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Translating and (re)constructing the self in a different language: exploring the language memoirs "Lost in translation" by Eva Hoffman and "Heading south, looking north" by Ariel Dorman

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the trope of 'lost in translation' with regard to immersion in another language and aims to show that the notion requires revisiting in order to test the validity of the contention of irretrievable loss and lack in self-translation. Exploring the language memoirs *Lost in Translation* by Eva Hoffman and *Heading South, Looking North* by Ariel Dorfman, the research shows that whilst there is indeed substantial loss, disorientation and estrangement involved in transferring the self into another language and culture, valuable gains and positive personal growth nevertheless emerge.

Primarily the thesis examines how, due to the role of language and culture in the formation of the self, the process entails translation and (re)construction of the self, which inevitably involves modification. In language memoirs the inherent properties of autobiographical writing add another dimension to this translation. In this way, given the multifaceted and fluid nature of identity, the process of self-translation attests to the potential limitlessness of identity and is presented as a heightened version of standard identity dilemmas and the lifelong construction of the self. In the knowledge of their complexity and the need for continual revision of the self, Hoffman and Dorfman recognise the misplaced nostalgia for a fixed and cohesive self, and embrace the wider access to identity options and means of expression that living with more than one language allows them. Enhanced self-consciousness, expanded perspectives and further aspects of the self that are revealed in the new language lead to personal growth as well as fuel creativity, serving as an impetus for writing.

These authors are therefore not only 'lost in translation' but also 'found' and principally 'altered'. The notion of 'lost in translation' is thus established as insufficient in describing the experience of the self in language memoirs, and the rewriting of the self in another language rather necessitates a theory of overriding transformation that acknowledges both losses and gains. Translation of the self thus unfolds as a metamorphosis that does not replace one self with another but instead embraces aspects of both languages and constructs a palimpsest-like interlayering of a multidimensional identity.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before any other degree or examination in any other university.

Sarah Meisch _____

____ of _____, 2011.

Preface

This research was born out of my desire to better understand how language is tied to identity, and in particular to explore the impact that additional languages have on the self mentally, emotionally and socially.

Like most South Africans, multilingualism and multiculturalism have always been a part of my life in various ways. My father immigrated to South Africa as a young boy and my own childhood was flavoured with the sounds of visiting German relatives in the house and of inherited traditions that appeared at times such as Christmas, which was celebrated with both Stollen and Christmas cake. My maternal grandfather from Berlin was a polyglot par excellence, and the treasured English letters he had written to my mother and through which I got to know him (he died many years before my birth) were dotted with German, French and Italian. When I met his sister (my great aunt) for the first time in Buenos Aires, we conversed in an unusual mixture of English, Spanish and German.

The delights of foreign words and the alternative worlds they conjured led me to study languages, as I was eager to expand the possibilities of interacting and connecting with people from other countries. Extensive travel over the years both reinforced and further motivated my curiosity about cultural particularities and how they seemed to be mirrored in language. Leaving the multicultural background of South Africa, I moved to France where I lived amidst the cultural and linguistic diversity of an international university. I then moved to Singapore, again immersing myself in a stimulating array of diverse and intermingling local and expat cultural worlds. I cherish this exposure to other ways of seeing the world, other values and lifestyles.

Above all, on a personal level this research has been fuelled by my experience of constantly switching, on a daily basis, between English and Italian, which is now predominantly my home language. I often grapple with the inability to translate a word or concept in a way that perfectly captures its cultural essence and above all, I puzzle over how different aspects of myself seem to be highlighted in each language and therefore over how to authentically replicate my ‘English’ self into Italian — how to fuse Sarah with Sara. These reflections sparked an interest in understanding the ways in which language and culture relate to the self,

and the ways in which languages seem to express concepts and emotions with varying nuances.

In particular, I was prompted to understand how the self changes, the advantages and disadvantages of this modification, and how this (re)construction is dealt with in and through autobiographical writing. I strongly believe that more research is needed on what it means emotionally to live with more than one language. In a world where a continuously growing number of people find it more challenging to answer the question, “Where are you from?”, exploration of these issues could provide useful insight on understanding and repositioning a transformed self.

The great pleasure of being able to carry out this research would not have been possible without all the financial and emotional support for which I am immensely grateful: my heartfelt thanks to my loved ones for their constant care, encouragement and belief in me during the writing of this thesis. My sincere thanks also go to my research supervisor Professor Kathleen Thorpe for her reassuring and insightful guidance, as well for being an inspiration through her passion for savouring literary texts.

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Introduction

> As much as flesh and blood, we are composed of and by words. If Homo sapiens is a species defined by language, then switching the language entails transforming the self. While it can be liberating, discarding one's native tongue is also profoundly unsettling; it means constructing a new identity syllable by syllable.
>
> (Kellman, 2003: xiv)

This thesis aims to show that the notion of 'lost in translation', especially when applied to the acquisition of a new language, has become a trope, effectively halting discussion on the topic, and should therefore be revisited to test its validity. While my research does indeed confirm the presence of certain loss and profound disorientation occurring in the translation of the self, valuable gains and personal growth nevertheless emerge from the process. Above all, in investigating these losses and gains, I aim to show that they attest to the overriding result of unavoidable transformation, as distinct from mere disappearance and disorientation, whether positive, negative or both, involved in the transfer from one language to another. Furthermore, my investigation reveals the multifaceted nature of this transformation by establishing how the process of interpretation and alteration is further compounded, firstly by the element of translation inherent in autobiographical writing and within the very act of communication itself, and secondly by the already multiple and mutable nature of the self. The perception of having 'double selves' in two languages therefore manifests as an additional, heightened version of varying social roles, demonstrating that the dilemmas involved in switching languages are an augmented form of general identity confusion, thus further attesting to the role of language and culture in the formation of the self. Ultimately these premises affirm the expandability of the self and the continual construction of identity that consists of a fluid intermingling of palimpsest-like layers.

This study centrally analyses two texts, Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989) and Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South, Looking North* (1998), in relation to the theoretical premises that support my aim. (I am aware that these texts may be approached from other angles, but for this thesis my concern is how they explore the negotiation and (re)construction of the self across languages.) Before examining these texts I lay the foundations for the discussion in the

preceding Chapters. In Chapter 2, I explore the characteristics of autobiographical writing which are present in language memoirs and which not only support self-formation and the resolution of identity confusion, but further introduce another element of translation in the presentation of the self. Chapter 3 focuses on the social and cultural construction of the self, uncovering how the self relies on culture as an interpretative resource and exists in relation to other people, and is susceptible to alteration in various contexts and types of interaction. Similarly, issues of belonging and estrangement that feature in language memoirs are dealt with. In Chapter 4, I investigate how the self is tied to language and what this means for bilinguals and especially for a self entering a new language. In particular, I consider the viability of translation and whether bilinguals feel they can express the same concepts and emotions equally and authentically in both languages. It is important to point out, however, that this is not a linguistic study. Although a linguistic approach to second language acquisition would of course be interesting, it falls outside the framework of my thesis, which instead focuses on how the immersion in another language affects emotion and identity, and how this is dealt with in and through autobiographical writing.

In Chapters 5 and 6 I then address *Lost in Translation* and *Heading South, Looking North*. These texts serve as significant examples of language memoirs and offer a detailed exploration of the key themes of Chapters 2, 3 and 4. In *Lost in Translation* Eva Hoffman nostalgically mourns the loss of her childhood self that Polish represented so naturally and so authentically (or so she perceives). She battles to comfortably inhabit her new reality and to escape estrangement, and fears losing her self in the process. Eventually, by fully welcoming English into her inner self before she can return to Polish, Hoffman succeeds in making the transition into her new environment whilst maintaining a connection to her 'original' self. In the end there has been some loss in translation, but also positive gains, and predominantly her ways of defining the world and her self have been transformed and expanded.

Eva Hoffman is an author, academic and editor who lives in New York City and London. She was born Ewa Wydra in 1945 in Cracow, Poland to Jewish parents who survived the Holocaust. When she was thirteen, her family immigrated to Vancouver, Canada. She studied at Rice University, Texas and received her Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Harvard University. Hoffman was an editor and writer for *The New York Times* and has been a professor of Literature and Creative Writing at several institutions including Columbia, the University of Minnesota, and Tufts. She was the Una's Lecturer Year 2000 at the Townsend

Center for Humanities, Berkeley. In 2008, she was awarded an honorary DLitt by the University of Warwick. Hoffman is the author of several books, including the non-fiction works *Exit into History: A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe* (1993), *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (1997), *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (2004), *Time* (2009), and a work of fiction *The Secret* (2002). She received the Jean Stein Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, as well as the Guggenheim and Whiting awards.

In *Heading South, Looking North* Ariel Dorfman oscillates between North and South America, between English and Spanish, suppressing each language in turn in an attempt to solidify a sense of belonging. Wavering, not only between identities but also between life and death, his efforts to lead a monolingual life are sabotaged by the events of history, compelling him to confront his complexity and driving him towards a writing life. He ultimately accepts that he must lead an adulterous existence, married to two languages, and that the only way to do so harmoniously is not to question their diverse merits too deeply. He embraces his multiplicity, recognising the benefits of being hybrid.

Ariel Dorfman is a world-acclaimed novelist, playwright, human rights activist and professor who lives with his family in Durham, North Carolina (he has been a citizen of the United States since 2004). He was born Vladimiro Ariel Dorfman in 1942 in Argentina. When he was two, his family fled to the United States for political reasons, and then to Chile when he was twelve. He attended and later worked as a professor at the University of Chile, becoming a Chilean citizen in 1967. From 1968 to 1969, he attended the University of California at Berkeley and then returned to Chile. From 1970 to 1973, Dorfman served as a cultural advisor to president Salvador Allende. Forced to leave Chile in 1973, after the coup he lived in Paris, Amsterdam, and Washington, D.C. before becoming a professor of Literature and Latin American Studies at Duke University where he holds the Walter Page chair. Dorfman is the prolific author of numerous works of fiction, plays, poems, and essays in both Spanish and English, which include his novels *Widows* (1981), *The Last Song of Manuel Sendero* (1987), *Mascara* (1988), *Hard Rain* (1990), *Konfidenz* (1994) and *The Nanny and the Iceberg* (1999); the nonfiction books *How to Read Donald Duck* (1971), *The Empire's Old Clothes* (1983), *Some Write to the Future* (1991) and *Exorcising Terror: The Incredible Unending Trial of Augusto Pinochet* (2002); his poetry collections *Last Waltz in Santiago* (1988) and *In Case of Fire in a Foreign Land* (2002); and his plays *Death and the*

Maiden (1991) and *Reader* (1995). Dorfman has won several international awards, including two Kennedy Center Theater Awards and England's Olivier Award for Best Play for *Death and the Maiden* which was made into a feature film directed by Roman Polanski. In 1996, with his son, Rodrigo, he received an award for best television drama in Britain for *Prisoners in Time.* Dorfman currently has several film projects in development with his sons. Dorfman also writes regularly for *The New York Times, The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times, The Guardian, Le Monde* and *L'Unità*. Dorfman presented the Eighth Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture in Johannesburg on July 31, 2010.

Although I am aware of Dorfman and Hoffman's other works, I am not dealing with them in this study. Hoffman's non-fiction works underline her preoccupation with her Jewish background and Dorfman's extensive body of diverse genres of literary and non-fiction works not only represent the complexity of his multifaceted bilingual identity, but also reinforce his commitment to and compassion for the victims of Pinochet, and more generally to resisting suffering and finding hope via reflection. However, in this thesis I am exclusively examining *Lost in Translation* and *Heading South, Looking North* since my focus is on language memoirs and these texts are unique in their detailed autobiographical examination of the authors' experiences of the need for translation in another language.

Hoffman and Dorfman's memoirs are shown to support my aim of establishing the connection between language and the self, in order to examine how immersion in a new language entails translation and thus (re)construction of identity, which inevitably involves not only the irretrievable absence or (re)discovery of the self but also especially, modification and growth. In this way, I am setting out to further show how the process of self-translation is a heightened version of standard identity confusion, involving a fluctuating self that engages in life-long creation.

At the end of this thesis, the investigations point to the conclusion that the idea of 'lost in translation' is therefore insufficient to describe the experience of the self in language memoirs and needs to be revised. The rewriting of the self in another language instead requires a theory of transformation that recognises both losses and positive gains (obviously to varying degrees relative to the individual context). Despite the 'scar-tissue' that disturbs the translated self, the transformation allows for valuable raised consciousness, and a wider worldview and range of identity options. Additional aspects of the self are highlighted in a

new language, giving rise to personal development. The process involves a degree of pain through bewildering estrangement, but above all, it questions and alters the self.

Similarly, the process is not one of substitution, but rather of gradual alteration that eventually embraces all aspects and languages of the self in a multi-dimensional layering. The self is therefore reconstituted until it is whole (relatively speaking) but in a new, (ironically) fuller way. The limitlessness of identity allows for re-entry into a comfort zone in which the point of reference for the self has been expanded. The unveiling of the self as possessing seemingly endless incremental potential for development, points to a more lucid awareness of identity that apprehends the misplaced nostalgia for an original anchored whole and appreciates the multifaceted self involved in perpetual formation. In this way, the introduction of a new language and the reflection in writing of its effects on the self augment the core existing identity disorientation by adding additional elements of identity, as well as by increasing the need for construction and interpretation.

Chapter 1
Literature Review

1.1 Self-formation in autobiographical writing

This thesis is situated in the phenomenon of bilingual authors who use autobiographical writing to explore and forge new identities. It investigates language memoirs and how the process of transferring the self into a new language is not so much a case of being 'lost in translation' but instead a (re)construction and transformation of identity. The linguistic construction of the self is a central focus in many recent memoirs (principally, Agosín, 2000; Canetti, 1983; Dorfman, 1998; Green, 1985; Hoffman, 1989; Kaplan, 1993; Lerner, 1997; Lvovich, 1997; Mori, 1997; Ogulnick, 1998; Riemer, 1992; Rodriguez, 1982; Sante, 1999; Stavans, 200; Steiner, 1975) and edited collections (predominantly Aciman, 1999; Arteaga, 1996; Bammer, 1994; Beaujour, 1989; Besemeres, 2002; Besemeres et al., 2003 / 2007; De Courtivron, 2003; Kellman, 2003; Koven, 2007; Lesser, 2005; Ogulnick, 2000; Pavlenko, 1997 / 2005 / 2006; Wierzbicka, 2007). All of these texts in different ways and to varying degrees deal with the process of translating the self into another language.

A beneficial starting point for this literature is provided by studies of the properties of autobiographies, which constitute the first main theme of my thesis. To begin with, the concept of fictionalisation provides useful insight into the construction and transformation of the self. This view is presented most comprehensively in Paul Eakin's key text *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention* (1985) in which he declares that the self of autobiographical narrative is "necessarily a fictive structure" (3) since the autobiographer in fact "invent[s] himself" (26). In *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (2000) Adriana Cavarero likewise underlines that the "autobiography is an intimate reconstruction of a self that narrates himself to himself" (41) and that to "tell one's own story is to distance oneself from oneself, to double oneself, to make of oneself an other" (84). This unavoidable self-distancing is also referred to by Brockmeier et al. (2001) in *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture* as a "second reading" (80) and similarly in Linda Anderson's *Autobiography* (2001) where she states that autobiography "requires a man to take a distance with regard to himself in order to constitute himself in the focus of his special

unity and identity across time" (5).

Eakin (1985) also reviews how the self is further fictionalised in that it eludes exact representation by being "shaped by memory and imagination to serve the needs of present consciousness" (6). Eakin later reinforces this idea in *Touching the World: Reference in Autobiography* (1992), stating that autobiography is a repetition of the past, "but a repetition with a difference" (45). Michael Kenneally echoes this stance in *Portraying the Self* (1988) and importantly emphasises that because all attempts to duplicate [the irrevocably lost past] in the present are but approximations of those vanished experiences" (14), they "can be achieved only at the cost of much distortion" (21). Similarly, in *Writing a Woman's Life* Carolyn Heilbrun asks how much vanishes and is "distorted or changed, even in our memories" (51). These concepts contribute valuably to my aim by emphasising the elements of loss and alteration involved in replicating the self in writing and above all, by establishing the idea of the self as a construction involved in levels of interpretation and therefore "not given, monolithic, and invariant, but dynamic, changing, and plural" (Eakin, 1999: 1). These sources do not allude to self-translation but reveal two features that centrally substantiate my aim — that is, the reinterpretation and the expansion of the self. Further, by underlining the estrangement of the self in autobiographical writing they allow for a parallel with the alienation that the self faces in a new language. This in turn supports my premise that the difficulties of self-translation expose a heightened form of 'standard' identity dilemmas.

