issue to the attention of his audience. By doing so, he tries to build acceptance of his art within the Indian community and strengthen his ties with the Indian community. As a second-generation migrant, Mr. Virani argues that traditional concepts of community, state and nation contribute to a “one-directional process that reaffirms the superiority of those to whom the

²⁰⁵ Faroukh Virani, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 2, 2010).

²⁰⁶ Faroukh Virani, *Anjali*, directed by Faroukh Virani, 2011.

stranger must assimilate.”²⁰⁷ However, this limits Mr. Virani’s association, and he chooses to strengthen his ties with the Indian community. Mr. Virani challenges concepts of the nation-state system by refusing to assimilate, and instead, he chooses to strengthen his ties with the Indian community.

Conclusion

Mr. Virani indirectly engages with issues with the nation-state system within his art. His films are not intentionally political. However, the transnationality of his identity expressed through his art makes his art political. Mr. Virani combines cultures and art forms by using dance, music and film from Indian Bollywood films with American music, dance and filmography. He creates a transnational space within his art. This space represents the transnational lifestyle and identity of Mr. Virani.

Mr. Virani’s work creates transnational spaces by combining both his Indian and his American identities. His multicultural background allows him to mix different cultures within his art. As a global migrant, he transcends states and nations through his films, and by doing so he challenges traditional concepts of community and identity.

The following chapter explores the work of Bapsi Sidhwa who examines different cultures through her novels and short stories. Mr. Virani often spoke of the multicultural characteristics of India and how those characteristics influence his work. Ms. Sidhwa examines multiculturalism in India, Pakistan and the United States.

²⁰⁷ Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

Chapter Five: Cultural Differences

This chapter focuses on the work of renowned author Bapsi Sidhwa. While Mr. Virani referred to multiculturalism and its influences on his work, Ms. Sidhwa uses her work to explore the benefits of multiculturalism. She challenges the nation-state system by validating Anderson's argument that nations are imagined communities and exploring the benefits of multiculturalism. Highly regarded throughout the Pakistani and Indian communities, Ms. Sidhwa's works brings a perspective of a first generation migrant and an established, honored artist. The chapter will follow the same outline as the other chapters by starting with a brief biography, followed by a review and analysis of some of her work. Ms. Sidhwa addresses issues related to the state and nation directly through her art by comparing and contrasting cultures and communities and exploring multicultural communities.

Biography

Ms. Sidhwa was born and raised in Lahore, Pakistan. She had polio at a young age, but this did not impede her ability to graduate from college, represent Pakistan in the 1974 Asian Women's Congress, serve on the Advisory Committee to Benazir Bhutto, and publish five novels.²⁰⁸ She has taught at Columbia University, Mount Holyoke University, the University of Houston, Brandeis University, and the University of Southampton.²⁰⁹ Bapsi, a Zoroastrian Parsee, claims her ethnicity as Parsee, religion as Zoroastrian and nationality as American. She relocated to the United States with her husband in the 1980's and gained citizenship in 1992. However, she continued to travel between the two countries for many years until the death of her mother. She maintained a house in Lahore until 2009. She now considers the United States to be

²⁰⁸ Muneeza Shamsie, ed., *And The world Changed Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women*, ed. Muneeza Shamsie (New York, NY: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2008), 28.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

home, for “home is where your kitchen is.”²¹⁰ It is interesting to note that Ms. Sidhwa is the only South East Asian who did not claim her ethnicity as Pakistani or Indian. She claimed her ethnicity as Parsee, one of the many different ethnic groups in Pakistan. However, the others from this region drew no ethnic distinction between themselves and the other people from their country of origin and instead identified their nationality with their ethnicity. As a minority in Pakistan, she emphasizes her ethnic identity over her connection to the larger collective identity of Pakistan.

Art Review

Ms. Sidhwa is an acclaimed author who was asked to turn Deepa Mehta’s film, *Earth*, into a book.²¹¹ This thesis focuses on her novel *The Pakistani Bride* and her short story “Defend Yourself Against Me.” Her other works include *Water, Ice Candy Man* (known as *Cracking India* in the United States), *Crow Eater*, and *An American Brat*.

The Pakistani Bride²¹²

The Pakistani Bride was published in 1983. The novel follows Munni, a young Pakistani girl. When she is very young her family attempts to flee the violence of the 1947 Partition of Indian and Pakistan. The Partition between Indian and Pakistan was very violent and resulted in the death of 1.5 million people.²¹³ While on a train fleeing to Pakistan, Sikhs attack the train and kill her family. A man from the mountainous, tribal region adopts her and renames her Zaitoon. He married her to a man from his tribe that is very harsh and not her own. It follows her unique background, and her experience during her marriage to a man of a culture that is as foreign to her

²¹⁰ Bapsi Sidhwa, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 5, 2010).

²¹¹ Bapsi Sidhwa, *Water* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2006).

²¹² Bapsi Sidhwa, *The Pakistani Bride* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 1983).

²¹³ Ravinder Kaur, *India and Pakistan: Partition Lessons*, August 16, 2007, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/india> (accessed November 18, 2011).

as the American woman she meets during her journey to her marriage. Zaitoon receives many beatings from her husband that nearly kill her. Eventually, she runs away from the tribe and seeks refuge from a military general.

Simultaneously, the story follows the experiences of Carol, an American woman in Pakistan. Carol struggles with the strict culture of Pakistan and her repressive husband. She acts out and seeks attention by having a love affair with a military general. In the end, she divorces her husband and returns to the United States to regain her independence. The military general she has an affair with also saves Zaitoon. The reader is left to speculate about the fate of both women as the book closes with the military general contemplating the Zaitoon's fate.²¹⁴

Defend Yourself Against Me²¹⁵

This short story follows the immigration of a Muslim woman to the United States. Joy, a friend of the family, discovers the fascinating history of the woman and the difficulties she experienced during the Partition. Ammijee, the Muslim woman, suffered horrendous human rights abuses during Partition at the hands of Sikhs. Upon the arrival of the woman in America, the family's friends, who practice the Sikh religion, beg for the woman's forgiveness. They dress in traditional garb and crawl face down on the ground to her feet. The experience shocks all who are present and ends only when the woman finally grants her blessing and admits forgiveness was given long ago. The story shows the ability of reconciliation.

Analysis

Ms. Sidhwa addresses issues related to the nation and state directly in her work. She compares and contrasts cultural, ethnic and national identities within her work, validating Anderson's

²¹⁴ Bapsi Sidhwa, *The Pakistani Bride* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 1983).

²¹⁵ Bapsi Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me," in *And The World Changed Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women*, ed. Muneeza Shamsie (New York, NY: The Feminist Press, 2008).

“Imagined Communities.” Ms Sidhwa’s work shows that nations are imagined because differences are as stark within nations as between them. However, she also makes a case for multiculturalism. This section first analyzes the way Ms. Sidhwa affirms Anderson’s argument that nations are imagined through her work *The Pakistani Bride*. Then it examines the case for multiculturalism that Ms. Sidhwa makes in her short story “Defend Yourself Against Me.”

Differences within and between nations

The driving force of collective identity is the differences that exist between a community and others. As previously discussed, contemporary nativists fear global migrants and argue that irrefutable differences exist between global migrants and their host state.²¹⁶ Ms. Sidhwa emphasizes cultural differences within Pakistan. She says Pakistan is a multi-ethnic culture.²¹⁷ Zaitoon’s adopted father, Qasim, originates from a mountain tribe, while she originates from the plains. Ms. Sidhwa casts Qasim as a harsh man who is unafraid to kill. Qasim flees the mountain region after he killed a man because his victim was a “bloody Hindu bastard.”²¹⁸ During Qasim’s travels to Lahore, he notes the people who live in the plains are “soft, their lives easy.”²¹⁹ Upon arrival in Lahore, he befriends a man from the plains area named Nikka. Qasim questions his friend’s inability to kill others. Nikka asks, “Why would I kill a man who has done me no harm?”²²⁰ Ms. Sidhwa emphasizes a difference of character, customs and traditions between these two men and their approach to honor and killing. These differences affirm Anderson’s

²¹⁶ Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion*.

²¹⁷ Bapsi Sidhwa, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 5, 2010).

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

argument that nations are imagined communities by showing that not all ‘others’ are foreign to one’s own cultural practice.²²¹

Likewise, when Qasim arraigns Zaitoon’s marriage to man from his tribe, Nikka and his wife try to convince Zaitoon to decline, saying “We’ll marry you to a decent Punjabi who will understand your ways.”²²² It is not until Zaitoon meets Carol that she recognizes cultural differences exist. The concern over Zaitoon’s safety with the tribal is echoed when Zaitoon and her father met Carol and the major. The major voices his concern asking Qasim if he thinks Zaitoon will be happy by reminding Qasim that the people in his tribe have a hard life.²²³ These differences within the Pakistani community show that differences exist within nations and not just between them.