The next key idea present in these texts is that of autobiography as an "identity-supporting structure" (Eakin, 1999: 20). In his 1985 work, Eakin attests that autobiography offers an opportunity "to create an identity" (26) in that "the rhythms of the autobiographical act recapitulat[e] the fundamental rhythms of identity formation" (8). In his 1992 text he reinforces the narrative as an instrument of self-construction, but admits that "in retrospect [he] did not give adequate weight to the force of culture in the playing out of the autobiographical act" (71). Acknowledging the "model[s] of identity" (77) provided by culture that "all autobiographies presuppose" (77), he explains how the self in autobiography is in fact "doubly structured, doubly mediated [in that] the self is already constructed in interaction with the others of its culture before it begins self-consciously [...] in autobiography — where it exists" (102). These observations are valuable in emphasising the cultural creation of the self, both in narratives and in life. In his later work *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (1999) Eakin worthily confirms that "the selves we display in

autobiographies are doubly constructed, not only in the act of writing a life story but also in a lifelong process of identity formation" (ix), and stresses the need not to oversimplify the self by thinking of it as a story or an entity, but rather to see it "more as a kind of awareness in process" (x), a "lifelong process [...] that we engage in daily and that informs all autobiographical writing." (1)

The idea of identity as an incomplete work in progress finds a fitting literary parallel in the *Bildungsroman*. Although the *Bildungsroman* is only mentioned briefly by Alice Kaplan as "closest in genre" to the language memoir with regards to self-translation in and through writing (in Bammer, 1994: 69), its characteristics provide worthwhile appreciation of the self as a continual construction and thus it is useful to consider some additional theory. In *The German Bildungsroman: History of a National Genre* (1995) Todd Kontje emphasises the *Bildungsroman*'s focus on "inner development" (29) and the "development of the hero towards maturation and social integration" (29). Martin Swales' *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (1978) similarly presents the *Bildungsroman* as a novel about "self-realization" (15) that is "unremittingly concerned with the Werden of an individual hero" (28). He also highlights that the process of identity formation and "learning from life" (29) is "a tentative progression" (29) that mirrors the "flow of experience" (33) of life and supports "the flux of character" (148).

The way in which narrative supports identity formation is seen by Anderson (2001) as a means to "order both time and personality" (8) and to "constitute [the] self in the focus of his special unity and identity across time" (5). (Anderson usefully reminds us though that "a unified self [...] can only ever be a fiction" — 66). Kenneally (1988) further maintains that "[i]n the process of explaining the nature and characteristics of a personality, the autobiographical act can, then, assuage doubts about identity and counter threats to self-image" (18). Brockmeier et al. likewise assert that in reviewing problems of identity, narrative construction "locates them in such a way as to make them comprehensible" (30), since the autobiography offers "an expressive embodiment of our experience, as a mode of communication, and as a form for understanding the world and ultimately ourselves" (1).

The facilitation of self-affirmation in turn points to the therapeutic value of autobiographical acts that Henke in Smith et al. affirms as "investigations into and processes of self-knowing" (69). In *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2001) Smith et al.

discuss Suzette Henke's notion of scriptotherapy that denotes healing through the articulation of trauma; that is, "narrators of trauma often testify to the therapeutic effects of telling or writing a story, acknowledging how the process of writing has changed the narrator and the life story itself." (22) Studies of this therapeutic quality provide a valuable contribution to my thesis in that this attribute offers a tool for rebuilding the self that has suffered loss through self-translation, and in turn attests to the modification involved in the process.

The above texts therefore present the self as "doubly mediated" (Eakin, 1992: 102), firstly though culture and language and secondly through autobiographical writing. In *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World* (2000) Holstein et al. emphasise that "self construction is a complex process that responds to multiple 'layers' of interpretive constraint and narrative resources" (167). Retaining this idea of complex creation, I then take the construction of the self a step further by suggesting that the transposition of the self into another language further augments the composite layering of translation in self-formation. In the seminal collection *Translated Lives*, Besemeres at al. (2003) also propose that "to write autobiography across languages involves two processes of translation, first of memory and second of culture" (1); however, I am not suggesting "two processes of translation" but rather a fluid intermingling of multiple interpretative sources. For example, a more comprehensive understanding of the constructed self in and through language memoirs takes into account significant acts of transformation, such as the process of crossing from memory to fictionalised story in autobiography that simultaneously emphasises the exacerbation of loss. Furthermore, my view considers, for example, Steiner's theory, explored in *After Babel: Aspects of Language & Translation* (1998), which proposes that translation occurs not only between languages but also within a single language, since "[a]ny model of communication is at the same time a model of translation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance" (47). Steiner therefore stresses, very importantly, not only that "translation proper [...] is a special, heightened case of the process of communication and reception in any act of human speech" (436), but also that translation is always "a transformational process" (29). Similarly, in *The Bilingual Mind: Thinking, Feeling and Speaking in Two Languages* (2007) Javier points to the compound nature of interpretation, stating that "[c]ommunication between two individuals in a monolingual condition involves the process of transmitting [...] When the communication occurs between individuals whose worlds have developed in different geographical, cultural, and linguistic contexts, as in the case of the bilingual experience, it is even more difficult to gauge accurately what is being communicated." (8)

In my own thesis I am thus firstly placing an emphasis on the element of transformation inherent in translation, and secondly I am using the palimpsest as an analogy of the multi-layered constructed self. Kenneally (1998) mentions the palimpsest when discussing the composition of the autobiography and its function as a "restorative process" (18) in repositioning the self of the past in the present: "[The autobiographer] turns to his past to begin the process of shoring up the self, of defining a current identity. […] As a result of self-reflection and self-analysis, connections between past selves and present identity are re-established, and others previously hidden will often emerge from the palimpsest of the past to reinforce, modify, or even challenge." (19) However, although the restoration of the self is essential to my thesis, I am employing the palimpsest as a central and fuller metaphor for the translated self: a parchment that incorporates not only a layer of the past self in the present narrated self, but simultaneously a layer of the self of the original language and culture in the self translated in the new language. This image allows for the coexistence of all layers of self-construction through various means of interpretation, and emphasises the multiplicity and relativity of identity that eludes being a single, solid text. A similar comprehensive use of a metaphor for the translated self is not employed in the other selected language memoirs or collections. Furthermore, I also support the image of the palimpsest with that of 'scar tissue'. This metaphor is taken from the title of Gustavo Perez Firmat's collection of poems *Scar Tissue* (2005), written in a cathartic response to the vulnerability of pain. Firmat does not elaborate on the significance of the image within his poems but its symbolism is present in his theme of "recovery and reconnection" (xiii). I appropriate this analogy and use it in a similar way: self-translation makes an incision of loss and pain, but healing and reconciliation of the self can occur, although the skin will never return to its exact pre-operative state. The image of a scar is used by André Aciman in *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss* (1999) as a metaphor for an accent: "[a]n accent is the tell-tale scar left by the unfinished struggle to acquire a new language." (11) Although this use is enlightening, I use it more comprehensively to denote elements of loss, healing and complexity of the self.

1.2 Social and cultural aspects of the self

Eakin mentions the role of culture in contributing to self-formation in autobiography, but for my aim it is necessary to further explore culture, in particular the self's relationship to culture and society, and how this interaction forms another layer of self-interpretation. The above view of the self as a dynamic creation in flux is increased by the sociological viewpoint of the self that sees identities as fractured and evolving, because as Philip Riley points out in *Language, Culture and Identity* (2007), identities "are not formed ex nihilo [but] are the product of social interaction." (Riley, 2007: 16) In *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World* (2000) Holstein et al. present the early conception of the pragmatists' vision of the self as "a social self" (17), but Holstein et al. emphasise that the self is "not only a 'social structure', as George Herbert Mead put it, but also a valued social construction, reproduced time and again in everyday life." (viv) They see the self as "an artefact of interpretive practice, as something under construction at every turn of social interaction" (14).

In *Mirrors & Masks: The Search for Identity* (1997) Strauss emphasises how the formation of the self is tied to other people and that the self is thus multiple and variable: "[i]dentity is connected with the fateful appraisals made of oneself — by oneself and by others. Everyone presents himself to the others and to himself, and sees himself in the mirrors of their judgments. The masks he then and thereafter presents to the world and its citizens are fashioned upon his anticipations of their judgments." (11) The symbolic notion of masks is reviewed in Burke et al.'s *Identity Theory* (2009), in which the authors attribute the multiple facets of the self to societal roles: "[p]eople possess multiple identities because they occupy multiple roles, are members of multiple groups, and claim multiple personal characteristics" (3). Strauss (1997) presents a valuable explanation of the self that has an essential core but undergoes multiple, often painful changes: "[c]hanges in people may be conceptualized like fashion. Thus a person during his lifetime may seem to change considerably, but the essential person is assumed to be the same; he is after all the same person, albeit he may suffer severe damage in transit. This metaphor [...] is represented by the very familiar conception that the essential core of personality is laid down early in life and that later changes are variants, although complicated ones, on the initial personality organization." (59) Riley similarly explains that we "change from role to role" (86), and usefully questions the extent of the stable core: "[i]n what sense is it the 'same' person who is present in successive situations?" (86)

The available roles are influenced by culture, which provides a platform of interpretative resources. Holstein et al. (2000) propose that "[l]ocal culture offers ways of constructing [the] self" (163) and that "[c]haracter is thus socially conditioned" (40). In *The Conceptual Self in Context* (1997) Neisser et al. echo the view of the self as socially formed "in interaction with others" (14) and "through participation in cultural practices" (13) (Neisser et al. place importance on differentiating between the "conceptual self [that] is a mental representation [or] what we bring to mind when we think about ourselves [and] other important aspects of the self" (3), however I do not see this as a necessary distinction and view the self as an entity representing identity and strongly linked to a person's inner emotional world). Myers-Scotton's *Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism* (2006) points out that culture is what "provides [...] interpretation of not only [an individual's] world, but of the world in general." (177). This notion is reflected by Terry Eagleton who maintains that culture is "a set of tacit understandings or practical guidelines" (*The Idea of Culture*, 2005: 34), and by Edward T. Hall (*Beyond Culture*, 1989) who defines culture as "man's medium" (16). In *Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture* (2002) Côté et al. reinforce this stance with the idea of culture as a "tool kit" (122) of interpretative resources for self-construction. Furthermore, they highlight culture's function as "defin[ing] the parameters of acceptable behaviors" (62). Riley similarly affirms that culture "is the knowledge members of a society need if they are to participate competently in the various situations and activities life puts in their way" (36). Here it is useful to also consider Vladimir Vertlib's essay *Ich und die Eingeborenen* (in *Die Fremde in Mir*, edited by Niederle, 1999) in which he highlights that one of the key inhibitors to a complete assimilation into a new language and culture is not only a lack of cultural familiarity (which can be learnt), but the lack of a shared history with the new culture: "*[I]ch vergesse manchmal, dass ich zwar Österreicher, aber kein Eingeborener bin. Und nur wenn meine eingeborenen Freunde von den Erlebnissen ihrer Eltern und Großeltern erzählen [...] da merke ich wieder, dass ihre Vergangenheit nicht meine Vergangenheit ist*" (320).

An important concept that emerges from this literature is that if cultural know-how constitutes participation in a society, then a lack thereof likewise excludes participation and initiates alienation. Kanno attests in *Negotiating Bilingual and Bicultural Identities* (2003) that "[w]hen newcomers join a community of people with shared practices — 'ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations' — they need to learn to participate in those practices" (Kanno, 2003: 12), and Burke et al. warn that "[w]hen a social identity is not

verified, there is the threat of rejection from the group." (171) Charles Taylor explains in *Sources of the Self* (1989) that exclusion from a group or cultural space can provoke an identity crisis: "[p]eople may see their identity as defined partly by some moral or spiritual commitment [...]. Or they may define it in part by the nation or tradition they belong to [...] were they to lose this commitment or identification, they would be at sea, as it were [...]. It's what we call an 'identity crisis', an acute form of disorientation, which people often express in terms of not knowing who they are, but which can also be seen as a radical uncertainty of where they stand." (27) Côté et al. point out that the term *identity crisis* was coined by Erik Erikson and can fittingly be described as "identity confusion [...] and a lack of commitment to recognized roles in a community" (15).

Although Charles Taylor (1989) provides very valuable insight on issues of identification and the identity crisis (which sheds light on the pain and loss incurred in self-translation), his stance on the social construction of the self is, in my opinion, somewhat extreme and insular. Taylor maintains that "[o]ne is a self *only* [my italics] among other selves. A self can *never* [my italics] be described without reference to those who surround it." (35) Similarly: "I am a self *only* [my italics] in relation to certain interlocutors: in one way in relation to those conversation partners who were essential to my achieving self-definition; in another in relation to those who are now crucial to my continuing grasp of languages of self-understanding [...]. A self exists *only* [my italics] within what I call 'webs of interlocution'." (36) Taylor does redeem himself somewhat by situating social interaction as one of two identity defining dimensions. That is, "[t]he full definition of someone's identity thus usually involves not only his stand on moral and spiritual matters but also some reference to a defining community." (36) However, I believe that self-formation needs to be viewed more comprehensively, and despite its central role in my aim, society and culture should be acknowledged as having a profound influence on the self, but not as the only factor in entirely determining the self. As Amartya Sen confirms in *Identity and Violence* (2006): "[o]ur cultural identities can be extremely important, but they do not stand starkly alone and aloof from other influences on our understanding and priorities." (112)

It is thus more useful to see culture (and in turn society and language) in the sense used by Côté et al. — that is, as an interpretative resource for understanding the self and the world. Considering this stance, the above authors' views imply in relation to my aim that if the self is somewhat forged by culture then there shall surely be losses incurred when it is transported

into a new culture in which the individual lacks the relevant resources. In turn there is the risk of a form of identity crisis invoked by disorientation of a displaced frame of reference. Furthermore, these concepts point to my emphasis on the expandability of the self (which makes self-translation feasible). In other words, if the self is socially constructed and wears varying masks according to the context, then an additional mask can be assumed in a new language.

1.3 Language, identity and bilingualism

In their discussions of culture and its identity-shaping role, Neisser et al. (1997) underline the link between culture and language. They argue that language "reflects codified cultural ways of viewing the world" (178) and "is also the medium through which the self is constructed" (180). Burke (2009) likewise clarifies that the "categories and classifications that are used for [identity assessment] are provided by [the] language and culture in which we are enmeshed" (13). In *Language and Culture* (2009) Kramsch also emphasises that language "is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways" (3) and that it "is not a culture-free code" (8). The study of this link is of fundamental value to my aim — that is in order to see if and how the self can be (re)constructed in a new language, it is essential to understand how deeply the self is tied to language and its accompanying culture.

John E. Joseph discusses how identity is constructed through language in *Language and Identity* (2004), expressing his conviction that "language and identity are ultimately inseparable" (13). With reference to Whorf, Joseph claims that "[t]hought and language come into being simultaneously" (47) and that language "shapes the culture and thoughts of a people" (47), or rather that it is "a systematic way of constituting realities" (89). These ideas of linguistic relativity are most useful in showing how a sense of self is bound to language, and in turn in indicating the difficulty of transporting the self into another language. Joseph also stresses the concept of a core identity existing in conjunction with other language-shaped aspects of identity: "[t]here are, then, two basic aspects to a person's identity: their name, which serves first of all to single them out from other people, and then that deeper, intangible something that constitutes who one really is and for which we do not have a precise word." (1) Joseph's

examination of a core self is valuable in that it captures an aspect of identity that is linked to deep-seated emotions and a profound sense of self, for example, he asks meaningful questions such as "[w]ho are you *really*? Who are you *deep down*?" (1) He also underlines that this sense of self is difficult to define, suggesting that habitual terms such as "soul", "Ego" or "inner self" (1) can be problematic and that "who one is 'deep down' can never be fully captured and articulated in words." (1) On the other hand, however, Joseph places too much emphasis on the value of a name as a central marker of identity. He not only states the "importance of names as carriers of identity" (16) but also declares that "names are the primary text of personal identity, occupying a privileged place within the language" (12), and that his "view [is] that our understanding of linguistic identity must begin with what in common usage is the primary meaning of identity: the name." (11) Although I fully acknowledge that the name is a salient marker of identity and that its alteration in a new language can have a disturbing effect on the self, I do not agree that it constitutes the first part of "two basic aspects to a person's identity" (1). Furthermore, Joseph's analysis of identity also includes issues of national and ethnic identity that exceed my interests. Amin Maalouf's *In the Name of Identity* (2003) places an even greater focus on national identity and the dangers of attachment to language in prompting fanaticism, which also does not concern my study. However, Maalouf nevertheless provides strong points that are of considerable value to my aim in that he highlights that identity is a lifelong construction and a fluid sum of multiple elements, stating that "[i]dentity can't be compartmentalised. You can't divide it up into halves or thirds or any other separate segments" (2), and that "[i]dentity isn't given once and for all: it is built up and changes throughout a person's lifetime" (23).