These intrastate cultural differences are also magnified on an interstate between Zaitoon and Carol, an American woman. Ms. Sidhwa uses her knowledge of multiple cultures to create literary pieces that combine, comment and critique both cultures simultaneously. Ms. Sidhwa states that, “a mix of different cultures, makes for a sort of tension, drama, all that is added when you mix cultures.”²²⁴ In the Pakistani Bride, Ms. Sidhwa compares the young protagonist to an American woman. She uses a Pakistani character to internalize, contrast and discuss the differences and similarities between the two women that they themselves do not even recognize. Bapsi says that Carol “was created for that purpose. Because of that time I had not known Americans or America really, but I thought what I was describing in the tribal culture was too alien for them to relate to.”²²⁵ For this reason Bapsi “thought if I introduce an American woman

²²¹ Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion*, 24.

²²² *Ibid.*, 96.

²²³ Bapsi Sidhwa, *The Pakistani Bride* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 1983), 139.

²²⁴ Bapsi Sidhwa, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 5, 2010).

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

character, who was able to interpret the tribal culture to the Americans.”²²⁶ In the book, she mentions that the woman from California cannot understand the life of Pakistani women any more than a Pakistani woman could understand the American woman’s life. The military general that saves Zaitoon and has an affair with Carol comments:

It wouldn’t be easy for you really to understand her. You’d find her life in the zenanna with the other women pitifully limited and claustrophobic-she’d probably find yours - if she could ever glimpse it - terrifying, insecure and needlessly competitive.²²⁷

Ms. Sidhwa uses Zaitoon and Carol to note the explicit differences between the two cultures. She does so without casting criticism upon one or the other, yet he does manage to describe the differences in such a way that shows the implicit differences between the two. By doing so, Ms. Sidhwa comments on the differences and similarities between the two women and their cultures.

After meeting Carol she comments on the differences between herself and Carol and comments on the strangeness of Carol to Qasim.²²⁸ Qasim reminds her that Carol’s ways are different from their own. It is at this time Zaitoon begins to recognize the potential for cultural differences between herself and her future husband. She asks Qasim if Carol’s ways are “as different as my ways will be from your people in the hills.”²²⁹ Ms. Sidhwa notes that Zaitoon “is treated different than when she marries and goes among the tribals.”²³⁰ Upon her marriage, Zaitoon receives regular sexual, verbal and physical abuse from her husband. As her beatings worsen, Zaitoon chooses to run away from the tribe recognizing that it is her only hope for survival.

²²⁶ Bapsi Sidhwa, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 5, 2010).

²²⁷ Sidhwa, *The Pakistani Bride*, 180.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 141.

²³⁰ Bapsi Sidhwa, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 5, 2010).

Ms. Sidhwa comments on the different ways that women are treated in Pakistan based upon politics, saying:

Suddenly, we had Bhutto, for example, who was good for women. He was a broadminded liberal man and he wanted to see the next sexes mingle. Then Zia came in with very strict arbitrary laws about women very harsh laws were introduced, and our lives became totally constricted as women. You could see with every successive regime you could see the change in the way people behave the way they talk to you the way they treat women. You know it just changes when Benazir was there; there was a different atmosphere. Musharraf was wonderful for women again, so it just keeps changing around.²³¹

Like the differences of women's rights based upon the political climate, Zaitoon's experience shows the difference of cultural experience. Through Zaitoon's experiences, Ms. Sidhwa demonstrates to the reader that there are many different ethnicities such as Benjalis, the Paktuns, the Pashtun's the Punjabis, the Sundis within Pakistan. Likewise, there are "different languages and each language seems to define a different region a different people and they have their own customs, norms and traditions."²³² Differences within nations are equally as significant as they are between them. These internal differences challenge the concept of nation.

Ms. Sidhwa argues for multiculturalism. She emphasizes, "women under the skin are the same."²³³ She allows the differences to become apparent through the contrast of the two female characters. It is not a fundamental difference that separates the two women, instead, "Customs are different the way they are treated is different to an extent, but other wise you see the similarity between both these women."²³⁴ Ms. Sidhwa chose to combine the cultures to not only help Americans relate and understand the story but because:

When you are between cultures, each culture is different from the other, and when you portray cultures the identity of each has to be very sharp. And there I find language helps

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Bapsi Sidhwa, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 5, 2010).

²³⁴ Ibid.

me a lot because when I'm writing a Punjabi speaking characters, although writing in English, the language changes to their idiom their dialogue type of thing, the syntax you know. When I'm writing with Parsees like the Crow Eaters again their identity gets established through the language. It's easier to describe their customs.²³⁵

Multiculturalism is not about a lack of differences. Instead multiculturalism is the "affirmation that such diversity extends into the realm of morality and politics."²³⁶ Even analyzing identity "depends upon some form of classification."²³⁷ Ms. Sidhwa advocates multiculturalism and the ability to overcome nationalistic differences within her work.

Multiculturalism

The short story, "Defend Yourself Against Me," tells the experience of a Muslim woman kidnapped and abused by men of the Sikh religion. The reader learns of these experiences when her son and his family rekindle the friendship of a British woman, Joy, he knew as a child in Pakistan. Her son, Sikander who lives in America is, at the time of the story, closely acquainted with two Sikh men.

Nationalism drove the conflict of Partition and justified the violence between Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. Sikander and his family relate the trauma his mother endured during the Partition. They claim she and other village women planned to kill themselves rather than endure the torture of the Sikh.²³⁸ However, she and the village women did not have time to commit suicide when the Sikh men attacked their village. They claim that "Pregnant women were paraded naked, their stomachs slashed" and that "babies were swung by their heels and dashed

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ranier Baubock, "Farwell to Multiculturalism? Sharing Values and Identities in Societies of Immigration," *JIMI/RIMI* 3, no. 1 (2002): 1-16.

²³⁷ Kearney 557

²³⁸ Bapsi Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me," 40.

against wall.”²³⁹ Later, in private, Sikander relates to Joy that his mother remembered women being sold in the street for “50, 20 and 10 rupees!”²⁴⁰ The differences among these groups and their notions of their nation led to the horrors of Partition. The nation-state system’s need for different communities to affirm and maintain their own state drove the violence of the Partition.

Ms. Sidhwa imposes her desire to see healing and reconciliation between the groups upon the story. The main characters and their social group of Pakistani Muslims, Sikhs and British citizens exemplify “the networks and boundaries of sociocultural and political space that some groups of transnational migrants, exiles, and refugees are presently constituting.”²⁴¹ The group upon first notice seems to be made up of people with “an apparent commonality of language and culture, but as the story unfolds the reader learns that these people belong to different religious groups: Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh.”²⁴² This again confirms that within nations there are differences that are as stark as between nations. Further more, it represents a group that fulfills Ms. Sidhwa’s desire to see reconciliation between the groups. In reference to the partition Ms. Sidhwa believed over time, “the two communities would forget this hostility and heal themselves.”²⁴³ She says that this “hostility has to be dealt with.”²⁴⁴

Upon the arrival of the mother, the Sikh men make a tremendous scene asking the woman for forgiveness of the sins of their forefathers. They enter the house with “disheveled hair, parted at the center, bristles about their bears” wearing “white muslin kurtas.”²⁴⁵ The dinner guests at

²³⁹ Bapsi Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me," 41.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 45.

²⁴¹ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 17.

²⁴² Bapsi Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me," 28.

²⁴³ Bapsi Sidhwa and Preeti Singh, "My Place in the World," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* (Department of English and Comparative Literature, American university in Cairo and American University in Cairo Press) 18 (1998): 290-298. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/521890>

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Bapsi Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me," 47.

the party welcoming Sikander's mother watch in shock as the Sikh men "lie face down across the threshold, half outside the door, and half in the passage, their hands flat on the floor as if they were about to do pushups," and they begin to cry "Maajee! Maajee! Forgive Us."²⁴⁶ Upon realizing who the men are and their religious affiliation, Sikander's mother abrasively screams "Throw them out. They're badmashes! Goondas!"²⁴⁷ They men, on the hands "propelled forward by small movements of their shoulders and elbows," make their way to Sikander's mother slowly approaching the edge of her sari begging for forgiveness.²⁴⁸ After claiming she will never forgive them, the Sikh men continue to beg for forgiveness, "wiping their noses on their sleeves, tearing at their snarled hair, plead, 'We will lie at your door to our last breath! We are not fit to show our faces.'²⁴⁹ The scene continually becomes emotional and heart breaking as Sikander's mother, exhausted, with "knees giving way" "squats before the men," and she "buries her face in the chador."²⁵⁰ Finally, "in a flat voice," she says "My sons, I forgave your fathers long ago,"²⁵¹ and states "How else could I live?"²⁵² The forgiveness bequeathed to the two Sikh men was accomplished through the ability for the men to have access to ask for her forgiveness.

When the Sikhs and Muslims where in Pakistan, their religious differences created unbreakable boundaries between the people. However, in America, those boundaries are broken down. Instead, what remains is the mutual culture and background. In Pakistan and India, "each little bump in politics dictates our future; the regime changes and our future changes." Bapsi develops this thought by saying that, "Every breathe of our lives is a sort of dictated by the

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 48.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 48.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 49.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 51.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., 52.

politics in India and Pakistan. You prosper or fail according to what the politicians do.”²⁵³ Since politics dictate the lives of those in India and Pakistan, it takes migration for the people of the two differing religions to be able to communicate, create friendships and bonds.