Joseph's belief that language shapes thought is echoed by Riley (2007) who claims that "language is at one and the same time the tool, the contents and the form of human thought" (9). In a similar way to Taylor, he makes an extreme claim that a self is formed exclusively through language; that is, "[c]hildren raised outside society do not acquire language, though they have the capacity to do so, and for that very reason, they fail to form selves." (83) Although language is integral to self-formation, again, a degree of relativity is called for and it is clear from examples of non-verbal children that identity can certainly exist separately from language.

The debate of whether language determines thought and identity is most explicit in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis explored in *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin*

Lee Whorf, edited by John B. Carroll (1956), which includes almost all of Whorf's writings that pertain to linguistic relativity, as well as *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality*, edited by David G. Mandelbaum (1951). The principle of linguistic relativity which affirms that the particularities of a certain language influence thought is central to my study, however the principle of language determining thought is problematic and certain claims are extreme and unsound. In *Dialogue at the Margins: Whorf, Bakhtin, and Linguistic Relativity* (1990) Emily Schultz correctly notes that the hypothesis "harbor[s] serious ambiguities" (14). The illogicality of linguistic determinism is most fully explored in *The Language Instinct* (1994) by Steven Pinker who resolutely refutes the hypothesis, claiming that it is nothing more than "a conventional absurdity" (57): "[p]eople do not think in English or Chinese or Apache; they think in a language of thought." (81)

Pinker provides thorough evidence against linguistic determinism, however his views are also controversial and do not take into account the valuable claims of Anna Wierzbicka. In *Understanding Cultures Through Their Key Words* (1997) Wierzbicka criticises Pinker and insists that it is misguided to "question the validity of the link [between language and thought] on the basis of an alleged lack of [scientific] evidence" (5) because "[t]o people with an intimate knowledge of two (or more) different languages and cultures, it is usually self-evident that language and patterns of thought are interlinked." (5) Furthermore, arguments against linguistic determinism based on the viability of translation are also problematic. Kramsch (2009) notes that the hypothesis disproves itself, since "it is *always* [my italics] possible to translate across languages, and if this were not so, Whorf could never have revealed how the Hopis think." (13). Steiner (1998) similarly argues that if linguistic determinism were valid, then "how could we acquire a second tongue or traverse into another language-world by means of translation?" (98)

However, Kramsch's statement that it is "always possible to translate" (2009: 13) is flawed, since he does not consider pertinent points such as the existence of "areas of tension and untranslatability, where concepts from one language and culture do not easily fit within the other language" (Pavlenko, 2006: xiv) that are explored in Aneta Pavlenko's *Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression and Representation* (2006). Steiner (1998), on the other hand, is aware of the complexity involved in translation and fundamentally underlines that translation takes place within all communication and always involves transformation. Wierzbicka (1997) correctly summarises how translation is 'superficially' possible but has

side-effects of loss and alteration: "Whorf may also have exaggerated the differences between languages and cultures and the conceptual universes associated with them, and the degree to which the terms of the agreement that holds throughout a speech community 'are absolutely obligatory'. We can always find a way around the canonical 'terms of agreement' by using paraphrases and circumlocutions of one kind or another. But this can only be done at a cost (by using longer, more complex, more cumbersome expressions than those which we can use [when] relying on the habitual ways of speaking offered to us by our native language)." (7) Like most current scholars (Grace, 1987; Keckses et al., 2000; Kramsch, 2000; Pavlenko, 2006; Schultz, 1990), I therefore reject the validity of linguistic determinism, but support the principle of linguistic relativity that language and culture shape thought and personality to some degree. I likewise recognise the challenges of entirely accurate translation due to various levels of incongruency and due to the critical fact that, as Steiner (1998) stresses, "[n]o language, no traditional symbolic set or cultural ensemble imports without risk of being transformed" (315). This element of transformation within translation itself is often not emphasised when considering self-translation, but it is essential since it consequently means that change, whether a loss or gain, inevitably occurs.

1.4 'Double selves' and language emotionality

Linguistic relativity principles become particularly interesting with regards to bilingualism because they raise the issue of whether each of the bilingual's languages denotes a distinct way of perceiving the world and the self. Most scholars (Grosjean, 1982; Hoffmann, 1991; Kanno, 2003; Keckses et al., 2000; Milroy et al., 1995; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Pavlenko, 2006; Romaine, 1995;) and some writers (Green, 1985; Todorov in Arteaga, 1996) acknowledge that bilinguals and biculturals rarely have equal fluency ('technical' or emotional) in their languages. Imbalance in languages necessitates language choice for both personal and contextual reasons, such as code-switching, which is explored by Milroy et al. in *One speaker, two languages: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on code-switching* (1995). Grosjean (1985) underlines rudimentary reasons for code-switching, such as shifting to another language when the bilingual is "tired, lazy, or under stress" (311). Another aspect of language choice is emphasised by Myers-Scotton (2006) who discusses how code-switching is used to

negotiate different identities and to signify either solidarity or discordance with the interlocutors. That is, "[s]peakers use and value languages as indices of how they view themselves and as a tool for the negotiation of interpersonal relations." (413) Kramsch (2009) points to a similar motivation for language crossing in which "speakers perform cultural acts of identity" (70). My interest in code-switching is, however, not a focus on positioning identity in relation to others so much as the incidence of not being able to express exactly the same thing across languages — this in turn has valuable implications for possible challenges of expressing the self equally and authentically in different languages. My interest finds confirmation in Pavlenko's (2005) observation that although commonly discussed factors affect code-switching, "including topic, context, interlocutor, and the speaker's language proficiency [...], these studies offer a somewhat oversimplified portrayal of affective functions of code-switching" (131).

Different ways of expression in different languages lead to the critical question posed by Grosjean (1982): "Do bilinguals have one or two personalities?" (279) Grosjean examines beliefs that bilingualism "can lead to a split personality and, at worst, to schizophrenia" (282), but he dismisses these claims and proposes that "what is seen as a change in personality is simply a shift in attitudes and behaviors corresponding to a shift in situation or context, independent of language" (282), providing a few examples of bilinguals who confirm the constancy of personality across languages. However, Grosjean contradicts himself somewhat by simultaneously providing examples of "bilinguals [who] report that when they change language they feel they are changing their attitudes and behaviors" (279). In *Selves in Two Languages* (2007), Koven criticises Grosjean's dismissal of the impression of 'double selves', stating that it diminishes the "profound effect of language on the experience of self" (19) and reduces bilinguals' sense of alternating personalities across languages to "merely experiencing language-independent changes in context" (19).

I acknowledge the validity of Koven's criticism and simultaneously support Pavlenko's observation (2005) that the "current consensus in the field, based on decades of research, is that bilingualism per se is not the cause of problems in emotional and social adjustment" (27). These studies therefore support my view that bilingualism does not literally provoke schizophrenia (obviously the majority of the world's population, who is not, in fact monolingual, is clearly not schizophrenic), but that this serves as a valuable metaphor for the impression that bilinguals have of distinct expressive traits in their different languages.

Furthermore, it points to my belief that the introduction of a new language and the necessity for self-translation are a heightened form of the usual identity dilemmas. This stance is expressed by Charlotte Hoffmann in *An Introduction to Bilingualism* (1991): "The question of 'Who am I' is of course asked by monolinguals and bilinguals alike, but in an attempt to find an answer the latter has the additional dimension of his / her biculturalism to contend with." (146)

The most groundbreaking and comprehensive analysis of twentieth-century views on bilingualism and emotions that sheds much more light on these issues is found in two pivotal works by Aneta Pavlenko. The first is *Emotions and Multilingualism* (2005) in which she unites insights from linguistics, neurolinguistics, psychology, anthropology, psychoanalysis and literary theory; the second is *Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression and Representation* (2006) in which she explores the "translatability of emotion concepts" (xiii) and addresses "something even more central than the role of emotions in our language choice and use, namely, bi- and multilingual minds and our experience of self" (xiv). These works provide a basis for the central arguments in my thesis.

In *Emotions and Multilingualism* Pavlenko reviews the trend mentioned by Grosjean to "pathologize bilingualism" (1982: 23), examines psychoanalytic studies of language, emotions and memory, and looks at the role of anxiety and attitude in language learning. The psychoanalytic studies (Buxbaum, 1949; Greenson, 1950; Krapf, 1955) "firmly establi[sh] the view of the first language as the language of emotions and the second as the language of distance and detachment." (30) Most importantly, Pavlenko underlines how "[t]his view and the metaphor of a 'split identity', an identity 'in-between', continue to pervade contemporary scholarly and personal writing on second language learning and bilingualism" (30), such as that of Eva Hoffman (1989). Similar studies are investigated by Javier (2007) who refers to suggestions that "bilingualism may encourage emotional splitting" (38) and to the same psychoanalytic studies (Buxbaum and Greenson, mentioned above) that note "the remarkable distinctiveness in their bilingual patients' responses in the therapeutic situation, depending upon the language of the treatment." (44)

Pavlenko poses a series of fundamentally important questions: "Are emotion and emotion-laden terms in bilinguals' languages perfectly equivalent or are they represented differently? Do bilinguals have different emotional reactions to their respective languages? Do their

emotional linguistic bonds influence their language choices? Are their actual feelings affected by the language they speak?" (23) In the first chapter of *Bilingual Minds* Pavlenko similarly examines how studies of language and emotions in autobiographical memory "illuminate the experience of self" (xiv), asking, "[d]o bi- and multilinguals sometimes feel like different people when speaking different languages? [...] Do they behave differently? What prompts these differences?" (1)

The next important chapter in *Bilingual Minds* is by Mary Besemeres and "examines ways in which bilingual writers discuss their emotional experiences and identifies several areas of tension and untranslatability, where concepts from one language and culture do not easily fit within the other language." (xiv) Besemeres discusses Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989), Riemer's *Inside Outside* (1992) and *The Habsburg Cafe* (1993), Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory* (1982) and Ishiguro's *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986). Besemeres presents essential arguments such as "how moving between languages involves inhabiting significantly different conceptual and emotional worlds" (39), and how it "becomes harder" (36) in another language to talk about feelings "shaped by concepts specific to a particular language" (36). Although Besemeres justifies her selection of analysed texts by declaring that "they all affirm the centrality of emotional experience to narrative representations of lives between languages" (39), her inclusion of Ishiguro's text is curious in that, although the author is bilingual (British-Japanese) the book itself does not explicitly deal with issues of self-translation and therefore does not fit my classification of a language memoir since it does not assess the transportation of the self into a new language. Besemeres herself admits that "not all of these works deal explicitly with issues such as the incommensurability of different languages' conceptualizations of emotion" (39).

Another key chapter is by Michèle Koven and addresses bilinguals' affective repertoires and whether "they [are] perceived as different people by their interlocutors" (Pavlenko, 2006: 1). Koven's analysis of affect performance in the two languages of a Portuguese-French bilingual coincides with the discussion in her book *Selves in Two Languages: Bilinguals' verbal enactment of identity in French and Portuguese* (2007), in which she explores "how language mediates local experiences" (9) in French-Portuguese bilingual women. The book "takes questions that are raised by psychological anthropologists about the role of cultural and linguistic forms in the shaping of self and emotion and integrates them with a more discourse-oriented approach to how 'selves' and 'affects' are instantiated through indexical

forms in talk" (9), concluding that "[m]ost participants say explicitly that there is something quite different in their experience of speaking French and Portuguese, with many reporting that they feel they are not the same person in each language." (7)

The conclusions that Pavlenko draws from both works are that "bi- and multilinguals themselves perceive the emotionality of their languages differently, with L1 [first language] commonly seen as the most emotional" (2005: 188) and thus that they need to learn "to interpret emotion displays and emotional expression in languages learned later in life" (2005: 81). However, although bilinguals "may favor a particular language for emotional expression, they most often find themselves 'doing emotions' in more than one language" (2005: 140). Furthermore, she underlines the "emphasis the respondents maintain on internal satisfaction in language choice." (2005: 140)

Another major contribution to the study of bilingualism and emotions is made by Anna Wierzbicka in her texts *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words* (1997) and *Emotions across Languages and Cultures* (1999). These texts provide essential insights on the untranslatability of certain cultural terms, however they place a detailed focus on semantics as opposed to the "internal satisfaction" of which Pavlenko talks and which interests me principally. Wierzbicka also sometimes exaggerates the untranslatability of terms, for example she correctly points out that "English doesn't have a word corresponding to […] the Japanese word *miai*, referring to a formal occasion when the prospective bride and her family meet the prospective bridegroom and his family for the first time." (1997: 2). However, the lack of a corresponding cultural practice does not necessarily signify an inability to understand the practice, except for the loss of subtle nuances known only to those with intimate knowledge of the culture. Nevertheless, Wierzbicka's innovative views highlight very significant concepts of the way emotions are expressed and experienced differently in different languages and cultures.

In *Understanding Cultures Through Their Key Words* Wierzbicka reveals her firm support of Sapir's views on the "very close link between the life of a society and the lexicon of the language spoken by it" (1), and although she acknowledges that "the outlook of an individual is never fully 'determined' by the conceptual tools provided by his or her native language" (5), she endorses the notions that "the meanings of words from different languages don't match (even if they are artificially matched, faute de mieux, by the dictionaries), that they

reflect and pass on ways of living and ways of thinking characteristic of a given society (or speech community) and that they provide priceless clues to the understanding of culture." (4) Using examples from the "personal insights of bilingual and bicultural insiders such as [Eva] Hoffman who echo analytical insights of scholars with a broad in-depth knowledge of different languages and cultures such as Sapir" (8), she shows how every language has 'key concepts' that encapsulate core values of the culture and that these concepts, in addition to the way they are used ('frequency'), create problems of translatability.

Again using examples from Hoffman's memoir (1989) in *Emotions across Languages and Cultures*, Wierzbicka further argues how each language provides valuable "evidence of different ways of conceptualizing and categorizing human experience" (3), or rather how "culture often shapes both ways of thinking and ways of feeling" (5). She demonstrates that "[h]uman emotions vary a great deal across languages and cultures, but they also share a great deal" (34), and ends with the important conclusion that "[a]lthough human emotional endowment is no doubt largely innate and universal, people's emotional lives are shaped, to a considerable extent, by their culture. Every culture offers not only a linguistically embodied grid for the conceptualization of emotions, but also a set of 'scripts' suggesting to people how to feel, how to express their feelings, how to think about their own and other people's feelings, and so on" (240).

1.5 Self-translation in language memoirs

The reflections on bilinguals feeling like different people in different languages, among other pertinent issues such as how one continues to be oneself in a new language, are explored by bilingual authors and by scholars who discuss these authors. Koven (2007) sites the following authors as "bilingual memoirists [who] have vividly described firsthand the experience of having two linguistically based selves" (20): Green 1985; Hoffman 1989; Kaplan 1993; Rodriguez 1982; Steiner 1975; Todorov 1985, and Karen Ogulnick (2000) classifies texts by "Kaplan, 1994; Lvovich, 1997 [and] Ogulnick, 1998" as "memoirs that deal with the impact the process of adapting to another language and culture has on one's sense of self" (2). Pavlenko et al. (2004) underline how contemporary immigrant authors who have moved to

America "do not necessarily aim to create all-American identities for themselves" (54) like their predecessors (for example, Mary Antin's *The Promised Land*, [1912], which is referred to in *Lost in Translation* [1989]), but rather use their autobiographies to create "hybrid, hyphenated, or transnational and cosmopolitan identities [in which] linguistic identities occupy a primary position [...] or at least assign linguistic construction of identity a significant role" (54). She identifies the following as authors who "appeal to the safety and authority of writing to claim ownership of their new language and to construct legitimate linguistic identities for themselves and their fellow bilinguals, challenging the native / non-native speaker dichotomy which grants unique authority to monolingual native speakers of English" (54): Dorfman (1998), Hoffman (1989), Lvovich (1997), Mori (1997), Ogulnick (1998), Rodriguez (1982) and Stavans (2001).

These works have been analysed by applied linguists and literary critics who consider such autobiographical writing as valid and valuable evidence for better understanding the relationship between language and the self. In conjunction with the work of Aneta Pavlenko, the most extensive studies on this writing have been conducted by Mary Besemeres. In her important book *Translating One's Self: Language and Selfhood in Cross-Cultural Autobiography* (2002) Besemeres provides a detailed analysis of contemporary works of autobiography, fiction and poetry of "language migrants" (10), examining the central "question of the embeddedness of thought and inner life in natural language" (10), and demonstrating how a shift in language compels a shift in the self. That is, of critical importance to my thesis, she explores "[t]he immigrant experience of having to 'translate oneself' from one's mother tongue into a foreign language and losing part of oneself in the process [which] shows how deeply self is bound up with natural language." (9) Besemeres claims that self-translation is made possible when "the second language's concepts can be to some extent taken on, internalized, in a way that parallels the acquisition of the first language" (19), which has a (perceived) absolute claim over the self. These themes that Besemeres emphasises are of great worth to my study, however, as mentioned above with regards to her chapter in *Bilingual Minds* (2006), her selection of texts does not comply totally with my interests. Although she amply and valuably discusses *Lost in Translation*, *Inside Outside* and *Hunger of Memory*, she dedicates entire chapters to Czesław Miłosz's translation of his own poems, Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin* and again Kazuo Ishiguro's *An Artist of the Floating World* which do not address issues that are particularly relevant to my research concerns. For example, I am dealing with language memoirs and not poetry and

further, I find Nabokov and Ishiguro's texts in particular to be ill-suited to the major concerns of Besemeres' book as a whole, and especially to my interests, since although the authors are bilinguals the books are not memoirs and do not deal with self-translation.

Besemeres et al.'s *Translated Lives* (the twenty-third edition of *Mots Pluriel*, 2003) is another especially pertinent collection of bilingual reflections that ask the question of "what special issues are thrown up for an individual living, thinking, and writing in a language that is not the 'first' language" (1). As the title of the edition suggests, the two major themes that emerge are the extent to which "crossing languages and cultures entail a form of self-translation [and the] role [that] translation — of memory, experience, one's past identity and ties to a community — play[s] in autobiographical, and more broadly, life writing" (9). Among other useful contributions by Alice Kaplan, Andrew Riemer, Eva Hoffman, Peter Cowley and Kim Lefèvre, Kateryna Olijnyk Longley insightfully looks at how autobiography always involves translation from the past, but that the autobiography of language migrants involves a heightened translation and a "huge chasm between the world of the narration (the *now* of the telling) and the world of the other place, the lost home, which becomes super-charged with emotional and mythological energy precisely because it is the place of no return." (2)

Translating Lives: Living with Two Languages and Cultures (2007) by Besemeres et al. is another key work that examines "the relationship between language, society, culture and that elusive and complex entity, the self" (xxiv). The book presents twelve bilingual Australians' experiences of duality, and aims to increase awareness of "what it means to be a native speaker of another language in a country where English alone is the shared medium of communication" (xiii). This aim and the focus on Australia itself does not interest me, but the bilingual narratives offer staple arguments, such as whether the same thoughts and feelings can be expressed in different languages and whether a specific language influences interaction with people.

Further concepts of the role of language in positioning oneself in relation to other people are widely explored in Pavlenko et al.'s *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts* (2004). However, the core focus of the work is on "how languages are appropriated to legitimize, challenge, and negotiate particular identities and to open new identity options for oppressed and subjugated groups and individuals" (13), or rather on how "language choice and attitudes

are inseparable from political arrangements, relations of power [and] language ideologies" (1). This focus exceeds the scope of my thesis, but nevertheless gives rise to the useful view of identity's multiplicity; that is, "[s]ince individuals often shift and adjust ways in which they identify and position themselves in distinct contexts, identities are best understood when approached in their entirety, rather than through consideration of a single aspect or subject position." (16) The other most salient notion that emerges is the role of narratives in the negotiation of identity. Pavlenko et al. identify the "fragmented, decentered, and shifting identities" (18) caused by displacement and propose that "[i]dentity narratives offer a unique means of resolving this tension, (re)constructing the links between past, present, and future, and imposing coherence where there was none" (18).

Pavlenko's most vital contribution to my study is undoubtedly her essay *"To speak a foreign language is to depart from yourself": Late Bilingualism as (Re)Construction of Identity* (1997), from which I appropriated the term *(re)construction* for my title. This essay contains some of the key themes explored in my own study, however it also exceeds its scope in certain areas. Firstly, Pavlenko is deeply concerned with the lack of attention in the field of bilingualism given to "the process of reconstruction of social and linguistic identity by adult immigrants, striving to become bilinguals, [as it] remains an often ignored and underrepresented topic" (80), and one of her aims is to reveal the examination of how this "marginalized" (80) data can contribute to the theory of bilingualism. Secondly, Pavlenko exclusively considers the first-person narratives of authors and scholars who learnt their second language as teenagers or adults, but for my own study I am not delineating any such limits of age of acquisition (although the majority of shifts happen to occur in the teenage years, which is pertinent in the augmentation of the standard *identity crisis* as understood by Erikson). Nevertheless, the analysis of Pavlenko's chosen data leads to exceptionally valuable arguments. Pavlenko proposes that "the process of successful L2 [second-language] learning necessitates (re)construction of one's linguistic, cultural and social identity, or at the least the development of new ones." (80) She stresses how the "paramount" (81) process of self-translation "differs from the generally accepted banking metaphor of language learning as immediate acquisition" (80). Principally she defines self-translation as "a two step process, which entails an initial phase of continuous loss and followed by a second phase of gain and (re)construction" (81). Drawing on illustrations from *Lost in Translation,* Pavlenko divides the phase of loss into five stages, namely loss of one's linguistic identity, loss of social networks and previous subjectivities, loss of the frame of reference and the link between the

signifier and the signified, and the loss of the inner voice. Similarly, she segments the phase of (re)construction into four stages: appropriation of others' voices, emergence of one's own new voice, translation therapy or the reconstruction of one's past, and finally continuous growth into new positions and subjectivities. This model is valid and immensely enlightening in understanding self-translation, in particular in acknowledging the possibility of gains and reconciliation, however I believe it is also necessary to maintain an awareness that the process is not always linear and clear-cut, but like all issues pertaining to the multiplicity and fluidity of identity, should be considered with regard to context and relativity.

Other significant studies of bilinguals' autobiographical writing are works by Arteaga, Aciman, Bammer, Beaujour, De Courtivron, Kellman, Lesser and Ogulnick. In the edited collection *Lives in Translation: Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity* (2003) Isabelle De Courtivron asks crucially important questions regarding bilingual authors: "What is it like to write in a language that is not the language in which you were raised? To create in words other than those of your earliest memories, so far from the sounds of home and childhood and origin? To speak and write in a language other than the one that you once believed held the seamless connection between words and things? Do you constantly translate yourself, constantly switch, shift, alternate not just vocabulary and syntax but consciousness and feelings?" (1) The writers in this collection, which include Dorfman and Hoffman, grapple with "fundamental issues of identity and creativity" (2) that point to De Courtivron's assertion that "the deepest material of the self" (4) is lodged in language. De Courtivron importantly reminds us that "[w]hile exile is 'hot', and it is chic these days to celebrate our multilingual, multicultural and mobile world" (3), the "lifelong struggle to reconcile the different pieces of the identity puzzle (or at least to acknowledge that they cannot be reconciled) continues to be a painful and constantly renegotiated process. All the more so, perhaps, when the fragmentation exists in that most intimate of sites — language." (2)

Wendy Lesser's *The Genius of Language: Fifteen Writers Reflect on Their Mother Tongues* (2005) also brings together reflections on language and the self by bilingual authors like Luc Sante and, most notably, Ariel Dorfman. These essays reveal the overlapping pain and pleasure of learning a new language, and the challenges of reconciliation. Above all, they emphasise what Lesser aptly identifies as "a tendency to equate the language of childhood with childhood itself." (8) She explains how although "[w]e have all been exiled from childhood" (8), the physical exile from the childhood place creates the impression that

"something of that lost experience still exists somewhere, accessible (if at all) only through language" (8). For example, writer M.J. Fitzgerald comments: "I cannot remember the details, but the songs and the words unlock the smell of the hay, the taunts and the teases of endless hot afternoons, and the playing, singing, and dancing […] No words in English have this power, to take me back home to childhood." (144)

Further substantial studies of bilingual authors are compiled by Steven Kellman. *The Translingual Imagination* (2000) takes a detailed look at the phenomenon of translingual literature. Kellman focuses on authors like Nabokov and Beckett, who he believes "are among the most fascinating of literary figures" (ix). Although these authors do not directly concern my aim, Kellman also includes useful discussions of authors like Canetti, Steiner, Lerner and Rodriguez, and in particular an essay in which Kellman compares Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* with Mary Antin's *The Promised Land*. Kellman shows how although Hoffman feels "a particular affection" (Hoffman, 1989: 162) towards Antin's story, Hoffman's transition into English is less concerned with total assimilation and more with staying true to her original self, whilst successfully inhabiting her new reality. Furthermore, Kellman reinforces the premise of linguistic relativity, underlining that although a language has an "instrumental" function and can be translated into other languages, "to those who savor the textures and resonances of words themselves, every syllable is, like a snowflake, unique" (23). He similarly claims that the English employed by the selected writers "facilitates a vast array of thoughts and emotions, but as any other language does, it also limits these human expressions to what is possible within its repertoire of sounds and structures." (viii)

Investigating similar themes in *Switching Languages: Translingual Writers Reflect on Their Craft* (2003) Kellman further underlines "language's integral role in constructing the self" (291). He importantly highlights the implication this has when switching languages and very valuably stresses the concept of transformation: "the adoption of a new language, particularly by a writer, means a gradual and unconscious transformation of his patterns of thinking, his style and his tastes, his attitudes and reactions." (291) In other words: "switching the language entails transforming the self" (xiv). Kellman draws these conclusions from the discussions of the diverse authors he includes, the most salient being Agosín, Lerner, Sante and Stavans.

André Aciman also examines how writers deal with a shift in language in *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language and Loss* (1999), posing a vital question: "What kinds of shifts must take place for a person to acquire, let alone accept, a new identity, a new language?" (14) Aciman looks at five writers, among them Eva Hoffman, who predominantly discusses the phenomenon of displacement and only briefly refers to her own experience and her memoir. Although, in keeping with Hoffman's essay, Aciman's focus is too centred on the condition of exile itself, he raises relevant themes such as the reconstruction of home and self: "An exile is not just someone who has lost his home; it is someone who can't find another, who can't think of another. Some no longer even know what home means. They reinvent the concept with what they've got" (21). Importantly, he notes that a type of home can be found in the act of writing itself: "Having chosen careers in writing, each [author] uses the written word as a way of fashioning a new home elsewhere" (10).

Similarly focusing on the "separation of people from their native culture [...] through physical dislocation" (xi), Angelika Bammer's *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question* (1994) significantly assesses how "language functions equally as an identity-grounding home under conditions of displacement and a means of intervention into identity-fixing cultural agendas." (xvi) Focusing on language, *Displacements* offers a broader contribution to my research than *Letters of Transit*, and contains Alice Kaplan's critical essay *On Language Memoir* that actually introduces the term *language memoir*. Other key essays include a look at how "language plays a complex role, both binding and dividing family members" (101) in Canetti's memoir, a noteworthy discussion by Homi Bhaba on the emergence of hybrid identities in "interstitial" (269) spaces of culture, and a useful review of *Lost in Translation* by Marianna Hirsch.

In *Alien Tongues* (1989), Elizabeth Beaujour echoes Kellman's thoughts, and countering Grosjean's belief that the impression of personality shifts in bilinguals are independent of language, confirms that "when [writers] actually sit down to write, and choose one language rather than the other, nothing is 'independent of language' anymore" (45). Unlike Beaujour, who discusses Nabokov, Beckett and Triolet, as well as "the decision to become a monolingual writer in an adoptive tongue" (52), my focus is not on language choice or attrition as such. However, Beaujour does point to interesting issues, such as the nature of self-translation, that is, self-translation as a "rite of passage" (37) and a "lengthy and difficult internal struggle" (44). Most valuably, in relation to bilinguals as "Janus-faced" (44),

Beaujour analyses Julien Green's impression of being another person when writing in English, in addition to Tzvetan Todorov who "finds it impossible to make a one out of these two halves because, for him, his discourses are not so divided" (49). Tzvetan Todorov's *Dialogism and Schizophrenia* in which he carries out this discussion is the most beneficial contribution to Alfred Arteaga's collection of five essays in *An Other Tongue* (1996). Arteaga explores how for Todorov, "Bulgarian and French exist hierarchically and function better in different spheres; he is therefore schizophrenic; his two languages exist in a dialogic, power differential." (2)

The last essential contribution is Karen Ogulnick's *Language Crossings: Negotiating the Self in a Multicultural World* (2000). These diverse essays explore the fascinating effect of language learning on the self, more specifically, "looking at one's own language-learning experiences in light of the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they occur" (2). Certain major themes do not concern my study, for instance how language relates to the way people "maintain subcultures" (3) or "how the process of language learning interacts with […] political realities" (3). However, other main themes are particularly salient, such as "how patterns of social and cultural behaviors (such as domination, control, and the impact of silence) are revealed in the process of language learning" (3). Of particular interest is the way Ogulnick emphasises that although some authors experience the acquisition of a new language "in terms of a loss of a prior self, which has been changed in significant ways" (1), for others it is a positive "act of transformation [that allows for the] opportunity to transcend the self, to travel, and to be another person" (1). For these individuals a new language offers a "more colorful, flavorful" (4) life and "opens them up not only to other cultures and ways of understanding the world, but ultimately to themselves, by providing a wider spectrum of feelings, thoughts, and ways of expressing their different personas in various languages." (4)

1.6 Text choice and conclusions

To categorise the memoirs by bilingual authors that the above scholars analyse and which form the basis of my thesis, I am borrowing Alice Kaplan's term *language memoir* (coined in her innovative essay *On Language Memoir*) to describe "the genre of twentieth-century

autobiographical writing" that reveals "what is going on inside the head of the person who suddenly finds herself passionately engaged in new sounds and a new voice" (Kaplan in Bammer, 1994: 59).

In a similar way to Kaplan's *language memoir*, Besemeres (in Pavlenko, 2006) employs the term *translingual memoir* (37) to denote memoirs that represent "emotional experience [and provide] a perspective on bilingualism and emotions" (36). Kellman (2000) also uses the term *translingual memoir*, but although he discusses George Steiner and Elias Canetti, whose memoirs comply with my use of language memoir as seen above, he also includes Samuel Beckett, Joseph Conrad and Vladimir Nabokov as the "most celebrated literary translinguals of the twentieth century" (ix). Although these authors, as well as the likes of Franz Kafka and Milan Kundera, are bilingual masters of writing in languages other than their mother tongue and are included by other scholars who deal with language memoirs (see Aciman, 1999; Bammer, 1994; Beaujour, 1989; Besemeres, 2002), they do not comply with my selection of language memoirs that are written by authors who self-reflexively document their internal and external navigation from one language to another in a central way.

For my thesis, I am identifying the following selection as salient language memoirs that contain, in varying ways and degrees, the main arguments of my aim: Marjorie Agosín's *The Alphabet in My Hands: A Writing Life* (2000), Marie Arana's *American Chica: Two Worlds, One Childhood* (2005), Elias Canetti's *The Tongue Set Free* (1983), Julien Green's *Le Langage et son double* (1985), Alice Kaplan's *French Lessons: A Memoir* (1993), Gerda Lerner's *Why History Matters* (1997), Natasha Lvovich's *The Multilingual Self* (1997), Kyoko Mori's *Polite Lies: On being a woman caught between two cultures* (1997), Karen Ogulnick's *The Diary of a Language Learner in Japan* (1998), Andrew Riemer's *Inside Outside: Life between two worlds* (1992), Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory* (1982), Luc Sante's *The Factory of Facts* (1998), Ilan Stavans' *On Borrowed Words: A Memoir of Language* (2001), and Tzvetan Todorov's *Dialogism and Schizophrenia* (1996). Although Agosín's *The Alphabet in My Hands: A Writing Life* (2000) has had little literary attention (De Courtivron, 2003 and Kellman, 2003) compared to some of these memoirs, it is of great value, since it poignantly and sensitively captures key concerns of language, emotions and identity. For example, Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory* (1982) is reviewed far more substantially along with other language memoirs (Bammer, 1994; Besemeres, 2002; De Courtivron, 2003; Kellman, 2000; Pavlenko, 2005). However, although Rodriguez's memoir

contains discussions of language and emotion, I do not believe that overall it correlates as much as Agosín's text, for example, with the key concerns of my aim, since there is too much focus on contrasting public and private languages, as well as the presence of other identity-related issues such as homosexuality. Similarly, *American Chica: Two Worlds, One Childhood* (2005) has not been included in the analysis of other memoirs by these authors, but offers a useful account of living between two languages and explores metaphors of duality.