Since the two Sikh men are friends with the woman’s son, they have access to ask for her forgiveness. Through migration, these people participated in transnational processes that “have reconstituted the sociocultural landscape.”²⁵⁴ The relocation of the Sikh man and the Muslim family to the United States broke barriers and “rendered problematic representations of the interplay between the state and civil society premised on clear distinctions between inside and outside, citizen and alien, self and other.”²⁵⁵ Ms. Sidhwa shows how migration can tear down some of the boundaries that exist between people. Even the horrors of the Partition were guided by politics and the creation and formation of lines and boundaries as people fought to determine “the physical borders” of Pakistan and India and thusly, “where the power of the state applied and stopped.”²⁵⁶ Currently, the United States immigration debate “can be read as a nation-state building project that delimits and constrains the allegiances and loyalties of transmigrants.”²⁵⁷ Transmigrants must choose between their “old” identity that exists in their sending state or their “new” identity that exists through assimilation.

Conclusion

Ms. Sidhwa’s short story “Defend yourself against me” argues that the nationalistic emotions that drove Partition are not as divisive and innate as the groups originally thought. Likewise, in *The Pakistani Bride*, Ms. Sidhwa focuses on the similarities of the Zaitoon and Carol. Ms.

²⁵³ Bapsi Sidhwa, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (July 5, 2010).

²⁵⁴ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 16.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ 101

²⁵⁷ Schiller, et al., "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 48.

Sidhwa's work exhibits the "struggle with states and other culturalist focuses and groups," and she uses a "deliberate vocabulary of culturalist movements."²⁵⁸ Bapsi highlights these cultural and identity issues to bring attention to their injustices. This short story is an example of Bapsi's strong opinions, as she says, "I have very strong opinions a lot of my writing is directed by compassion in a sense of injustice in the world, and that is the motivation and of course if you write with those motivations you're going to be very political." It is by crossing borders, boundaries that these people are able to break down the boundaries that exist between them and create meaningful lasting relationships.

Bapsi Sidhwa correlates, examines and connects differing cultures, religions, nations, and states through her novels and short stories. As a global migrant, she actively engages identities and the nation-state system through the characters and plots she creates. Ms. Sidhwa reaffirms Anderson's argument that nations are imagined communities by emphasizing that the differences that exist within nations are as stark as those that exist between them. Ms. Sidhwa challenges the nation-state system by questioning the differences that drive the founding of nations and advocating for multiculturalism.

Ms. Bapsi Sidhwa indirectly engages with issues related to the nation-state system. In her novel, *The Pakistani Bride*, Ms. Sidhwa focuses on the differences and similarities between cultures. By doing so, she shows that differences within nations are as prevalent as those between them. She continues to focus on cultural differences in her short story, *Defend Yourself Against Me*. In the short story, Ms. Sidhwa examines the differences that exist with Pakistan that the communities used to justify the need for nations, and subsequently, they led to the horrors of Partition between India and Pakistan. Ms. Sidhwa uses these to justify the need for reconciliation

²⁵⁸ Appadurai, *Modernity at Large Cultural Dimension of Globalization*, 15.

and multiculturalism. While Ms. Sidhwa engages with discussion around multiculturalism and the existence of the nation, Ms. Erum Rani Butt examines the process of assimilation and issues of 'othering' in her work. She actively examines her personal identity as a global migrant within the nation-state system.

Chapter Six: Neo-racism, Immigration and Assimilation

The previous chapter examined the work of author Bapsi Sidhwa who challenges the concept of the nation by focusing on differences within the nation and arguing for multiculturalism. Ms. Butt examines issues of assimilation and ‘othering.’ She uses art to gain agency, assert herself and maintain individuality within the nation-state system. This chapter reviews the work of Ms. Erum Rani Butt. It begins with a brief biographical overview, followed by a review and analysis of her work. Ms. Butt was one of the most challenging artists to interview and understand. She contradicted herself a lot, and it was not until she was allowed to freely express a negative experience that she began to speak freely about her art and her intentions. Ms. Butt directly addresses issues related to the state and nation in her work including issues related to ‘othering’ and assimilation.

Biography

Erum Rani Butt was born in Karachi, Pakistan, and relocated to Chicago, Illinois with her family at a very young age. They ended up settling in the Houston suburb of Sugar Land. Since she was only around eight months old when her family relocated, she does not have many recollections of the relocation, but she did say that she “didn’t like any of the preschools they were all weird.”²⁵⁹ She does not refer to Pakistani as her nationality.²⁶⁰ Interestingly, however, she does not consider American her only nationality. When asked what her nationality was, she answered, “I am more American. Texan slash American.”²⁶¹ Ms. Butt considers herself to be more emotionally attached to America, for when asked which location she considers to be home, she said America

²⁵⁹ Erum Rani Butt, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

is her home because she's lived in the United States her whole life."²⁶² She is currently working on an undergraduate degree in film production from the Art Institute of Houston. Ms. Butt, the daughter of a mullah, speaks her mind, and this trait has caused her to experience hardship. After September 11th, students at her high school would refer to her as "bin Laden's daughter."²⁶³

Art Review

Ms. Butt's work is still young and developing her art, but her pieces deal with significant, difficult issues and vary in topics. One poem written for her "Mona Aunty" describes her relationship with her aunt saying, "I am your life/I am your baby and poopa."²⁶⁴ While this piece focuses on family and relationships, the majority of Ms. Butt's work focuses on socio-political issues. For example another poem about the violence on television asks "where did all the happiness go/where did all the peace go."²⁶⁵

This chapter focuses on one of Ms. Butts's favorite piece, *American 2*, a documentary that she created with a fellow student from a Voices Breaking Boundaries summer workshop in 2009. In this brief 4:41 minute documentary, Ms. Butt interviewed Pakistani girls on what they think of the society and their religion today.²⁶⁶ The film consists of several questions that are asked of the girls in individual or small group (2-3 individuals) settings. It was very interesting that one participant was either unable or unwilling to be participate in the filming of the documentary, but her answers where still incorporated through slides at the end of the other interviews. Ms. Butt spoke animatedly about this piece.²⁶⁷

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Untitled Erum Rani Butt, "Untitled" (Unpublished).

²⁶⁵ Erum Rani Butt, "Violence on T.V." (Unpublished).

²⁶⁶ *American 2*, directed by Erum R Butt, 2009. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwKWxmDNBYE>

²⁶⁷ Erum Rani Butt, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

Analysis and Findings

While Ms. Butt denied expressing her identity in her art, she claimed that expressing oneself through art is “better than [expressing oneself] verbally because verbally you can really get kicked down and get in trouble.”²⁶⁸ Likewise, she described *American 2* as the beginning of her future and exploring her questions, cultural views, people community, and the whole world.²⁶⁹ Ms. Butt did this to understand younger girls perspective and views.²⁷⁰

Ms. Butt’s first documentary focuses on understanding the identities of young women with similar backgrounds to her. *American 2* interrogates identity by focusing on how the young women define themselves. The first question in the documentary is “Do you consider yourself as a Pakistani or American?”²⁷¹ Two participants identified themselves as American, three as Pakistani, and one as Indian.²⁷² In response to the previous question, the next question asked “Why?”²⁷³ The film then shows two representative ideas, one for the American identity and one for the Pakistani. These questions attempt to determine which state holds the allegiance of the participants. Brown explains that identity formation is based upon borders, although these borders, while noting that the “hard shell of the classic nation-state territorial sovereign state”²⁷⁴ are not the only kinds of borders “within which identities can flourish.”²⁷⁵ Global migrants are one of the growing reasons the state is no longer one compulsory community.²⁷⁶ The international community recognizes “the phenomenon of the bifurcation of membership of the

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ *American 2*, directed by Erum R Butt, 2009.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Brown, "Borders and identity in International Political Theory," 133.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Jacobson, "The Global Political Culture," 173.

state from membership in the nation.”²⁷⁷ Ms. Butt examines bi-national identity within the nation-state system.

Ms. Butt has been a target of neo-racism. Ms. Butt lost confidence in expressing herself verbally when, “[she] was judged in community college by one teacher,” and she felt that the professor implied the September 11th attacks were the fault of all Muslims.²⁷⁸ Ms. Butt said, “I have to say what I believe in, and you are going to come and tell me that I’m kicked out of class. And you come and tell me at the end of the semester, school ain’t good for you; you need to go get married.”²⁷⁹ It was clear through our discussion that this was a very painful experience for her. In this experience, Ms. Butt was interpellated as a radical Muslim. This experience shows that “democracy is under threat . . . from those who pretend to defend it.”²⁸⁰ Ms. Butt claims the identity of Muslim. She is proud of her father who is an Imam. However, she was interpellated as an extreme, radical Muslim. Religious differences between global migrants and their destination countries are one of the key differences in recent migration flows.