The two primary texts that I have chosen to form the core of my study are Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989) and Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South, Looking North* (1998), since, out of all the above-mentioned memoirs, they capture most comprehensively and illustrate in most detail the main themes of my thesis. *Lost in Translation* in particular has been widely analysed (Aciman, 1999; Bammer, 1994; Besemeres, 2002; Besemeres et al., 2003; De Courtivron, 2003; Kellman, 2000; Pavlenko, 2006; Rinner, 2006) and even hailed as the "single book [that] can be said to have launched the new genre of what has been termed 'language memoir'" (Besemeres et al., 2003: 1). Fundamentally Hoffman introduces the key concept of self-translation: "if I'm not to risk a mild cultural schizophrenia, I have to make a shift in the innermost ways. I have to translate myself." (211) *Heading South, Looking North* however, has not been as amply examined by literary scholars as a language memoir. Dorfman's work, in particular his novels and his plays, has been extensively explored in terms of politics, torture, violence, Latin American literature, exile literature and memory. The focus on the role of language and identity (and how this plays out in *Heading South, Looking North*) has nevertheless been reviewed by De Courtivron (2003), Eidse et al. (2004), Lesser (2005) and most fully in the work of Sophia McClennen, in particular in her essay *The Diasporic Subject in Ariel Dorfman's 'Heading South, Looking North'* (2008) and her book *Ariel Dorfman: An Aesthetics of Hope* (2010). Very pertinent insight is also provided in the brief article by Fiona Doloughan *Translating the Self: Ariel Dorfman's Bilingual Journey* (2002) in which she underlines how "language is central to our perceptions of the world around us and to the ways in which we act upon it is one of the main themes of *Heading South, Looking North*", and she fundamentally identifies how writing functions as a means of translation for Dorfman.

My selection of primary texts as well as the secondary language memoirs was not made in order to reflect a geographically balanced representation, but rather was based exclusively on

the works that most profoundly embody the main themes that I explore. I am therefore aware that there are huge geographical and linguistic gaps (all memoirs involve English and the majority the United States), but I do not believe this is a cause for concern since the issues I examine are not specific to only particular languages but rather to the more general human experience of language, identity and emotion. I am also aware that a major proportion of the authors, including Hoffman and Dorfman, are Jewish (Agosín, Canetti, Kaplan, Lerner, Lvovich, Ogulnick and Stavans), however I am not approaching these works in the context of the vast literature of Jewish displacement — rather my focus is on the broader experience of language. Nevertheless I am aware of the characteristics of the transnational, multilingual wandering Jew and view them as emphasising wider themes of exile and hybrid identity.

In conclusion, these bilingual memoirists and the scholars who have studied them capture the dilemma of living with more than one language and reveal key themes such as the feelings of duality, fragmentation, estrangement and dislocation. Although most of the studies show how these narratives "often depict second language learning as an excruciating and anguishing journey, a painful process of self-translation, in which some identities may be lost forever" (Pavlenko et al., 2004: 55), it is essential for my aim to highlight those studies which examine or even hint at (Beaujour, 1989; Besemeres et al., 2003 / 2007; Kellman, 2000; Ogulnick, 2000; Pavlenko, 2006) the rewards of self-translation and point to the (re)construction and reconciliation of the self in another language. In this way it will be shown that the process of language memoir authors translating themselves into another language involves not only loss or the substitution of one self with another, but rather entails prevailing modification and transformation.

Chapter 2
The construction of the self in autobiographical writing

2.1 Fictionalisation and authenticity in autobiographical writing

> What is it that drives people to write memoirs? How to explain the need to turn ourselves into fictional characters?
>
> (Stavans, 200: 253)

The need to express one's self is deeply linked to the desire to understand and interpret identity. In this way, the autobiography provides a fitting platform for fostering self-formation in that it traces the experiences of the self in a process of self-discovery. In order to examine the characteristics of the autobiography, it is beneficial to first attempt to define it, even though Paul Eakin points to the challenge of this task in affirming that autobiography "may well be the slipperiest of literary genres — if indeed autobiography can be said to be a genre in the first place" (Eakin, 1999: 2). It is nevertheless useful to start by considering the etymology of *autobiography*: in Greek, *autos* signifies 'self', *bios* 'life', and *graphe* 'writing' (Smith et al., 2001: 1). The word thus denotes 'self life writing' which is in accordance with standard definitions of autobiography, such as "the story of one's life written by [one's] self" (Smith et al., 2001: 1) or the "writing of one's own history" (Winslow, 1995: 3). Philippe Lejeune (*The Autobiographical Pact*, 1970) expands on these basic definitions in order to emphasise how autobiographies additionally capture the ongoing process of reflection that leads the narrator to who he or she is at a given moment: "We call autobiography the retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence when he puts the principal accent upon his life, especially upon the story of his own personality." (Smith et al., 2001: 1)

Before the term *autobiography* was introduced, expressions such as *confession* and *apology* were used (for example, Blaise Pascal's *Pensées* [1670] that appeared under the original title *Apologie de la religion Chrétienne* or Michel de Montaigne's essay *An Apology for Raymond Sebond* [1580]). Responding to a compulsion to justify and reveal oneself, *apology* "suggests a defence, or vindication, although there is also a disarming tone of humility and an

implication of frankness and honesty" (Winslow, 1995: 3), whereas *confession* "implies an acknowledgment of one's sins, faults, wrongdoings, or weaknesses" (Winslow, 1995: 3). The term *confession* is derived from the Catholic religious act of confession to a priest, but also denotes the concept of the confession of faith or conversion, as in St. Augustine of Hippo's work *Confessions*. It is, however, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782) that can be considered the first notable autobiography to initiate the genre, since it focuses not on the religious experience of the author (as does St Augustine's), but on his own life; that is, it is "the first major example of detailed secular self-examination and introspection made public" (Riley, 2007: 75). This act is revolutionary in that it suggests that individuals can explain themselves through the story of the life they have lived. It further gives importance to the individual and the lessons drawn from his introspection inspires others' own quests of self-understanding. The exponential development of the autobiography thus parallels that of individuals' awareness of their value and place in society (from the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation onwards). That is, individuals assume a central role (formerly occupied by God) as narrators who speak of themselves and their lives, revealing and assessing events which influenced them, as well as their errors which they attempt to explain or justify.

The fact that autobiographies, unlike other forms of life-writing ("an overarching term used for a variety of nonfictional modes of writing that claim to engage the shaping of someone's life" — Smith et al., 2001: 197) are written in the present, looking back, is a critical factor in distinguishing them. Unlike the journal or diary, in which a narrator regularly reports and the narration is almost simultaneous with the events, the telling of the story in the autobiography is retrospective. This gap between the present self and the narrated self of the past unavoidably leads to self-objectivising, since autobiography "requires a man to take a distance with regard to himself in order to constitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity across time" (Olney in Anderson, 2001: 5). This in turn necessitates a certain mediation of the self that entails a reconciliation of past and present selves. This is crucial to self-translation, since the gap between these selves is profoundly deepened when they are further split by a new language:

> A narrator [...] must by convention bring that protagonist from the past into the present in such a way that the protagonist and the narrator eventually fuse and become one person with a shared consciousness. Now, in order to bring a protagonist from the there and then to the point where the original protagonist

> becomes the present narrator, one needs a theory of growth or at least of transformation. (Brockmeier et al., 2001: 27)

Self-distancing and, in turn, the formation of an imagined self are therefore essential in the autobiography, which involves "an intimate reconstruction of a self that narrates himself to himself" (Cavarero, 2000: 41). Paul Eakin explains how the process of autobiographical writing therefore revolves around an act of creation and of self-invention:

> To tell one's own story is to distance oneself from oneself, to double oneself, to make of oneself an other. [...] There is, in autobiography, the strange pretense of a self that makes himself an other in order to be able to tell his own story; or, rather, of a self which, using his memory as a separated mirror in which he inseparably consists, appears to himself as an other — he externalizes his intimate self-reflection. (Eakin, 2000: 84)

This externalisation of the self can also be seen in terms of a mirror — that is, the mirror can be employed as a metaphor for the self-reflective venture of autobiographical writing. Anderson explains this comparison in relation to the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's 'mirror stage', which denotes the formation of the Ego, or an integrated sense of self, via the process of objectification or alienation from itself:

> For Lacan what he famously designated the 'mirror stage' was the founding moment for the subject and the structure through which the subject assumes his identity, as the unified image that is reflected back to him from outside, from the place of the Other. Traditional notions of the mirror were that it returned a more or less faithful likeness of an original, pre-existing self. Lacan argued that the mirror constructs the self, that what is 'known' as the self is the cohesiveness of a reflection which the subject fantasizes as real. (2001: 65)

The narrated self, being only a mirror reflection of "false symmetry" (Anderson, 2001: 66), is therefore inevitably a fictive construction. This element of fiction simultaneously points to the issue of authenticity in autobiography and questions the accuracy and objectivity of truth, "[f]or how much of what we are, what we know about ourselves, is really *true*? We are merely

a sum of viewpoints, and human memory is treacherous and inconsistent." (Stavans, 2001: 88) Firstly, autobiographical truth is always incomplete and relative in that it always involves interpretation, offering the narration of only certain chosen experiences that reflect a stage or stages in the author's development: "access to the past world is possible only through the prism of memory, which in both its conscious and unconscious modes can be faulty and irrational, placing great importance on some experiences while censoring or repressing others." (Keanneally, 1988: 23) In other words, it is the story that the author decides to tell, and one must consider how much of the "shadow"[1] and which experiences the writer is willing to expose, and therefore how accurate the portrayal of the self is: "What secrets, what virtues, what passions, what discipline, what quarrels would, on the subject's death, be lost forever? How much would have vanished or been distorted or changed, even in our memories? We tell ourselves stories of our past, make fictions or stories of it, and these narrations become the past." (Heilbrun, 1988: 51)

An additional concern in identifying the self precisely in autobiographical writing is the context in which the author is writing, which is shaped by historical, social and linguistic factors and impacts on the available cultural narratives. In considering writing as an identity-sculpting structure, it is therefore necessary to look at the role of culture and recognise how selfhood is mediated by the environment, since the story of the self always exists in relation to the environment in which the story unfolds. It can therefore be said that identity is formed at the point where "stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of a culture" (Bammer, 1994: 1574) and that "[n]arrators artfully pick and choose from what is available to articulate their lives and experiences. Yet, as they actively craft and inventively construct their narratives, they also draw from what is culturally available, storying their lives in recognizable ways." (Holstein et al., 2000: 103)

Exploring this aspect of narrative construction, Paul Eakin approaches autobiography "in the spirit of a cultural anthropologist, asking what such texts can teach us about the ways in which individuals in a particular culture experience their sense of being 'I'" (1999: 4). He underscores degree to which the story of the self is rooted in culture and how we use the models of identity provided by our society to mould our own self-awareness. Narrative

[1] C.G. Jung, 1982: 165 — see 3.1.3

identities are therefore influenced by culture and vice versa, since "if narrative forms are constituted by experience, they also shape it, for the content and form of experience are mediated by the prevailing symbolic systems in a culture, and narrative forms are prominent among them" (Eakin, 1985: 132). In other words, "[s]imply put, 'my story' can never be wholly mine, alone, because I define and articulate my existence with and among others, through the various narrative models — including literary genres, plot structures, metaphoric themes, and so on — my culture provides." (Brokmeier et al., 2001: 287) Culture therefore serves as a "narrative resource" (Holstein et al., 2000: 108) for the contextualisation and composition of the self and the writing of an autobiography becomes "a cultural act" (Eakin, 1992: 516) that unites the inner experiences of the author with the wider external experiences of his / her culture. For example, narratives can differ across cultures in terms of the "amount of evaluation offered [and the] directness of emotion description" (Pavlenko, 2005: 121) or by having "different storylines and different foci" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 40). The autobiography is then "a construct of a construct" (Eakin, 1999: 102) in that "the self is already constructed in interaction with the others of its culture before it begins self-consciously in maturity (and specifically in autobiography — where it exists) to think in terms of models of identity." (Eakin, 102: 1992)

The mediation of the self by available frameworks of identity therefore again points to the aspect of inauthenticity versus truth in autobiography. That is, "[h]ow much of what autobiographers say they experience is equivalent to what they really experience, and how much of it is merely what they know how to say, [and is there] a demonstrable difference between the psychological reality of selfhood and the linguistic articulation of that reality?" (Eakin, 1999: 4) Similarly, it is necessary to consider the influence of the prevailing opinions of the time in the documentation of history and personal stories. For example, Carolyn Heilbrun argues that up until the twenty-first century, women were denied a voice with which they could freely articulate 'masculine' traits such as anger and power, and were compelled to conceal parts of themselves: "Forbidden anger, women could find no voice in which publicly to complain" (1988: 15). This led to female autobiographies in which both "the pain of their lives [and likewise] the successes [were] muted, as though the women were certain of nothing but the necessity of denying both accomplishment and suffering." (1988: 23) Due to a lack of supporting cultural and narrative structures, the private lives of women could not be accurately portrayed in the narrative representations of their lives:

> Well into the twentieth century, it continued to be impossible for women to admit into their autobiographical narratives the claim of achievement, the admission of ambition, the recognition that accomplishment was neither luck nor the result of the efforts or generosity of others. […] Above all, the public and private lives cannot be linked, as in male narratives. (1988: 24–25)

The risk of these private aspects appearing 'unwomanly' meant that women were "deprived of the narratives, or the texts, plots, or examples, by which they might assume power over — take control of — their own lives" (1988: 17). This limited forum of expression does not concern only the narrative tone, but also language. For example, Heilbrun claims that, until consciousness levels rose in the West, women only had "male language" (40) at their disposition to tell their life stories and that these confining narratives impacted on their vision of their own identities: "Consciousness raising [...] revealed to the white, middle-class women who took part in it, that, isolated in nuclear families, they suffered individual guilt, each supposing herself a monster when she did not fit the acceptable narrative of a female life." (1988: 45)

The limitations of available cultural modes can therefore generally result in discrepancy between the actual self and the 'expressible' self, which is "necessarily mediated by available cultural models of identity and the discourses in which they are expressed" (Eakin, 1999: 4). It is consequently essential to recognise the complexity of self-construction and the manifold components involved in the formation of identity, that include not only culture but also other identity markers:

> We must keep in mind that self construction is a complex process that responds to multiple "layers" of interpretive constraint and narrative resources. While discursive practice is always local, those contingencies that are brought to bear at any particular place and time coalesce from a vast array of possibilities, including those taken from broader cultural understandings such as might be drawn from race, gender, class, and myriad other configurations of meaning. (Holstein et al., 2000: 167)

In this composite interplay of elements culture therefore provides a blueprint on which the author draws to locate and narratively sculpt himself within the autobiographical structure. It

is not, however, the only available resource, but one among others that form part of the ongoing daily task of self-construction in relation to the "resources proximately available to us." (Holstein et al., 2000: 167–168).

These considerations about the relativity of context and the self lead to the conclusion that the key aspect to consider about autobiographical truth is that it is "not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation" (Eakin, 1985: 3). Autobiographical truth is necessarily dynamic and fluid because identity itself is multi-dimensional and constantly changing, avoiding definitive definition though the continually incremental nature of experience. Eakin therefore concludes that "autobiography is better understood as a ceaseless process of identity formation in which new versions of the past evolve to meet the constantly changing requirements of the self in each successive present." (1985: 36) A coherent identity is thus a fiction, "an imaginative singularity which we call our 'self'" (Eakin, 1992: 187), and its construction reflects the interpretative nature of a performance:

> [B]oth the unified story and the coherent self are myths of identity. For there is no coherent "self" that predates stories about identity, about "who" one is. Nor is there a unified, stable immutable self that can remember everything that has happened in the past. We are always fragmented in time, taking a particular or provisional perspective on the moving target of our pasts, addressing multiple and disparate audiences. (Smith et al., 2001: 47)

Furthermore, it must be reiterated that the authentic portrayal of one's life is hindered by the process of recomposition inherent in autobiographical memory because "[o]ne's past is irrevocably lost; all attempts to duplicate it in the present are but approximations of those vanished experiences." (Kenneally, 1988: 14) The self presented in autobiography is altered by time, memory and imagination and therefore "[b]etween life and writing vast territories of utterance, incipient or unattended [sprawl], that undermine the naive notion that a life in writing is teleologically what it is claimed to be." (Lim in De Courtivron, 2003: 40) In addition, psycholinguists Schrauf and Durazo-Arvizu propose that "to remember is not to reproduce a faithful copy of a pristine original, but rather to reconstruct a mental representation of an event out of variously available and selectively chosen details […] remembering an event is a dynamic mental process — a mental reconstruction — that

combines some details that are vividly re-experienced in the moment of recall, other details that are simply known or inferred. The emotional content of memories is subject to the same recollective dynamic — some emotions are re-experienced at recall, some are simply known or inferred." (in Pavlenko, 2006: 287; 293) There is therefore always a degree of loss or, rather alteration, between the actual past and the re-interpretation of the self in the written reflections of that past reality, since "in an autobiography, you are not reading memory, but its transformation through writing." (Besemeres et al., 2003: 10)

Despite the imprecision of the remembered self and its necessarily fictive quality, the process of remembering is nevertheless valuable in itself, since through the reflective act of retrospection insight is generated and "autobiographical narratives often confer meanings on events that they did not and indeed could not possess at the time of their occurrence" (Brockmeier et al., 2001: 82). The creation of understanding is thus integral to aiding and tracing the process of (re)construction of the self and in this way the autobiographical act can be placed "in the larger context of identity formation". (Eakin, 1992: 64)

2.2 Identity sculpting in autobiography, and the Bildungsroman

> To write is to make sense of confusion in and around.
>
> (Stavans in Kellman, 2003: 125)

Given the fictional and split nature of the narrated self, Eakin suggests that autobiography in fact represents "some wish or dream of a possible unity of personality" (1985: 36). This dream indicates the sincere desire to understand and reconstruct the self which overrides the aspect of inauthenticity. This balance is encapsulated in Philippe Lejeune's Autobiographical Pact (*Le pacte autobiographique*, 1975) that pledges sincerity while recognising that autobiography is necessarily a fiction. It represents the concept of a contract between the reader and the author in which the author commits him or herself "not to some impossible historical exactitude but rather to the sincere effort to come to terms with and understand their own lives." (Eakin, 1992: 24) Eakin suggests that this commitment is evident in "the identity posited among author, narrator, and protagonist, who share the same name." (1992: 24)

Despite the fact that "both the unified story and the coherent self are myths of identity" (Smith et al., 2001: 47), the autobiography nevertheless facilitates an augmented awareness of the self, promoting "redefinition and redemption" (Stavans, 2001: 90) through the ordering of personal experiences and by establishing a history of selfhood. One of the primary traits, if not *the* defining trait, of autobiography is therefore that it is a project of self-knowing, since "making sense of ourselves is what produces identity" (Joseph, 2004: 222). Autobiographical writing can thus be seen as a "central means by which people construct identities and give their lives meaning across time" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 34) in that it validates and extends earlier phases of identity formation, serving as a metaphor for self-composition:

> [F]igures as a third and culminating phase in a history of self-consciousness that begins with the moment of language in early childhood and subsequently deepens in a second-level order of experience in childhood and adolescence in which the individual achieves a distinct and explicit consciousness of himself or herself as a self. [...] The rhythms of the autobiographical act recapitulat[e] the fundamental rhythms of identity formation: in this sense the writing of autobiography emerges as a second acquisition of language, a second coming into being of self, a self-conscious self-consciousness. (Eakin, 1985: 8)

The writing of autobiography should therefore be seen as an active phase of self-definition and "not merely as the passive, transparent record of an already completed self" (Eakin, 1985: 226). Identity is formed in life and this self is then interpreted through memory and re-constructed by the author. In this way, the selves in autobiographies are "doubly constructed, not only in the act of writing a life story but also in a lifelong process of identity formation" (Eakin, 1999: ix). In other words, establishing identity is a "life-long reflexive project of self [that] can then culminate in the creation of 'stories' or 'narratives' that explain past actions" (Côté et al., 2002: 49). Narrative construction acts as an "identity-supporting structure" (Eakin, 1999: 20) or "'second reading' of experience" (Brockmeier et al., 2001: 80) that allows the author to review, evaluate, make sense of and locate problems of identity. In other words, positioning our lives as a story throws light on our identity: "In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going. […] We determine what we are by what we have become, by the story of how we got there." (Taylor, 1989: 47–48) This engagement with narrative construction and how it parallels self-

construction is well captured in the image of a *bricoleur*, a person who creates a work using a diverse range of materials:

> [W]e engage in ordinary "biographical work" to assemble aspects of personal history that can be used to bolster present claims of and about ourselves. Our view of this process is not one of miners excavating personal histories for telling artefacts of the self. Rather, it's more the image of the bricoleur who artfully, yet accountably, assembles an interpretively useful past for the practical purposes at hand. This is more than a matter of recall or memory, because it involves the active construction of what one claims to remember. (Holstein et al., 2000: 169)

Despite the gaps in the transfer from memory, in this process of assessing the past and assembling the self, a certain coherence and "stabilizing wholeness for the self" (Anderson, 2001: 5) emerges and the new self-understanding facilitates insight into the future, that is, "the autobiographer approaches remaining experiences with a new sense of insight and purpose: exploration has given way to knowledge." (Kenneally, 1988: 19) The autobiography thus simultaneously acts as a way to meaning and in times when identity is threatened and fragile, "the autobiographical act can, then, assuage doubts about identity and counter threats to self-image." (Kenneally, 1988: 18–19) The revision of one's past self therefore reinforces present stability and offers a way to work through an identity crisis, affirming the autobiographical act as "a task of personal salvation" (Brockmeier et al., 2001: 81). This unification and stabilisation of the self is epitomised in the use of the first person — the 'I' which "bridges the gaps between who we were once and who we are today" (Eakin, 1999: ix), creating a more comprehensive and confident sense of self.

This perceived unification of the self must of course be seen in the context of identity formation as an all-encompassing lifelong process in which "the plot of one's life story is in constant revision as new and unexpected events take place that throw our understanding of past events in a new light" (Kanno, 2003: 10). Furthermore, as with autobiographical truth, it is again necessary to maintain a dynamic and relative view of identity in continual construction, that is:

> Recognizable subject positions are constructed at the axis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, generation, social status, occupation, and political and religious affiliation […]. Constantly involved in the production of selves, individuals inherit narratives, contest them, revise them, and create new ones, valorizing new modes of being and belonging and new memberships in local or national imagined communities. (Pavlenko, 2005: 197)

As previously mentioned, the notion of identity as a life-long process under constant revision is encapsulated in the *Bildungsroman*, a borrowed term that is employed in the original, often unitalicised form, signifying how the German national genre has become representative of the wider "genre of modernity" (Kontje, 1995: 112). Although the term was first used in the early 1820s by Karl Morgenstern, the most influential definition of a *Bildungsroman* was given by Wilhelm Dilthey in 1906: "A regulated development within the life of the individual is observed [...]. The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary growth points through which the individual must pass on his way to maturity and harmony." (Swales, 1978: 3)

The *Bildungsroman* is a particularly self-reflective novel embodying psychological and moral development, with the aim not only of understanding the self, but also of discovering one's niche in society. The novel centres on the inner "development of the hero toward maturation and social integration [...] when he ceases to be self-centred and becomes society-centred, thus beginning to shape his true self" (Kontje, 1995:29; 69). For example, the key text of the genre is Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1796), which traces the experiences and errors of Wilhelm until his "project of self-cultivation" (Kontje, 1995: 9) leads him to finally take responsibility for his son and to study medicine in order to serve society and provide his life with a value beyond himself.

The *Bildungsroman* encapsulates the notion of continual growth and the limitlessness of identity, since the concept of *Bildung* in German denotes education in an ongoing fashion, that is, a never-ending process. This is distinct from development or education (*Erziehung*) in that *Bildung* is a life-long process which continues until death:

> The Erziehungsroman is unlike the Bildungsroman, explicitly (and narrowly) pedagogic in the sense that it is concerned with a certain set of values to be acquired, of lessons to be learned. [...] the Bildungsroman both in theory and in practice is concerned with a much more diffuse — and therefore more general — process by which the individual grows and evolves. The word Bildung implies the generality of a culture, the clustering of values by which a man lives, rather than a specifically educational attainment. (Swales, 1978: 14)

Furthermore, the limitless development of the hero makes his growth and self-realisation a tentative evolution and in contrast to the "ready-made hero" (Kontje, 1995: 40) of most novels, the *Bildungsroman* distinguishes itself by presenting "the image of man in the process of becoming" (Kontje, 1995: 40). Meaning is found not in the end goal but rather in the progression itself: "The Bildungsroman, then, is written for the sake of the journey, and not for the sake of the happy ending toward which that journey points." (Swales, 1978: 33–34) The *Bildungsroman* similarly supports the construction of identity by encompassing the way narrative facilitates self-formation (as explored above):

> Indeed, the Bildungsromane suggest that there is an inalienable need in man to have a story, to know himself as part of that linear flow of experience [...]. In order really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others. The story, then, becomes the guarantor that one is living. Obliteration of the story may seem to promise the realization of human wholeness, but ultimately it is a wholeness bought at the unacceptable price of stasis, bloodlessness, death. (Swales, 1978: 33)

In this way, the concept of *Bildung* and the sense of self as eluding "a coherent and intact entity" (Swales, 1978: 148) are thus highly symbolic of the process of continual identity construction reflected in and supported by autobiographical writing.

A further element of autobiographical writing that centrally supports the (re)construction of the self, is its therapeutic value and the platform it provides for re-invention. These properties are captured in scriptotherapy (a term proposed by Suzette Henke), which denotes how

autobiographical writing operates as a method for self-healing and as a means to reconfiguring the self that has been disturbed by previous distress. That is, as Henke notes: "in the very act of articulation, the trauma story becomes a testimony, a publicly accessible 'ritual healing' that inscribes the victim into a sympathetic discourse-community and inaugurates the possibility of psychological reintegration" (Besemeres et al., 2003: 2). Similarly, storytelling is a particularly valuable technique for alleviating loss and separation; it is "a medium for rewriting stories of oppression and victimization into parables of self-affirmation and individual empowerment" (Besemeres et al., 2003: 8).

Deepening the understanding of the self, the autobiographical act therefore potentially serves as a therapeutic intervention that cleanses the author, altering both the story and the self: "Speaking or writing about trauma becomes a process through which the narrator finds words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable. And that process can be, though it is not necessarily, cathartic." (Smith et al., 2001: 22) For example, in a collection of interviews of German Americans whose lives have been overshadowed by the Holocaust legacy, one author makes the following comment: "Writing has often been my way of understanding, of revealing things to myself that I didn't know before." (Hegi, 1998: 31) Likewise, writer Gloria Anzaldúa, who feels split by her Mexican / American Borderland position, views her writing as a "string for the labyrinth", that is, as a way "to make sense of the divisions" and "to integrate the many selves, to understand the confusion" (Anzaldúa, 1987: *Introduction*):

> Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland, is what makes poets write and artists create. It is like a cactus needle embedded in the flesh. It worries itself deeper and deeper, and I keep aggravating it by poking at it. When it begins to fester I have to do something to put an end to the aggravation and to figure out why I have it. I get deep down into the place where it's rooted in my skin and pluck away at it, playing it like a musical instrument — the fingers pressing, making the pain worse before it can get better. Then out it comes. No more discomfort, no more ambivalence. Until another needle pierces the skin. That's what writing is for me, an endless cycle of making it worse, making it better, but always making meaning out of the experience, whatever it may be. (Anzaldúa, 2007: 95)

In language memoirs, identity confusion therefore serves as an impetus to write, and the function of language as a refuge or opening for a 'new' self takes on powerful and distinct meaning, offering the potential to remedy loss as a way to conciliate an unsettled identity. The process is double because not only does autobiographical writing present an opportunity to recreate the self, but the introduction of a new language in itself contains "possibilities for reinvention" (García, 1992: 73). Bilinguals who associate a form of anxiety and emotional memory with one of their languages (usually the mother tongue) welcome the emotional distance and liberation offered by a second language that "promises to set them free, separating them from the voices and shadows of their past" (Pavlenko, 2005: 182). Writing about childhood in a language learned later in life can be useful psychologically in "offering writers new, 'clean' words, devoid of anxieties and taboos, freeing them from self-censorship, from prohibitions and loyalties of their native culture, and allowing them to gain full control over their words, stories, and plots." (Pavlenko, 2006: 20)

Evidence of this disassociation through another language, or rather, "emancipatory detachment" (Pavlenko, 2006: 20), is found in many authors' language choices. In particular, several writers report on how abandoning their mother tongue allows them to detach from their traumatic childhoods and reflect on them in a meaningful way. For instance, Jerzy Kosinski, a Polish immigrant, writes: "English helped me sever myself from my childhood, from my adolescence." (Kosinski in Pavlenko, 2006: 20) and, similarly, in *Fugitive Pieces*, the narrator declares that "later, when I began to write down the events of my childhood in a language foreign to their happening, it was a revelation. English could protect me; an alphabet without memory" (Michaels, 1997: 101). Another clear case is Kim Lefèvre's memoir *Métisse Blanche*, the cathartic writing of which vouches for scriptotherapy by enabling the author to recognise and reconstruct her past, reconciling it with her present identity: "The narrator addresses the pain-filled memories of her early years and coalesces them into a coherent life narrative. The earlier self that had sought so unavailingly for the comfort of a recognized identity (whether Vietnamese or French) can now embrace both." (Besemeres et al., 2003: 6)

Scriptotherapy underlines the inherent aspect of self-formation in autobiography by encapsulating "a process of narrative recovery, in which the earlier fragmented, traumatized self is reformed into a whole capable of embracing a more flexible identity" (Besemeres et al., 2003: 6). Scriptotherapy is furthermore supported by the inherent qualities of written

language that make it particularly conducive to self-construction, such as the fact that it "demands conscious work and deliberate analytical action" (Kecskes et al., 2000: 16), that it can be "stored, retrieved, and recollected, and responses can be delayed [and] because it can be read and re-read at will" (Kramsch, 2009: 38), thereby cultivating reflection and providing a means of attaining greater unity. Writing, especially autobiographical writing, therefore reinforces the sense of self by raising consciousness and facilitating "disciplined self-discovery" (Arteaga, 1996: 108).

2.3 Bilingual autobiographical writing

> What is it like to write in a language that is not the language in which you were raised? […] Do you constantly translate yourself, constantly switch, shift, alternate not just vocabulary and syntax but consciousness and feelings?
>
> (De Courtivron, 2003: 1)

2.3.1 The relationship between self-translation and language memoirs

The above-examined features of autobiographical writing and how they facilitate self-construction culminate in the language memoirs that form the core framework for the exploration of my hypothesis. Before establishing my interpretation of what constitutes a language memoir, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between the terms *autobiography* and *memoir*.

The French term *memoire* was brought into England in the early eighteenth century (Winslow, 1995: 39). Like the autobiography, the memoir involves a narrator who records the events of his or her own life retrospectively and, as the etymology of the word suggests, it is concerned with extracting the essential elements from memories and reassessing oneself.