While separation of church and state exists in the United States, religion is intricately tied into the state identity. As the “source of immigration has radically changed, so that the old nativist fears” have reemerged.²⁸¹ For example, “the current crisis over Islamic immigration” in France raises “the entire question of French national identity.”²⁸² As these nativist fears reemerge, migrants feel a greater sense of conflict in transitioning to their new state. Many immigrations share the same fear of discrimination. Some populations feel the pressures of discrimination so strongly that “many crimes in transnational migrant and refugee neighborhoods

²⁷⁷ Hammar qtd in Jacobson, "The Global Political Culture," 167.

²⁷⁸ Erum Rani Butt, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ranier Baubock, "Farwell to Multiculturalism? Sharing Values and Identities in Societies of Immigration," 1-16.

²⁸¹ Ravitch, "Your People, My People; Your God, My God: French and American Troubles Over Citizenship," 518.

²⁸² Ibid.,521.

go unreported because of widespread fear by crime victims of being reported to INS.”²⁸³

Religion constituted one of the core components of the national collective identity of the United States and France.²⁸⁴ Since religion historically constitutes one of the key aspects of national collective identity of the United States, the increased immigration of global migrants with a different religion threatens the national collective identity. The way Anderson argues that the nation is an imagined community;²⁸⁵ Roxanne Doty defines neo-racism as people who fear other cultures and believe that cultures are fundamentally different and cannot coexist.²⁸⁶ Doty argues that the state does not exist. Instead in its place is the existence of statescraft or the actions that result out of desire for the state to exist. Doty argues that all desire of statescraft leads to violence in its worst form.²⁸⁷ Currently, the neo-racist motivations of the right exhibit the desire of statescraft.²⁸⁸ Neo-racism justifies the racist beliefs on the concept of cultural incompatibility.²⁸⁹ Ms. Butt’s negative experience explains her desire to understand other young women’s experiences with similar backgrounds.

Art gives Ms. Butt agency, and helps her maintain both identities and overcome neo-racism. Ms. Butt discussed her failure in being able to properly express herself verbally saying, “I wouldn’t try it again, but hey, you’ve got to stand up for your religion for what you believe in.”²⁹⁰ Ms. Butt claims she contradicts herself a lot, saying “It’s hard for me to express because I’m afraid of what someone’s gonna say and what someone’s gonna tell me, and if I talk a little

²⁸³ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 20.

²⁸⁴ Ratvich, "Your People, My People; Your God, My God: French and American Troubles Over Citizenship."

²⁸⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

²⁸⁶ Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

²⁸⁷ Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion*.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ Erum Rani Butt, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

more, then I change a little.”²⁹¹ These discrepancies in her answers reflect a deeper fear of being interpellated as a specific subject:

I’m scared of expressing my nationality my background, my diversity. I’m scared of doing that. It’s because after 9/11 happened I was scared cause you know we’re Muslims. What are people gonna say? What are people gonna see?²⁹²

The neo-racism Ms. Butt experienced hinders her ability to feel comfortable. Ms. Butt’s different cultural views make her a target for neo-racism, for those with nativist fears feel her religious beliefs are incompatible with the majority of society.²⁹³ Ms. Butt’s fear of judgment makes her art more important to her, because it helps her overcome that fear. She said, “I feel like I’m trapped in a box, basically. That’s why art is very important to me, and I want to express that. Get out of the box and just express everything.”²⁹⁴ The difficulties that she experience stem from the religious differences between herself and the majority of the population in the United States. Ms. Butt gains agency through her art that allows her to assert her individuality and resist identities imposed upon her by the nation-state system.

The questions relating to the ease of maintaining bifurcated identities expresses Ms. Butt’s desire to explore the opinions of other young women with similar backgrounds. She tries to understand her difficult experience by learning about the participants’ experiences and identities. The next question asked in the documentary is, “Was it easy or hard for you to keep both of your identities?”²⁹⁵ Ms. Butt attempts to understand the processes of assimilation and the difficulties of being a second-generation migrant. America considers global migrants a part of the “melting pot” “where ethnic communities are considered to lose their identities and their

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion*.

²⁹⁴ Erum Rani Butt, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

²⁹⁵ *American 2*, directed by Erum R Butt, 2009.

cultural integrity through a process of homogenization or assimilation.”²⁹⁶ This experience increases her desire to understand the other girls’ experiences and the way they deal with their identities. The film portrays the majority of participants claiming that it is hard to maintain both identities and only one participant responded that it is easy to maintain both identities. The next question was “Why is it easy or hard?”²⁹⁷ Ms. Butt’s own experience shows she has difficulties maintaining both identities.

Ms. Butt explores the differences between the first and second generations Pakistanis. She asks the documentary participants, “What is your opinion of Pakistani society here today?” One participant said, “Some parts of the community are very religious. Compared to Pakistan people are much more religious” in the United States.²⁹⁸ Many focused on the loss of Pakistani identity in the second generation, noting that, “Things are being modified to the way it is here in America.”²⁹⁹ Another participant said, in relation to her friends, “They’re losing their roots.”³⁰⁰ This participant’s fears show that many people are “no longer rooted in a single place.” It does however contradict the idea that immigrants “go to great lengths to revitalize, reconstruct, or reinvent” their traditions.³⁰¹

The next question was “If you were the First Pakistani Muslim President of the United States what would you change or do?”³⁰² One interviewee said, “Equality. Every religion has their own beliefs.” She continued on this theme saying that she would “Get rid and abolish all of

²⁹⁶ Verne A. Dusenbery, "The Poetics and Politics of Recognition: Diasporan Sikhs in Pluralist Polities," 738-762.

²⁹⁷ *American 2*, directed by Erum R Butt, 2009.

²⁹⁸ *American 2*, directed by Erum R Butt, 2009.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Schiller, et. al, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 52.

³⁰² *American 2*, directed by Erum R Butt, 2009.

those racial stereotypes out there.”³⁰³ One interviewee denied that her Pakistani decent would influence her as president saying, “I wouldn’t care about that if I was president.”³⁰⁴ Interestingly, one participant said she would focus on the Pakistani-American identity, and have a special holiday in the United States for Pakistanis.

Conclusion

Through this documentary, Ms. Butt examines the process of assimilation that young Pakistani women are currently facing. Ms. Butt’s negative experiences stem from her difficulty of adjusting and her difference of religion with the majority population. Through her documentary, Ms. Butt explores these same concepts of immigration, assimilation and discrimination by examining other people’s experiences. Ms. Butt uses art to gain agency and resist identities imposed upon her such as being a radical Muslim.

Ms. Butt directly engages with issues related to the nation-state system. She uses her documentary, *Americans 2*, to directly engage issues such as neo-racism, immigration, assimilation, and ‘othering.’ Likewise, Ms. Sehba Sarwar uses her art to gain agency and avoids and reconstructs interpellation. Ms. Sarwar also examines other issues related to the nation-state system in her work such as ‘othering,’ the need for borders and transnationality.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

Chapter Seven: Activist Heart and Activist Art

Ms. Sarwar uses her art to examine issues related to the nation-state system. She actively questions the need for borders, increased securitization and the use of ‘othering.’ This chapter reviews the work of multi-disciplinary artist and co-founder of Voices Breaking Boundaries, Sehba Sarwar. It begins by giving a biography of Sehba Sarwar, and then reviews several of her pieces including her first novel, a short story, an essay, and a video collage. Finally, it ends with an analysis of Sehba’s work.

Biography

Sehba Sarwar is the daughter of activist Dr. Mohammad Sarwar, was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. She is married to a Chicano educator with whom she has one daughter. Her family, who were immigrants to Pakistan from India, raised her to be very political. Her father passed on to her his love for politics and his strong belief in the freedom of expression. While her family is Muslim, she was raised in a secular environment. Her parents “didn’t practice, [and her] grandparents prayed upstairs.”³⁰⁵ Ms. Sarwar was born into a “slippery space,” for her “family was born without having a permanent space.”³⁰⁶ Ms. Sarwar’s family simultaneously belonged and yet did not belong in Pakistan or India, and therefore, they had no “permanent space.”³⁰⁷

On graduating from secondary school, she moved to the United States where she attended Mount Holyoke College and received her undergraduate degree in English and received her Master’s degree in Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin. Ms. Sarwar is a

³⁰⁵ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

“multidisciplinary artist whose prose, poetry, video, and performance art tackle race, class and gender issues” and published her first novel “Black Wings” in 2004.³⁰⁸

Ms. Sarwar’s identity as an artist grew over time. She did a lot of visual art in college as an undergraduate student, and she was always torn about what she wanted to do, “and then, [she] eventually found [her] niche in writing.”³⁰⁹ She established herself in the Houston area as a teacher, but for the past ten years, she has been the executive director of Voices Breaking Boundaries. She argues that creating art is a part of her identity, saying “When I’m not producing work, I’m not a complete person.”³¹⁰ She described a period of time when she focused on the running of Voices Breaking Boundaries instead of creating art as a time of hardship. She said, “I have to write. You know like some people have to exercise, have to do yoga, have to do this, you know, I’d love to be able to do all those things but, I don’t feel complete if I’m not writing.”³¹¹

Ms. Sarwar was trained as a visual artist, and her experience as an artist has evolved over time. She described that ten years ago she would have said “I’m a fiction writer. I’m a novelist, and it would have been that simple.”³¹² Her craft evolved, and “five years ago [she] would have said [she’s] a writer, and it would have been very simple. I’m a writer.”³¹³ She recalls that things slowly started to change and now, she uses all media.³¹⁴ In the end, Ms. Sarwar rearranged my original question of what media does she use to “what media, I do not use.”³¹⁵

When asked if Ms. Sarwar considers both the United States and Pakistan home, or one place more of her home than the other she says:

³⁰⁸ *Sehba Sarwar*, <http://mantlethought.org/content/sehba-sarwar> (accessed September 3, 2011).

³⁰⁹ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The lens through which I experience the world is definitely Pakistan. Pakistanis may have a problem with me saying that since I'm based here, and I got my education, well, my high education here, and my professional experience is here.

However, her first book was published in Pakistan. She holds many workshops there, and she often presents art in Pakistan. She continued to explain her statement saying, "The core of my memories, and what I use for my writings is from Pakistan. Everything, what I use for my [work] is grounded there." She justifies these statements saying, "I don't see it as a holding on, it's truth."³¹⁶ She continued to develop this idea later in the conversation when discussing her short story "Soot" and her desire to see a world without borders. She described her feelings towards borders and the United States and Pakistan saying, "it's not about the U.S. versus there. It's about roots, personal roots, personal history."³¹⁷ Ms. Sarwar's new work "goes back to the history in India." Ms. Sarwar says:

People always assume, when I go out, and when I'm out of town, when I meet people for the first time, and when I'm ordering food, I'm generally ordering vegetarian, so the assumption is that I'm Indian/Hindu and slowly it unravels. I could easily say I'm from India because my parents were born in India. I spent time there.

It is out of this identity and framework that Ms. Sarwar creates her art. In the following sections I will focus on three of Ms. Sarwar's pieces.

Art Review

As a multidisciplinary artist, Ms. Sarwar produces a multitude of work varying in mediums. She writes short stories, novels, poetry, creates film instillations, and documentaries. This chapter focuses on Ms. Sarwar's written pieces, including her first published novel, *Black Wings* and a short story entitled "Soot". It also includes review and analysis of a video collage entitled "Why

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

are You Looking at Me Like That?” This thesis also includes a recent essay on the assassination attempt on Gabriella Giffords published in the Houston Chronicle, “No Escaping Violence in Pakistan – or U.S.”

*Soot*³¹⁸

This short story follows Zahra, a Pakistani graduate student, as she completes an internship in India (where Ms. Sarwar also completed an internship).³¹⁹ Like Ms. Sarwar, the Pakistani graduate student’s family was originally Indian. Zahra has an opportunity to intern in India and explore her family’s ethnic roots only through her degree in the United States. After hearing about her roommate’s positive experience, Zahra chooses to do an internship in India. Zahra desires to complete an internship somewhere other than Pakistan or the United States, where she was attending university. She interns with a non-profit organization in Kolkata, and through her time there, Zahra learns that she had a natural gift for photography. During her time in India, Zahra creates a lasting friendship with an Indian woman named Amita. Through her friendship, Amita introduces Zahra to a different side of Kolkata. Upon completing her internship, she returns to Pakistan to visit her family and decides not to return to school. Instead, she decides to reconnect with her family, her country, her roots, and thus, herself.

*Black Wings*³²⁰

Ms. Sarwar’s first novel, *Black Wings*, portrays a Pakistani - American woman, Yasmeen, who moves to the United States upon the death of her twin brother, Yasir. After years of hiding from her past, she invites her mother, Laila, to visit her and her children, Saira and Sameer, in Houston, Texas. Upon Laila’s arrival in Houston, she begins to share with Yasmeen’s

³¹⁸ Sehba Sarwar, "Soot," in *And the World Changed Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women*, ed. Muneeza Shamsie, 252-265 (New York, NY: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2008).

³¹⁹ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³²⁰ Sehba Sawar, *Black Wings* (Islamabad: Allhamra Publishing, 2004).

children stories from Pakistan. The reader learns Yasmeen blames her mother for Yasir's death and confronts her mother for keeping secrets. After Laila reveals she had an affair when Yasir died, Yasmeen must confront many of her preconceived notions of her mother. Through this time, Yasmeen must begin to process and deal with her past. Yasmeen struggles to accept her mother's presence in America. During a trip to California, Yasmeen contracts pneumonia. While ill and recovering, Yasmeen begins to accept her stories. Meanwhile, Yasmeen deals with her daughter, Saira's, bullies. After continually teasing her for being different, Yasmeen decides to take her children to Pakistan. The story completes with Yasmeen and her children in Pakistan as she reconnects with her past.

Why Are You Looking At Me Like That? - A Rough Cut

Ms. Sarwar first started experimenting with film installations in 2010. Shortly thereafter, in October 2010, a screening of Ms. Sarwar's short video collage, "Why are You Looking at Me Like That?" took place at the 4th Cairo Film Festival held by the Medrar for Contemporary Art in Cairo, Egypt.³²¹ While other artists interviewed are film producers or directors, Ms. Sarwar's films are quite different from their work. Film installations are not documentaries, short, or feature films. Instead, it is a unique art form that combines different art mediums into a short film. Ms. Sarwar describes the art form as follows:

When I say film I don't mean documentary or feature length film, I'm talking about experimental, video collage, is what I call it, which is mixing sound, image, poetry, still image, moving objects, like one of the videos I made had [my daughter's] breathing with my heart from when I was pregnant with her.³²²

"Why are You Looking at Me Like That?" starts and ends with a radio interview Sehba gave from Pakistan, reporting on the state after the death of Benazir Bhutto. These segments are back

³²¹ Sehba Sarwar, *Updates*, <http://www.sehbasarwar.net/updates.shtml> (accessed September 10, 2011).

³²² Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

dropped with photographs from Pakistani, Palestinian and other protests, and car explosions. The middle section features video and photographs from a gun show in Texas with an audio overlay during this section of Ms. Sarwar reciting her poem “Why Are You Looking At Me Like That?”³²³ In the poem, Ms. Sarwar describes an attendee of the gun show and his reaction to Ms. Sarwar’s negative views of his participation at the gun show.

*No escaping violence in Pakistan — or U.S.*³²⁴

This short essay was featured in the *Houston Chronicle*. Arizona representative Gabrielle Giffords was shot during an assassination attempt on January 8, 2011. The shooter killed six people and wounded thirteen others. Ms. Sarwar’s essay discusses recent violence in Pakistan and the United States through her daughter’s perception. Ms. Sarwar describes her daughters understanding of both places and juxtaposes the two violent attacks: one the murder of Punjab’s governor; the other the attack on Congresswoman Gabriella Giffords. She uses the events to challenge the reader’s perspective of Pakistan and America’s perspective on gun control, while also raising awareness of the conflict around the American-Mexican border.

Analysis and Findings

Ms. Sarwar explains that in *Black Wings* Yasmeen cuts off her identity and finds it by reclaiming her stories.³²⁵ This literary technique comes from the *Arabian Nights*. It also “echoes of Kamila Shamsie’s *Salt and Saffron*, or *Kartography*, where the protagonists and even more minor

³²³ *Why Are You Looking At Me Like That? (a rough cut)*, directed by Sehba Sarwar, 2008, <http://www.sehbasarwar.com/blog/?month=2008-11>, (accessed September 10, 2011).

³²⁴ Sehba Sarwar, "No Escaping Violence in Pakistan - or U.S.," *Houston Chronicle*, January 30, 2011, <http://www.chron.com/opinion/outlook/article/No-escaping-violence-in-Pakistan-or-U-S-1607313.php> (accessed September 10, 2011).

³²⁵ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

characters are innate storytellers.”³²⁶ The idea of storytelling is very important to Ms. Sarwar. She is a great storyteller, and “used to love playing games [and] telling stories.”³²⁷ For example, she would tell her university friends that “my family, they live in a desert, so when I sent letters I just put in their name, and I just put Pakistan on there, and it arrives in Karachi, and they just find them because they’re nomads.”³²⁸ Ms. Sarwar found this greatly amusing. In this way, Sehba uses her art to express her and personal traits. However, she also uses her art to discuss her political identity.