Despite such similarities and the fact that the two terms are used interchangeably in contemporary vocabulary, there are nevertheless differences. The memoir "ordinarily differs from autobiography in being less formally organized and in centering more upon social and historical background, less upon private life." (Winslow, 1995: 39) Kenneally underlines this distinguishing feature and emphasises the autobiography's characteristic portrayal of the evolution of the self:

> The focus of autobiography is, ultimately, on the shaping of an inner identity; its centre of interest is subjective experience. The materials of a memoir, however, are primarily the external occurrences in which the writer has participated — things done, events witnessed, people encountered. A memoir presents the personal, social and historical events in the author's life which have marked his journey to the present. In contrast to this, external happenings are of importance to an autobiography only when they point to a better understanding of the developing self, or provide a clearer rationale for the unique evolution of the author's current sense of identity. Unlike that of the memoir, the emphasis in an autobiography is not so much on what happened as on its personal significance. (1988: 16)

For the specific scope of research for this thesis, my use of the term *language memoir* will indicate the above-mentioned features of the autobiography and not those that typically define the memoir. That is, when employing the terms *language memoir* or simply *memoir*, I shall be signifying all the above-mentioned properties characteristic of the autobiography, since these best encapsulate the facilitation of self-construction. I am borrowing the term *language memoir* from Alice Kaplan's pioneering essay *On Language Memoir*, which denotes the "genre of twentieth-century autobiographical writing which is in essence about language learning." (Kaplan in Bammer, 1994: 59) Kaplan coined the term due to the lack of an appropriate expression for the emerging genre:

> When I began, I read as many scholarly disquisitions as I could find on language acquisition — linguistics, sociology, education — and I found methods and statistics and the occasional anecdote, but *nothing*, really, about what is going on inside the head of the person who suddenly finds herself passionately engaged in new sounds and a new voice, who discovers that

> "*chat*" not a cat at all, but a new creature in new surroundings. I wanted to see the "cat" then the "*chat*". I wanted the differences between languages to come alive in a dialogue and characterization. What I was looking for was not theory, but fiction. When I turned to fiction I found, to my delight, that there is an entire genre of twentieth-century autobiographical writing which is in essence about language learning. But it has never been categorized or named as such, either because it is discussed in terms of the history of a specific ethnic national literature, or because language is understood in these books as mere decor in a drama of upward mobility or exile. […] th[is] genre I am calling "language memoir". (Kaplan in Bammer, 1994: 59)

I am choosing this term over the generic *autobiography*, as well as over the term "cross-cultural memoirs" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 34), which, although it captures the over-lapping of two cultural worlds, lacks an indication of a specific focus on the "question of the embeddedness of thought and inner life in natural language" (Besemeres, 2002: 10), which is a pivotal element of my research. I am therefore employing *language memoir*, since I find it to be most comprehensive and precise in describing the body of literature that I am examining. I am however also choosing the term over *translingual memoir* (Pavlenko, 2006: 37) which characterises the genre equally well. This genre deals not only with the self-reflexive process of language learning, but also the self-reflexive (re)construction of the self in another language or, more specifically, the "long, painful, inexhaustive and for some never-ending process of self-translation." (Pavlenko, 1997: 86) Above all, language memoirs convey the central necessity for transition and the disorientation this provokes:

> The particular resonance between translation and displacement is amplified and made manifest in what is sometimes called the genre of language memoirs, although the texts are inevitably concerned with more than language. They are intimate stories, frequently autobiographical, of the transition between languages and cultures. Moreover, they are often tales of exile; from a culture, from a language, and sometimes from the self. They speak to the experience of outsiders seeking to understand, trying to find a way in, but always speaking in a voice not quite their own, from a place in between. Sometimes they speak of failing to belong; sometimes of not wanting to. (Besemeres et al., 2003: 1)

In accordance with my aim, language memoirs therefore provide the basis for exploring the loss of displacement, but also for investigating the positive gains that emerge from the process of self-translation. The language memoirs considered in my thesis are contemporary, autobiographical works by authors of non-English-speaking backgrounds who write in English as "language migrants" (Besemeres, 2002: 9) and whose craft is language. The authors portray not only their experience of self-translation and the challenge of "articulating in English what was first experienced in another language" (Besemeres, 2002: 12), but simultaneously "the act of observing oneself do so" (Besemeres, 2002: 12). This self-awareness is a crucial component of language memoirs that can be defined as narratives that hold the "magnifying glass" (Bammer, 1994: 60) up to language and to its relationship with the self. This process of double reflexivity is labelled by G.H. Mead as "the phenomenon of introspection which proceeds via the method of introspection — a person reflects on how he reflects on himself" (Mead in Besemeres, 2002: 12). It gives the texts a characteristically meditative quality the role of narrative in supporting the self and meaning. As discussed earlier, this type of writing also provides a way forward to self-consciousness, which thus aids the exploration and possible resolution of the identity crisis provoked by self-translation and is thus "a better forum for the exploration of the self between languages and cultures than more self-consciously philosophical or theoretical enquiries." (Besemeres, 2002: 34)

The significance of the chosen texts being contemporary (from the 1980s onwards) coincides with an increased interest in the twentieth century in the theoretical fields of enquiry into language and thought (for example, Sapir in linguistics, Lacan in psychology, Geertz in anthropology and Goffman in psychology), which paved the way for a consciousness in writers of the strong relationship between language and the formation of the self. While language migration is certainly not a new phenomenon, it has intensified dramatically due to globalisation and "unprecedented transnational migration and displacement [which are] the hallmark of the twentieth century" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 18). This phenomenon has led to "fragmented, decentered, and shifting identities" (2004: 18), which has prompted a "desire for meaning and coherence" (2004: 18) in writers who strive for a certain unity amidst the disunity.

In terms of the process of attempting to understand and locate the self, the language memoir reflects several aspects of the *Bildungsroman*, a similarity that is affirmed by Kaplan:

"Language memoirs are closest in genre to the classic Bildungsroman — the novel of education and development." (in Bammer, 1994: 69). Kaplan, however, goes on to state that "[t]he difference, in language memoir, is that it's not yourself you're growing into, but another self, perceived as better, more powerful, safer. The change in language is the emblem of a leap into a new persona." (in Bammer, 1994: 69) This statement is valid in that the mention of "persona" points to a valuable concept of adopted identity and role play (which I shall discuss later). Similarly it relates to Bakhtin's notion of the *carnivalesque,* which raises important issues of authenticity of identity and denotes the possibility of masquerading as someone else, simultaneously asking if self-translation ever puts an end to the masquerade and makes the second-language persona 'real'. However, I do not agree with the use of "emblem" which, as opposed to a symbol, indicates something immutable that is fixed in meaning. My view of the shift that takes place when the self is translated into another language rests on a far greater awareness of the complex fluctuation of identity. I likewise consider language memoirs rather to be narratives of "people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves" (Rushdie in Bammer, 1994: 233).

2.3.2 Double translation and reconstruction in language memoirs

Writing an autobiography in a language that is not the author's mother tongue raises fundamental issues of (re)construction, not only from the past to the present and from the actual self to the fictionalised self, but also from one language and all its frames of cultural reference to another. It must be considered what is it like to "create in words other than those of your earliest memories, so far from the sounds of home and childhood and origin? To speak and write in a language other than the one that you once believed held the seamless connection between words and things?" (De Courtivron, 2003: 1) Keeping in mind previously mentioned aspects of authenticity, the author of a language memoir therefore not only has to translate his / her self from one language to another, but must simultaneously navigate through the webs of time and memory. In other words:

> The enquiry is not into the given individual's earliest psychic development

> (by free reconstruction), but into the author's remembered attempt — mostly in mid-childhood or adolescence — to translate a formerly unquestioned sense of self not experienced as language-dependent, into the terms of an abruptly introduced, non-native linguistic valence. (Besemeres, 2002: 20–21)

Edward Said confirms this difficulty of replicating the self across time and language in his own memoir: "More interesting for me as author was the sense I had of trying always to translate experiences that I had not only in a remote environment but also in a different language. Everyone lives life in a given language; everyone's experiences therefore are had, absorbed, and recalled in that language." (1999: xi)

Given this complex process of attempting to relocate the remembered former self into a new language and present reality, re-establishing identity in self-reflexive writing requires compound processes of translation. Firstly, all autobiography can in fact be considered a form of translation, from childhood to adulthood, past to present:"[i]f, as L.P. Hartley famously claimed, the past is another country, it is highly likely that they speak another language there. All memory is translation." (Besemeres et al., 2003: 1) Secondly, the past is further removed by the experience of the self in another language, thus doubling the translation: "To write autobiography across languages involves two processes of translation, first of memory and second of culture." (Besemeres et al., 2003: 1)

Salman Rushdie (who writes in English, but whose first language is Urdu) similarly suggests that the writing of exiles and language migrants documents a type of double loss, since autobiography usually contains a loss from being exiled from the past and this loss is then compounded in people who have left one culture and entered another:

> It may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity. Which seems to me self-evidently true, but I suggest that the writer who is out-of-country and even out-of-language may experience this loss in an intensified form. It is made more concrete for him by the physical fact of discontinuity, of his present being in a different place from his past, of his being 'elsewhere'. (Rushdie, 1991: 10)

The distance across time and cultures creates the compulsion to reflect on and reclaim the past in

writing amidst the loss. However, the loss is largely irrecoverable and the reclaiming of the original home can only be a fiction: "[our physical alienation] means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands." (Rushdie, 1991: 10) This element in turn compounds the already fictive nature of the self in autobiographical writing and likewise the original existence of loss upon leaving childhood: "*Alle Kindheiten [...] sind imaginäre Heimaten, Fiktionen, die wir zurücklassen, wenn wir aufwachsen und erwachsen werden.*" (1999: 17)

Author Kateryna Longley similarly confirms the process of crossing from memory to fictionalised story in autobiography, and emphasises the exacerbation of loss in language memoirs:

> Autobiography is, by definition, always a story about something that has been and gone, something that is over. But the kind of autobiography I am drawing attention to has the special extra feature that there is a huge chasm between the world of the narration (the *now* of the telling) and the world of the other place, the lost home, which becomes super-charged with emotional and mythological energy precisely because it is *the place of no return.* [...] This makes cross-cultural autobiography the extreme case that illuminates the many one-way crossings that shape all narrations of self. In fact, autobiography is always a fantasy of return to a lost world. (Longley in Besemeres et al., 2003: 2)

Longley reiterates how although every story about the self contains "that same line to cross from past to present, from the old self to the new, from the self as object to the self as subject and from life as story to life as storytelling" (in Besemeres et al., 2003: 3), in stories narrated by people who have been de-centred, especially exiles and refugees, this crossing over is more dramatic, as is the sense of loss, since their world is visibly divided by the change in the geographic and cultural environment. The exile is suspended between two selves, two realities: "With their memories perpetually on overload, exiles see double, feel double, are double. When exiles see one place they're also seeing — or looking for — another behind it. Everything bears two faces." (Aciman, 1999: 13)

Longley highlights how the past assumes a magnetic pull because of its association with home and the homeland, which is linked to a stable sense of identity. However, in spite of the apparent stability that might be achieved by telling stories of the past, Longley confirms that the process of translating the self from the past to the present is, above all, a painful and somewhat unfeasible one that is characterised by a strong anxiety provoked by a loss of selfhood: "every instance of this ritualised process is an intensely personal act of self-invocation, a conjuring of an old lost self, a frozen self, into the new living reality, across an impossible chasm" (in Besemeres et al., 2003: 3). In response to the question of "[w]hat kinds of shifts must take place for a person to acquire, let alone accept, a new identity, a new language?" (Aciman, 199: 14), Longley therefore proposes that the only way for self-translation to take place is through loss, in order to make space for the new self:

> The freedom that the new world provides is precisely the freedom to manipulate at will, to conceal and reveal at will; in other words, to have the power over the autobiographical narrative — over the past as a story — that it was not possible to have over lived experience. The self there can be remade at will. And this can be done from the new space as long as that space can provide a context, an audience, that can meet the narrative half way. In other words, something needs to be conceded, given up, so that the story can take hold meaningfully in the new space. (Besemeres et al., 2003: 5)

In support of my aim, this conscious creation of a fresh, meaningful space for a new self that, like a Phoenix regenerates from the ashes of loss, alludes to the light that accompanies the loss involved in self-translation.

2.3.3 Self-translation as a resolution of crisis

The regeneration of the self in the face of loss significantly signals the possibility of the rise of certain benefits and certifies that it is indeed possible to make linguistic shifts as an adult. Despite the "*Scar Tissue*" (Firmat, 2005) from the incision of loss that marks the self-translated individual, there nevertheless appears to exist a degree of advantage in the transformation. If nothing else, these language memoirs bear testimony to "an element of

courage" (Besemeres, 2002: 278) in all the authors.

Firstly, in terms of gains, the "freedom to manipulate [identity] at will" (Besemeres et al., 2003: 5) points to the limitless potential growth of identity. Although the modification and expansion of identity can be deeply disorientating, it nevertheless offers the self a chance for development and a new, perhaps even fuller, way of being. Secondly, the way in which plunging into another language puts the self under the spotlight, provides the impelling force for writing. Joseph Conrad, one of the most renowned non-mother tongue English writers, bears witness to this stimulus by declaring: "if I had not written in English I would not have written at all." (in Lesser, 2005: 4) Similarly, the native English speaker Nancy Huston chooses to write in French because "its coolness releases her creativity" (in Pavlenko, 2005: 182) and Greek writer Nicholas Papandreou appreciates the creative access that English allows him: "I now treasure the split. English acts as a passport into unexplored territory, into the terrain of my fictional Greece, into the Greece of my memory, the Greece of my childhood." (in Lesser, 2005: 126) The fact that creativity emerges at the point where languages clash and identity is thrown into question points to the phenomenon that identity becomes particularly "interesting, relevant, and visible when it is contested or in crisis" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 19). It therefore seems that the creativity and impulsion to write language memoirs erupts from a build-up of suppressed bewilderment and estrangement:

> *La littérature vient toujours d'une faille, d'une blessure intérieure […]. Parce que si on vit pleinement heureux, on n'a pas envie de dire quoi que ce soit, puisque c'est suffisant en soi. Il faut qu'il y ait une brisure intérieure, ou une difficulté, ou un tourment pour qu'on ait envie de l'exprimer, de le dire. […] C'est souvent que les gens qui sont exilés écrivent, parce qu'ils portent une souffrance.* (Lefèvre in Besemeres et al., 2003: 3)

In addition to a surge of creativity and innovation, writing in another language can also increase the quality of writing. For example, the automation of writing in a mother tongue can limit expressive power, whereas a new language increases self-consciousness of the actual words and phrases used: "working with a strange language is an obvious way to defa-miliarize verbal expression, and the work of translinguals, more so than that of most other writers, foregrounds and challenges its own medium." (Kellman, 2000: 29–30) Furthermore, the experience of another language provides bilingual writers with a valuable double

perspective on every situation, freeing them from culturally confined narrow-mindedness. Said elaborates on how the exile has the advantage of a double perspective and that this juxtaposition fosters more balanced views: "Intellectually this means that an idea or experience is always counterposed with another, therefore making them both appear in a sometimes new and unpredictable light." (in Bayoumi et al., 2000: 378)

The propulsion to write in response to an identity crisis is in keeping with previous considerations of how the autobiographical act therapeutically facilitates the resolution of the dislocated self by offering a mode of uniting the past and the present, thereby pacifying tension and creating coherence. Driven by a need to reposition themselves, the authors generate an inner healing by writing about or, "in effect, rewrit[ing]" (Pavlenko, 1997: 83) experiences of their childhood in a language other than that in which it took place:

> This rewriting of one's life story in another language represents above all translation therapy, the final stage of the healing process, prompted by the need to translate oneself and to ensure continuity by transforming and reintegrating one's childhood into one's new past. Without this move, one would be left with an unfinished life in one language, and a life, begun at midstream, in another. The necessity of binding the two halves together prompts the authors to look into their past from a position of double displacement: in time as well as in cultural space. (Pavlenko, 1997: 83–84)

In an attempt to relocate themselves, the authors fall back on writing itself as a place of belonging where words "are the priceless buoys with which they try to stay afloat both as professional thinkers and human beings" (Aciman, 1999: 14). They create portable "textual homes" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 270) in which "writing becomes a place to live" (Said in Aciman, 1999: 114), searching for their former homelands through writing or trying to distance themselves from it: "Having chosen careers in writing, each uses the written word as a way of fashioning a new home elsewhere, of revisiting, transposing, or perpetuating the old one on paper, writing away the past the way one writes off bad debts." (Aciman, 1999: 10)

As mentioned above, the composition of language memoirs, like autobiographies, constitute an undertaking of restoration, assuming value as a tool to reposition the multilayered self:

> The need for autobiographical definition often coincides with, or follows closely upon, a crisis or a series of experiences which threatens an individual's perception of identity. [...] Feeling that identity has broken its moorings from the secure ties of the past and now floats free and isolated in a turbulent and confusing present, he attempts to trace who he has been. He turns to his past to begin the process of shoring up the self, of defining a current identity. […] As a result of self-reflection and self-analysis, connections between past selves and present identity are re-established, and others previously hidden will often emerge from the palimpsest of the past to reinforce, modify, or even challenge. (Kenneally, 1988: 18–19)

In other words, language migrants embark on a journey of autobiographical writing "to discover the relationship between what the author was and what he had become" (Kenneally, 1988: 19). Their reflections on this journey from where they started in one language to where they ended up in another have the potential to lead them out of their identity crisis and into a sphere of valuable understanding.

In addition to emphasising the hope for reconciliation, Kenneally points to two other crucial concepts. Firstly, by stating that the previous experiences of the self were only "*believed* to be understood," (1988: 18 — my italics) he raises the issue of another gain: that of the wise realisation that the previous self was not coherent. This lack of unity applies not only to the former self but also to the self that is recreated. The knowledge of the multiple, mutable self (that I shall discuss shortly) is in fact a more accurate understanding of the self (monolinguals possess only an "imagined lack of confusion about their identities and languages" — Pavlenko, 2006: 87) and thus represents an enlightened understanding.