Ms. Sarwar challenges the concept of borders. She wrote “Soot” out of her desire to connect with her Indian roots.³²⁹ In the same way that Zahra’s experience in India revealed to her the need to reconnect with her roots, Ms. Sarwar claims, “I like to be able to view myself as being able to walk into India, and reclaim my family’s history there.”³³⁰ Ms. Sarwar’s feelings towards borders become apparent in this story. In discussing Soot and her own experiences, she says “I also feel, I guess, I like to see the world without borders.”³³¹ A wealth of academic information revolves around borders. Boundaries fall into one of five categories “natural, national, contractual, geometrical, and power-political.”³³² Theorists generally take “the existence of these state-dividing lines as being part of the normative territorial structure of the state, focusing on their empirical characteristics than their functions.”³³³ States construct borders, and borders in turn construct people. Ms. Sarwar questions these constructs and their

³²⁶ Lisa E. H. Lau, *Black Wings*, February 16, 2009, <http://www.sawnet.org/books/reviews.php?Black+Wings> (accessed November 19, 2011).

³²⁷ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Jones qtd in Newman, "Boundaries, Borders, and Barriers: Changing Geographic Perspectives on Territorial Lines," 140.

³³³ Newman, "Boundaries, Borders, and Barriers: Changing Geographic Perspectives on Territorial Lines," 140.-141

repercussions on the international community. Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system by questioning the need for borders

Zahra comments that “[i]t is strange how we can be neighbors, and still be so distant.”³³⁴ She justifies this statement through the history of the two states explaining that “[o]ur governments make it hard for us to cross the border, so we fly over each other’s countries.”³³⁵ The preconceived notion of difference is reinforced through state action. Since the national collective identity’s difference in this situation is based upon the difference of India from Pakistan (and vice versa), the states reinforce that message and belief through enforcing the border between the two states. However, Zahra’s friendship with Amita is an example of how she “maintain[s] meaningful social relations that cut across territorial boundaries, link several localities in more than one country, and extend[s] meaningful social action across geographical space.”³³⁶ As a transnational, Zahra “move[s] into and indeed create[s] transnational spaces that may have the potential to liberate nationals.”³³⁷ In this case she has liberated Amita and her boyfriend as well as herself. Likewise, Ms. Sarwar continuously does the same through her work. Ms. Sarwar uses her art and work to incite questions about borders because of “the fact [her] family originally comes from India, so [she] was born with broken borders, broken history.”³³⁸ Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system by questioning the need for borders and argues for transnationalism.

Ms. Sarwar challenges one of the repercussions of borders by deconstructing the idea of the ‘other’ and the dichotomy between “us vs. them.” She first does this in her short story, *Soot*,

³³⁴ Sarwar, "Soot," 261.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 20.

³³⁷ Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," 553.

³³⁸ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

through the friendship that Zahra creates with Amita and her boyfriend Manik. One evening, over drinks, Manik reflects on their new friendship saying:

Our Government told us to hate you because of what your people did in Bangladash. I might be drunk but I know you're not the enemy. You didn't support the military. There you are from the other side of the border ... and we're not that different.³³⁹

Manik describes the animosity that his national collective identity prescribes him to feel towards Pakistanis: that of anger, hatred, fear, and the bitter feelings that are supposed to separate Indians from the 'other' of Pakistanis. However, through their friendship they find familiarity and friendship with one another that supersedes the idea of us vs. them, thus reemphasizing Ms. Sarwar's view of a "world without borders."³⁴⁰ Ms. Sarwar challenges the idea of the 'othering.' She challenges the nation-state system and the need for borders by questioning the imposition of the 'other.'

Ms. Sarwar examines the impact of securitization. Upon her arrival in the United States, Laila reviews her trip through the United States customs, and notes that while she did not have any problems, "the gentleman I was speaking to had to open out his whole suitcase. It was terrible. And then this rude immigration lady asked him so many questions. We were thinking he'd be sent back."³⁴¹ Josiah Heyman found that United States immigration officers have an "imagined construal of who those others are," and believe that "aliens are far more dangerous than drugs, because they come in such numbers."³⁴² Laila's experience exemplifies states' views of immigrants as security threats to the state.

³³⁹ Sarwar, "Soot," in *And the World Changed Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women*, 261.

³⁴⁰ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³⁴¹ Sawar, *Black Wings*, 20.

³⁴² Josiah McC. Heyman, "Respect for Outsiders? Respect for the Law? The Moral Evaluation of High-Scale Issues by US Immigration Officers," *The Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* (royal Antropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland) 6, no. 4 (December 2000): 635-652. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2661034>

Later, Laila continues developing her thoughts about the securitization of international travel, saying “But that’s what they’re doing. Making it so impossible for our men to travel. And if the men have beards, they should just forget about it.”³⁴³ Through the use of intimidation and fear, the customs officials emphasize the idea of “us vs. them,” and remind the Pakistani travelers that they are “the other” on American soil. Historically, people have “held morally loaded opinions of each other, a tendency reinforced in the capitalist world system, where segmentation, mobility and reformulation make for new clusters of people in novel encounters, often poorly understood but highly moralized.”³⁴⁴ Laila’s experience emphasizes these moralized opinions and the securitization that is currently occurring as a result.

Ms. Sarwar continues to examine the concept of the ‘other’, the socio-political changes and securitization since 9/11 and the lack of social integration through citizenship. In *Black Wings*, Laila asks Yasmeen “Are you having problems here?”³⁴⁵ Yasmeen then contemplates her political situation in the United States after the September 11th attacks. Before September 11th Yasmeen felt she could slip between spaces without being considered a ‘foreigner.’³⁴⁶ Because of Yasmeen’s looks, dress and lifestyle, she lived in a multi-dimensional space allowing her to blend into the American population.³⁴⁷ Yasmeen’s skin tone allows her to avoid being labeled as the ‘other.’ She avoids being cast as a stranger. After 9/11 global migrants have been seen as more threatening.³⁴⁸ Likewise, her status as a citizen “offers inclusion into the political system,” but what she found after 9/11 was while she was formally included into the political system through citizenship, this did “not necessarily [offer inclusion] into (all other social systems of)

³⁴³ Sawar, *Black Wings*, 20.

³⁴⁴ Heyman, "Respect for Outsiders? Respect for the Law? The Moral Evaluation of High-Scale Issues by US Immigration Officers," 635.

³⁴⁵ Sawar, *Black Wings*, 20.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Kearny, "The Local and The Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism," 549.

³⁴⁸ Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies* Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion.

society.”³⁴⁹ States consider citizenship as “one of the foreseen instruments of correction” that resolves otherness.³⁵⁰ However, global migrants continue to face social problems even after they naturalize. Ms. Sarwar examines the increased securitization of the nation-state system and challenges the assumption that assimilation and naturalization resolve her condition as a global migrant.

Society excludes second-generation migrants. In response to her mother’s question, Yasmeen recalls her daughter being bullied at school. Yasmeen recalls arriving to pick up her children from school to find Saira crying and insisting on switching schools. “Only when I pushed her, she told me that a group of fifth grade boys had been throwing her sandwich in the trash and were calling her evil and ‘black witch.’”³⁵¹ Saira’s classmates call her names in an attempt to emphasise her “otherness.” Laila’s daughter who was raised without much knowledge of her mother’s background or her family in Pakistan said “Mom, why’re they telling me to go back? Go where?”³⁵² This is the first time that Saira realizes that she lives in a “slippery space” of “being the other.”³⁵³ Her American citizenship “no longer designates ‘belonging-in-space’ and decreasingly answers the question ‘Who am I?’”³⁵⁴ While Saira remains an American citizen, she finds that her citizenship no longer answers her questions of identity. Ms. Sarwar examines the concept of the ‘other’ and challenges the assumption that assimilation remedies ‘otherness’ within society.

Ms. Sarwar notes her own experience of others attempting to place an emphasis on her differences:

³⁴⁹ Halfmann, "Citizenship Universalism, Migration and the Risks of Exclusion," 514

³⁵⁰ Hammar, "Dual Citizenship and Political Integration," 440.

³⁵¹ Sawar, *Black Wings*, 32.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³⁵⁴ Jacobson, "The Global Political Culture," 164.

People say, o that's John, the white writer from wherever he's from. Is he framed that way? If not then why do I have to be framed that way? I'm an artist before I'm Pakistani. That just happens to be where my inspiration comes from. It's very political.³⁵⁵

Ms. Sarwar's experience did not carry the same negative connotations as Saira's experience. Ms. Sarwar's comments seem contradictory for earlier, when she herself claims that she creates her art through a Pakistani lens, but she resents other people labeling her Pakistani. Ms. Sarwar shows the process of interpellation as she recognizes herself in the nation-state system and internalizes the names that she is given. When people introduce Ms. Sarwar, they emphasize her difference by describing her as a Pakistani author. She felt that this distinction attempted to separate her from other American artists.

For example, Ms. Sarwar often bemoans the form of introduction that others use for her, questioning why she must always be introduced as the Pakistani writer. If others are simply introduced by their name and profession, then why must her ethnicity be included within her introduction? While Ms. Sarwar defines her art through her Pakistani identity, she resents being labeled Pakistani or immigrant by Americans and questions why her Pakistani identity trumps her identity as mother, woman or artist. Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system by resisting interpellation and engaging her identity.

States create lines that define identities, create a sense of belonging, but they also create cracks for people without a permanent space to fall between. Ms. Sarwar's work relates to that of Dr. Joudah examined in Chapter Three. As a stateless, Palestinian Dr. Joudah lives in a space between. Likewise, Ms. Sarwar, as both Pakistani and American, lives in a state between as well. Ms. Sarwar expresses this notion of not having a permanent space in her novel, *Black Wings*. Yasmeen finds she exists in a slippery space, for she belongs in neither the United States nor

³⁵⁵ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

Pakistani society. Later in the book after being teased and ridiculed again, Yasmeen decides to return to Pakistan with her children, so “they can know - for the first time in their lives - what it feels like not to stand out as ‘foreigners’ and to be amidst people whose skin is more brown and hair more black than their own.”³⁵⁶ While Yasmeen wishes for her children to know what it feels like to not be foreigners, she, Saira and Sameer enter Pakistan on American passports with an entry visa. She “stepped away from other Pakistanis and followed the blonde couple in the line for foreigners.”³⁵⁷ She notes that, “though I was born Pakistani, I no longer held a green passport and I had had to get visas for us to land in my own city”³⁵⁸ Her distinction as a foreigner continues to grow when she meets with her relatives.

After immigrating to the United States, global migrants simultaneously belong and lack a sense of belonging in both places. Her cousin’s son, Fazal, drives Yasmine and her children to her mother’s home. After engaging him in conversation, Yasmeen comes to the conclusion that, “Fazal at least was treating me like a foreigner, replying in English to my faltering Urdu.”³⁵⁹ Through this experience, Yasmeen begins to realize that she lives in between places. As with the previously discussed global artists, this global migrant’s experiences are also, “about here and there, and it’s really about the space in between.” Her work and life belong in both places, which represents her lifestyle because it too is culturally bifocal.³⁶⁰ Likewise, later when shopping with her cousin, Fazila, Yasmeen insists on going to the crowded central market. Fazila complains, “Yaar, I don’t know why you had to come here - you foreign-returns” and insists that everything could be bought at a much more convenient shopping center.³⁶¹ Fazila’s comment hurt

³⁵⁶ Sehba Sawar, *Black Wings*, 175-176.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

Yasmeen.³⁶² During this discussion the experiences and emotions that Yasmeen experiences speak to Ms. Sarwar’s reflections of belonging. She says, “I don’t consider myself having relocated. I’m kind of in-between.” In this sense, Yasmeen begins to realize that her life is in between states. Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system by arguing for transnationality.

Ms. Sarwar asserts that maintaining a connection to her sending state does not signify a lack of assimilation into American culture. This is the idea that the emphasis on personal roots is “not about here in the U.S. vs. there. It’s about roots, personal roots, personal history.”³⁶³ In ‘Soot,’ when Zahra describes her desire to learn about her personal roots, she is not turning her back on her lifestyle in America, nor is she changing her core values. In her own words you write about your region and “that would be where your core stories and your heart your heart beat would be coming from.”³⁶⁴ Ms. Sarwar tries to defy attempts “to be boxed in.” This makes her work “political, because it’s not what’s done.”³⁶⁵ Her art gives her agency by allowing her freedom from being boxed in or interpellated. Ms. Sarwar uses her art to maintain her individuality in the nation-state system and resist identities imposed upon her.

She challenges the concept that a person must choose one location over the other, or that by choosing to reconnect with one’s roots one lessens one’s ties to the United States. She argues that people in “slippery spaces” can actually belong to both or multiple places, and that borders and states impose the dichotomy between the states even though they might be dealing with similar socio-political issues.³⁶⁶ She says “We were born with those contradictions, and it doesn’t fit into that neat package that most Westerners want to see Pakistan.”³⁶⁷ For example,

³⁶² Ibid

³⁶³ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

when Zahra choose to not return to school, her decision was not made in response to a negative event. Instead, the author implies that it is out of the need to “know yourself and your neighbors.”³⁶⁸ Zahra compares her decision to stay and work in Pakistan to the work that her Mexican roommate Juana performed in America. Zahra thought that Juana would understand Zahra’s work, for she “knew all about her roots, closed borders, and neighboring countries at war.”³⁶⁹ Zahra knew that Juana would continue her “fight for the rights of the undocumented.”³⁷⁰ This parallel reinforces another one of Ms. Sarwar’s core values of transnationality. Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system by showing that people maintain ties to multiple states.

Ms. Sarwar notes everything is about both places. Zahra’s decision to stay in Pakistan is about self-development and self-awareness, for Zahra is not doing anything different in Pakistan that her friend Juana is doing in America. Likewise, Sehba she says, “I don’t do anything different from what I would be doing in Karachi. What I do in Houston is exactly what I do in Karachi. I’m an artist here and there.” This concept of “deterritorialization obviate[s] any notion of bounded cultures.”³⁷¹ In her story, both Zahra and Juana are working to open borders, unite people and overcome the “us vs. them” mentality. Zahra and Juana’s lives reflect the dual life that Ms. Sarwar leads in both the United States and America. Ms. Sarwar explains:

I feel like I’m recreating it because the issues are different but ultimately they are socio-political. We won’t talk about race issues. We’ll talk about class issues over there. If we talk about regional conflict, we’ll talk about India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Over here, we’ll talk about Mexico, Central America.³⁷²

As previously quoted, for Ms. Sarwar, “it is not about the U.S. versus there.”³⁷³ The work that she does and the life she leads becomes “a transnational social force” that spreads the “global

³⁶⁸ Sarwar, "Soot."

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 265.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 57.

³⁷² Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

and local signs of the possibilities for radical upward mobility.”³⁷⁴ For Juana, the issue revolves around the Mexican-American border, while Zahra is concerned about the Indian-Pakistan border. Historically, immigration is considered to be a “linear process” in which one moves from the old to the new.³⁷⁵ Therefore, it has been “uniformly defined as unacceptable” for migrants to who “permanently settled in their new country” to continue to maintain ties to their homelands.³⁷⁶ Instead, Ms. Sarwar represents an emerging population currently settling in the United States that maintains ties to both old and new.³⁷⁷ Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system through being transnational and maintaining ties to multiple places.

In this era of global migration, people maintain ties and connections to multiple places. Ms. Sarwar represents a population that is “no longer rooted in a single place.”³⁷⁸ The United States sees conflict with this concept because it wants to confine “loyalties to the U.S.”³⁷⁹ However, within Ms. Sarwar’s approach to her identity, the two backgrounds are not in conflict with one another. Instead, they support one another. The work that is done in both places consists of “different conversations but they are the same core things.”³⁸⁰ Her ties to both locations, like Zahra, give her the opportunity “in which, political acts can be orchestrated through multiple targets, operating at a variety of institutional and geographical scales.”³⁸¹ Ms. Sarwar lives a transnational life and expresses transnationality through her art.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 21.

³⁷⁵ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 24.

³⁷⁶ Schiller, et.al, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 51.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 52.

³⁷⁹ Schiller, et.al, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 59.

³⁸⁰ Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³⁸¹ Smith, "Can You Imagine? Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics," 31.

Ms. Sarwar's essay, "No Escaping Violence in Pakistan – or U.S." is a perfect example of how all of her "work is about both places."³⁸² Ms. Sarwar describes her reaction to an immigration official's comments on her trip and safety in Pakistan saying:

No more dangerous than anywhere else, is what I wanted to say. Depends on how you define danger. I refrain from assuring him that there's more to Karachi than what he may read in the news.³⁸³

The idea of violence transcends boundaries. Ms. Sarwar uses the idea of violence in this case to take a stance against guns and violence that is an issue in both places. She attempts to do this by describing her daughter's response and understanding of the violence in both countries.

Upon arrival through security and in the car, Ms. Sarwar and her daughter hear the news about the recent attack on Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and the death of six people including a young girl. In response to the news that she hears over the radio, her daughter asks, "Why did the 9-year-old die? Where were her parents?"³⁸⁴ These simple questions catch her parents off guard. Ms. Sarwar explains her daughter's view of violence saying that:

Violence is certainly not new to our daughter. [...] Unlike the immigration officer we encountered, she is aware that there are guns in Pakistan and the U.S., and that gun violence takes place on both terrains. For Minal, there is little difference between the two landscapes she has known since her birth.³⁸⁵

Ms. Sarwar ties both locations, Pakistan and the United States, together. In this essay, she does so through the eyes of her daughter to make a socio-political statement about violence, and more specifically about guns. Referring to her daughter, she says, "Seeing through her 6-year-old global lens, she has the wisdom to recognize that risks lurk in both of her own

³⁸² Sehba Sarwar, interview by Rebecca Malcolm, (June 16, 2010).

³⁸³ Sehba Sarwar, "No Escaping Violence in Pakistan - or U.S."

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

two backyards.”³⁸⁶ The two locations are very different, and one could argue the violence is completely unrelated. However, Ms. Sarwar connects the events by recreating them and looking at the basic issue that connects them both, violence.

Conclusion

This chapter examines the work of Ms. Seba Sarwar. Ms. Sarwar challenges traditional concepts of community and identity by questioning borders, maintaining a transnational lifestyle and creating transnational spaces through her art. Ms. Sarwar challenges the traditional concepts of the ‘other,’ and she questions the traditional concept of assimilation. Ms. Sarwar shows that global migrants maintain ties to both their previous state and their new state.

Ms. Sarwar directly engages with the concept of the nation-state system. As an activist, she uses her art to question the need for borders and their securitization. In her novel, *Black Wings*, Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system by questioning the increased securitization and the transnationality. Likewise, in her short story, *Soot*, Ms. Sarwar questions the need for borders and validity of nations. In her other pieces Ms. Sarwar emphasizes the transnationality of her lifestyle and identity. The subsequent chapter concludes the thesis. It briefly summarizes previous chapters and reviews the arguments presented in this thesis.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine identities of global migrants, its effects expressed through art with particular interest in how these identities affect and are effected by the nation-state system. The research, conducted through interviews and analysis of participants' art, found that global migrants express and examine identity within their art that challenge traditional concepts of community and identity.

Chapter One introduced the topic of this thesis. It reviewed the scope of the thesis and the methodological processes. The introduction reviewed the different participants and the gatekeeping organization used for selecting participants. Chapter Two laid the theoretical framework for the rest of the thesis. It reviewed the processes of identity construction, art theory, the history of the nation-state system, globalization and immigration.

Chapters Three thru Seven examined the participants and analyzed the findings from the in-depth interviews and analysis of their art. Chapter Three examined the poetry written by Dr. Fady Joudah. Dr. Joudah challenges the nation-state system by creating his own homeland through his art, creating transnational space through his art, asserting himself as a stateless person and by looking at aspects of the 'other.' Chapter Four reviewed the work of film director Faroukh Virani. Mr. Virani creates transnational spaces within his art that challenge the nation-state system. Chapter Five examined the one novel and a short story written by Bapsi Sidhwa. Ms. Sidhwa emphasizes that differences within nations are as significant as those between and argues for multiculturalism. Chapter Six focused on Erum Rani Butt and her documentary *American 2*. Ms. Butt gains agency through art allowing her to resist stereotypes and examines concepts of assimilation and 'othering.' Chapter Seven analyzed the work of Sehba Sarwar. Ms.

Sarwar challenged the need for borders and the concept of the 'other.' She uses her art to assert her identity.

The thesis found that the majority of the participants express their identities within their art. Only one artist's work was not political. Several artists created art without political intentions, but the identity expressed in their art created a political subtext to their art. Sehba Sarwar was intentionally political with her art, and she uses her art as medium through which she could be an activist. On occasion, Bapsi Sidhwa and Faroukh Virani intentionally address their political identity, but the majority of their work was unintentionally political. Dr. Fady Joudah and Erum Rani Butt use their art to explore identity as it relates the nation-state system. The final, anonymous participant occasionally engaged with political issues in the art, but the majority of this person's work related to personal, family struggles and loss.

While names are imposed, people also have the opportunity to accept, reject and create their own identities. Althusser's structuralist approach to identity formation and his concept of interpellation only account for the imposition of names. In other words, Althusser argues that the identity is imposed upon people. However, while the participants struggled with the constraints of interpellations, the majority of the artists actively challenge and reconstruct identities. The global migrants' participation in identity formation gives credence to Habermas' theory that identity simultaneously is imposed upon people and constructed by those people. They reflect this concept by avoiding and reconstructing interpellation.

In the era of globalization, the movement of money, goods and people across states creates questions regarding social order and construction. While society requires order, globalization challenges the traditional schema of ordering the international community through nation-states. Markets increasingly control and demand changes upon societal structure,

decreasing the control of states. As states attempt to maintain control and fear the implications of changing societal order, states increase their focus on the national collective identity and nativist fears arise. States express their fear through emphasizing the national collective identity of the state. This is done through the negative construction of immigrants.

With their art, global migrants create a new space that allows them to transcend the state system and create a transnational space. Their identities reflect the existence of this place. These transnational identities reflect the human impact of globalization and the era of global migration. These artists reflect the integration of the last aspect of globalization, people. While states encourage globalization and the movement of goods and funds to increase their capital welfare, states fear and hinder the movement of people.³⁸⁷ People's identities reflect the globalized world and are increasingly transnational.

During this era of global migration, migration literature and theory needs to reassess concepts of assimilation and generational identity among global migrants. Asking questions such as: Do the generational difference look the same, or do generational differences change as global migrants become increasingly transnational? How does the art of global migrants compare to the art of migrants in a less globalized and more structured world before World War II? States need to address the misplaced fear towards migrants and their families and need to be aware of the negative identity it places upon migrants. The experiences, art and identities the global migrants express and explore through their art confirm that neo-racism is a real problem for global migrants in the United States. However, these same pieces of art show the possibility and benefits of multiculturalism.

³⁸⁷ Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*.

In conclusion, *this thesis examined imposed and accepted identities of global migrants and the way identity is expressed through art. It argued that global migrants create transnational spaces through their art and challenge traditional concepts of community and identity.* As previously discussed, Dr. Fady Joudah creates transnational spaces within his art by transcending time and space. Also, he juxtaposes different places, national phrases and cultural references to create transnational spaces. In addition, Dr. Joudah challenged traditional concepts of community and identity. He uses his art to assert his own identity. Dr. Joudah directly engages with concepts related to the nation-state system. He examines issues of securitization and othering within his art, and he creates transnational spaces within his art.

Mr. Faroukh Virani indirectly engages with issues related to the nation-state system. He creates transnational spaces by fusing cultural and artistic art forms. Mr. Virani's work is political because of the transnational space he creates within his work and the transnationality of his identity it represents. Likewise, Ms. Bapsi Sidhwa indirectly engages with issues related to the nation-state system within her art. She challenges the construction of the nation by emphasizing that differences within nations are as stark as difference between them. Ms. Sidhwa also emphasizes the need for multiculturalism and reconciliation.

Ms. Erum Rani Butt directly engages with issues related to the nation-state system. She obtains agency through her art and reconstructs the imposed identity of 'radical Muslim.' Ms. Butt addresses issues of neo-racism, immigration, assimilation, and 'othering' within her art. Ms. Sarwar also directly engages with issues related to the nation-state system. She uses art to gain agency and avoid interpellation. Ms. Sarwar challenges the nation-state system by questioning the construction of borders and 'othering.' Ms. Sehba Sarwar focuses on multiple locations within her art creating a transnational space and argues for transnationalism.

These artists show that assimilation is changing, and global migrants live transnational lives. These artists use art to create transnational spaces, reconstruct identities imposed upon them, assert their identities, and examine and challenge the nation-state system. By asserting their identities, these global migrants create transnational space and challenge traditional concepts of community and identity through their art.

Appendix I: Written Consent Form

Recognition of Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project for my Masters' thesis called "Revolution: Identities of Transnational People Expressed Through Their Art and Its Significance." I, Rebecca Malcolm, am conducting the research. If you have any questions, my phone number is (832) 671-0293. The project is being supervised by Dr. Agnes Czajka at the American University of Cairo you can contact her by email at czajka@aucegypt.edu.

The purpose of this project is to identify socio-political identities expressed through the medium of art by transnational artists. Your participation in the project is strictly voluntary. If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about your background, place of origin, the manner in which you identify yourself, the manner in which others identify you, and the manner in which these are expressed in your art. The questions may at times be personal, but you do not have answer any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

The interview may vary from artist to artist, but it should take approximately one hour to complete. Unless you indicate otherwise, I will ensure your anonymity, so there should not be any harm in you participating in this research. Again, if at any time you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer the question, or you may withdraw your participation altogether.

The interviews will be recorded through a voice recording program on my computer. Unless you indicate otherwise, the recordings and any subsequent notes will be saved in an encrypted file without your name. In a separate, word document, I will rename the participants. I will then refer to the voice recording with the anonymous name I will give your recording, so your interview will be protected and kept anonymous at all times.

The information gathered through this research may also be used during a presentation at a conference or for a publication in an academic journal. Your anonymity will continue to be ensured during future projects as well. When this project, and any subsequent projects are completed, I will destroy the voice recordings on my computer and any notes referring to you.

By signing this sheet, you attest to having read it, and you consent to taking part in this research project.

Signature of Subject

Date

Appendix II: Operational Definitions

Globalization: economic liberal constructs that take place within states and across them that

Ideological State Apparatuses: technologies such as the private sphere such as school, churches, newspapers, parities, trade unions, and families that states use to impose the ideology upon its subjects

Interpellation: process of Subjects constructing identity for its subjects

Nation: a uniting of people within a community with a shared language, identity, history and territorial claims

Nation-State System: Organization within the international system based upon nations and states in which the state bases its authority on the nation

Othering: the process by which organizations and communities emphasis us versus them and the differences between the community and those perceived as on the boundaries or outside of the community

Securitization: process through which state emphasis security and combine issues of immigration with security

State: an organized, political community based on the territory of the community

Transnationals: immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state³⁸⁸

³⁸⁸ Schiller, et. al, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," 48.

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