Secondly, Kenneally's above use of the metaphor of the "palimpsest" (1998:19) points to a key element of self-translation; that is, the permeation of the past self into the present self and the overlapping of these two selves. A palimpsest is a parchment from which the writing has been scraped off and when it used again it still displays faintly visible traces of the original text: in a similar way, certain qualities of the original language may be carried over by the writers in such a way that "one can no longer talk [...] about a single linguistic consciousness. Their work achieves a certain quality of transparency: no matter which language they write in, the 'other' language shines through producing, as it were, an effect of refraction." (Savin

in Arteaga, 1996: 217) In other words, the absence or non-visibility of the original language does not necessarily mean that no inter-layering has taken place and that it does not exist in some way beneath the porous surface of the self and its written expression. The image of the palimpsest in turn corresponds to the concept of intertextuality that denotes how a text, like the self, is a permeable and multidimensional space in which meaning is constructed in relation to a layering of other texts ("We live our lives through texts [...] these stories have formed us all; they are what we must use to make new fictions, new narratives." — Heilbrun, 1988: 37). The 'old' self of the past that is conceived in the first language is transformed into the 'new' self of the present by the integration of another language. The past and present thus coexist as a palimpsest that can be scarified to reveal deeper layers that occasionally shimmer through. Conveying an idea of intratextuality, the past and present selves overlap in the same work.

I am thus endorsing the palimpsest as a symbol of the translated self: a present self submerged in a new language but with underlying traces or 'scar tissue' of the past self and original language. This symbol captures the struggle to become a clear whole in a new language and the desire for tentative reconciliation. The new text is present, but when placed directly above the original, it does not fit exactly. This lack of alignment is reflected in self-translation in that, in the process of redefining the self in a language other than that in which it was originally defined, self-translation becomes "the true test of whether a bilingual writer can ever totally coincide with himself" (Beaujour, 1989: 51). Often, the two texts do not match and remain overlapping, as is the case for writer Elsa Triolet, who found translating herself from Russian to French unnerving: "One would think that it should be easy for bilinguals to translate themselves. Not a bit! You look at yourself as though in a mirror, you try to find yourself, and you don't recognize the reflection as your own." (in Beaujour, 1989: 62) To use another metaphor to highlight the complexity of self-translation, one must similarly ask whether the umbilical cord to the original language can ever be entirely severed so as to allow free flow of the translation.

2.4 Conclusions

The characteristics of the autobiography that lie at the heart of language memoirs have shown to provide a particularly conducive platform for the exploration and resolution of the self in translation. Firstly, the fictive quality of the narrated self not only adds a further element to the experience of estrangement in a new language, but also compounds the need for translation and augments the probability of loss. That is, in order for the authors to write about their lives, they first have to imagine themselves in the past to be able to then reclaim the first-person narrative in the present. This process of self-detachment entails translation in that *I* → *he / she* → *I*, and certain gaps or alterations are inevitable in the transposition. When the self is then transplanted into another language, further fictionalisation and translation are required, since the past and the present are further separated by an inconsistent linguistic reality.

Secondly, the autobiographical act is revealed as a healing means of self-definition in the face of an identity dilemma, since autobiographies are undertaken, at least in part, to review the past, link the former self with the actual self. Autobiographies likewise support identity by underlining that it is a continual construction and an ongoing process of *Bildung*. Self-reflexive writing thus allows authors to trace their transition from one language to another and document the oscillation between losing and finding the self in translation. The elevation of self-consciousness and knowledge through writing, as well as the possibilities for self-development and increased creativity all constitute unexpected positive side-effects. This points to how the deep losses of self-translation can, to some degree, be counter-balanced by gains and is primarily a process of transformation. The self therefore undergoes a metamorphosis which in turn corresponds to the idea of identity as multiple and mutable, which I shall discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 3
The social and cultural construction of the self

3.1 The self as a continual and complex construction

> [Identity is] a never-ending, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or by choice, are engaged.
>
> (Bauman in Wierzbicka, 2007: 107)

3.1.1 Understanding identity and the self

Defining identity is a challenging undertaking, since "for over 2000 years, 'identity' has been regarded as a philosophical aporia, a problem so deep that we can hardly formulate the questions, let alone the answers" (Riley, 2007: 70). *Identity* is widely-used and ambiguous term and *self* is likewise evasive ("there is no other concept in the English language which presents so many definitional problems as *self*" — Eakin, 1992: 76). Despite the enormity of the research on the psychological study of self and identity ("More than 31,000 published papers on the self have appeared during this quarter century." — Côté et al., 2002: 72), there is still a lack of comprehensive clarification, since the concepts themselves defy definitive definition. In the knowledge that we can never ultimately fully capture the "identity of *identity*" (Joseph, 2004: 2), we can, however, establish certain principles of identity and must likewise presume that there must be certain core elements of identity in order to make operating in the world possible.

After having seen how the self is constructed through autobiographical writing, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by identity in the context of my thesis. Given that my hypothesis focuses on the transformation that the self undergoes when submerged in a new language (and culture), the clarification of the concept of a mutable, translatable self is of fundamental importance to my thesis. That is, if the formation of the self is inherently linked to socialisation within a culture, what aspects of the self, or personality, are independent of identity as a socio-cultural formation? This question leads to the examination of whether there is a core identity which remains unaltered by the language shift and can be equally expressed in both languages.

To begin breaking down identity, it is useful to assess the concept of personality. According to the author Amin Maalouf personality is equivalent to the "genes of the soul" (2003: 11), which are the unique combination in each individual of various affinities. Personality can similarly be described as "that pattern of characteristic thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguishes one person from another and that persists over time and situations" (Hull, 1990: 5). Sociologist David Riesman differentiates between *personality* and the less comprehensive term *character*, which he defines as "the more or less permanent, socially and historically conditioned organization of an individual's drives and satisfactions" (Riesman in Holstein et al., 2000: 39–40), or rather, "character represents those social aspects of personality that are learned in the lifelong process of socialization [and] there is an observable relation between a particular society and the kind of social character it produces." (Riesman in Holstein et al., 2000: 39–40) Character thus encompasses the aspects of personality that are socially conditioned, whereas personality includes the idiosyncratic features that exist independently of the social environment. For example, a person with an outgoing personality could have this trait heightened and develop the character of an extrovert in an expressive culture, whereas this same person could develop a more subdued character in a conservative, inexpressive culture. Bilingual author Andrew Riemer suggests that although one cannot discard the fundamental importance of visible cultural traits that constitute character such as manners, values and social conventions, they are not inherent like the "intimate, deeply-ingrained, essentially mysterious core of the personality which seems to be implanted very early in life — perhaps stamped on at the moment of birth, in the way that newborn babies are tagged with name-bands" (1992: 4).

In an attempt to remove the ambiguity of the often interchangeable terms *self* and *identity*, Mary Besemeres reinforces the inner quality or "inwardness" (2002: 22) of the self, which makes it particularly suitable to the experience of self-translation, as opposed to the broader, more 'external' category of identity:

> A person's 'identity' is their answer to someone else's question 'who are you?' or to the question that they are obliged to ask themselves in front of others. It is a response to a kind of pervasive societal census. 'Self' refers to a person's whole inner life, which is not exhausted by this one question; it helps to evoke what Green eloquently calls 'nôtre substance même'. […] A term

> complementary to 'self' is Todorov's use of *personnalité* for his own impression ('in my own eyes') of how he comes across to others when speaking one of his two languages. His use of the word *personnalité* captures the way in which this inward experience is nevertheless tied to the situation of communication. (2002: 21–22)

Besemeres emphasises that by interpreting the self in this way, its use is in fact equivalent to that of 'human being' (2002: 22), since the focus is "[w]ho a language migrant has been in life in his or her native tongue — the 'self' to be translated — [which] has more to do with the conceptualization of person in that language, than with the import of the English word 'self'." (2002: 22). Linguist John E. Joseph points to a similar understanding of *person* as an outer identity that is projected to others in socially defined roles, as opposed to the inner *myself*, which is who one feels to be "emotionally and affectively" (2004: 9).

Given the intimate, internal nature of personality, it is necessary to consider that each unique self is experienced subjectively, which means that self-awareness and reflection play a salient role in the establishment of the self. If the concept of the self is born in the mind out of the consciousness of one's own identity then in turn the self "has the ability to take itself as an object, to regard and evaluate itself, to take account of itself and plan accordingly, and to manipulate itself as an object in order to bring about future states." (Burke et al., 2009: 9) In this way, self-formation revolves around the analysis of one's experiences and the nucleus of the self could be seen as "a consciousness of oneself [and] the ability to be both subject and object to oneself" (Côté et al., 2002: 70). Social theorist Anthony Giddens similarly views the self as a creation through reflection, since identity "is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography." (1991: 53)

In keeping with the nature of the narrated self, the self, which is "constantly evolving [and] transforming" (Olney, 1973: 29), should therefore be conceived as an awareness in evolution as opposed to a static and uniform entity. Similarly, instead of trying to pinpoint identity with clarity and solidity, the self should rather be seen as an endless evolution[2], since "identity

[2] In the absence of a stable, endorsed identity, Said embraces this more accurate view of the self: "I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self,

formation is not available for conscious inspection as it happens. [...] We never catch ourselves in the act of becoming selves; there is always a gap[3] or rupture that divides us from the knowledge that we seek." (Eakin, 1999: x)

For this thesis, in accordance with the above stances, the terms *self* and *personality* will be employed to denote the core essence of a person's identity, as well as a self-reflexive awareness of identity negotiation. *Character* will denote the socialised facets of identity that are tied to culture. In other words, *character* can be seen as the changeable persona or mask worn by the *personality*. When analysing the reflections of how self-reflective authors transplant their selves into another language, this approach will support the contrast between what is felt to be an unchanging core versus identity as a whole, which is susceptible to the modification of certain culturally forged aspects of the self when reinvention in a new language and culture is required.

The attempt to understand exactly what constitutes the core of identity and whether it is in fact immutable is central to the hypothesis, but is a thorny task, since it can be argued that "who one is 'deep down' can never be fully captured and articulated in words" (Joseph, 2004: 1). Winslow's definition of identity as "oneness; the sameness of a person at all times or in all circumstances" (1995: 32) indicates that a person's identity maintains a sense of continuity and stability in spite of the passing of time or circumstances. However, this view is contested by other identity theories (poststructuralism and postmodernism) that consider the self to be a social construction that is in continual flux, perpetually affected by context and social interaction, and according to Erikson, by negotiating various crises throughout the lifespan that can modify identity. The validity of a malleable self (and the backbone that it provides for this thesis) shall be discussed in detail shortly. It is necessary, however, to acknowledge simultaneously that there nevertheless seems to exist some sort of fixed nucleus of identity, something that exists beneath the susceptibility to contextual change, even if it is difficult to

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the identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents [...] are always in motion." (Said, 1999: 295)

[3] This gap is amplified when the self already wavers within the gaps of loss caused by self-translation. Similarly the awareness of the process of 'becoming' is heightened through raised self-consciousness of the mutability of identity.

pinpoint the evasive underlying substance of who one really is: "*Soul* for many people is overloaded with religious connotations that distract from its core meaning. *Ego* is similarly overloaded with Freudian baggage." (Joseph, 2004: 1–2) Regardless of what precisely constitutes a core identity, its existence is essential, if for no other reason than to provide a stable point of departure from which to operate in the world, even if it is a fiction of perception. This point of reference assumes particular value in the process of self-translation, since it provides some sort of anchor in the midst of estrangement.

Bilingual author Lvovich suggests that the heart of the self is "the essence of a person behind languages and cultures" (1997: 81). However, this is problematic because firstly, as shall later be shown, the self is deeply tied to its cultural manifestation, and secondly, allegiance to the original culture can act as a point of identification and basis for functioning. For example, bilingual linguist Anna Wierzbicka strongly identifies with the Polish culture she was born into: "In my case at least it would be absurd to say that there is no 'inherited identity' [...] I believe that there is also in me, by necessity and by choice, a stable core of Polishness." (2007: 108) The point of reference need not necessarily be a country, but could rather be an emotional space, such as the sensation of feeling at home or the original experience of personality. It could also be found in the basics —, that is, even though "each individual's identity is made up of a number of elements, and these are clearly not restricted to the particulars set down in official records" (Maalouf, 2003: 10), in the midst of identity confusion one can always cling to the unchangeable facts, such as the circumstances of birth or a name, in order to create a working core. A name can be particularly useful and is considered to be the "most emotional of all words" (Pavlenko, 2005: 187) and even "the primary meaning of identity [since] if someone asks 'Who are you?', the answer they expect is your name." (Joseph, 2004: 11) A name is of course susceptible to modification in another language, but when the self is translated, the original name in the first language still holds the power to summon the deeper core self: "a name was as much a part of one as a limb. Even after amputation, its ghost survived. The nerves continued to feel pain in areas that no longer existed." (Turner, 1990: 128) Bilingual writer Luc Sante vouches for the power of this identity marker: "Today, when someone addresses me as 'Luke' I respond without a second thought; when I hear 'Luc' I jump as if I'd gotten an electric shock. Even though I know better, I feel as if someone had just looked down into my naked soul." (Sante, 1998: 284)

3.1.2 The multiplicity of the self and its social construction

The idea of an unvarying nucleus of identity is contrasted with the fragmented self, a self that, as mentioned above, is in continual evolution and fluctuates in relation to context, language, culture and society. It is therefore necessary to assess to what degree an individual is moulded by social context, as opposed to possessing an innate essence. This duality is at the heart of self-translation, which is only viable due to the self being not only multiple, but above all a perpetual, potentially expandable and mutable construction.

The key recognition that "identities are robustly plural" (Sen, 2006: 19) and "we are, each of us, comprised of a virtual infinity of selves" (Arteaga, 1996: 109) is now mostly accepted among psychological anthropologists, social psychologists, linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists (Koven, 2007: 4). In the 1890s Austrian philosopher and physicist Ernst Mach (the godfather of logical positivism) declared that "*Das Ich ist unrettbar*, literally, the *I* is unsavable, that is, unreal" (Blackmore, 1972: 155). Mach denies the self and affirms that it is misplaced to try to fix identity to one place, since the 'I' is merely a feeling of identity made up of particles of emotion. Following Mach, identity as a whole entity is none other than "a delusion of completeness" (Dorfman in De Courtivron, 2003: 31). It is misconceived to see identity as "something deeply rooted and unchanging" (Boli et al., 2005: 146); instead, it is constantly in flux, "mobile and transient" (Bagnall et al., 2005: viii). Recent postmodernists and poststructuralists point to this same multiplicity and splits in identity, underlining that they are formed at "the interstices of multiple axes, such as age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation, and social status, whereby each aspect of identity redefines and modifies all others" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 16). This denial of the unified self is supported by Jacques Derrida (the founder of deconstruction, 1930–2004) and philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984):

> For Derrida and Foucault, the idea of a unified self, even if self-constructed, misses the point that identity is a function of difference. Lacan offers, in opposition to Weber and Freud, a self without unity. Foucault, Lyotard, and Derrida agree with Lacan's movement away from a unified self [...] they define the self as multiple, not fixed, and always under construction with no

> overall blueprint. The various multiplicities that constitute the self at a given time are involved in play and dance with each other. (Côté et al., 2002: 41)

A further aspect born out of the fractured self is the more recent identification of hybrid identities, a concept that recognises the "fragmentation, de-centering, multiplicity, and shifts" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 17) of an emerging identity that exists in a 'third space' that accommodates alternative identity options. The term "cultural hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994: 5) was coined by Homi Bhabha to denote a place of cultural displacement and coincides with Edward Soja's concept of the 'third space' in signifying a place of transnational fields of tension or the "interstitial passage between fixed identifications" (Bhabha, 1994: 5). For example, this state of dislocation is commented on by bilingual writer M.J. Fitzgerald: "I cannot enjoy the solidarity of belonging to a group, because I cannot say I am Italian here [...] I cannot even say I am English here [...]. Nor can I say or think of myself as American, because I am not. I have to live straddling the three cultures I have absorbed." (Lesser, 2005: 141) Those who inhabit more than one cultural space hover in an in-between space since, due to the consciousness of a new space, they cannot return harmoniously to the original space, yet, they simultaneously cannot fully inhabit the third space without the knowledge of the first space. After having experienced a new realm both consciousnesses therefore exist within and collide:

> *Depuis toujours, le moment du retour est un pivot particulièrement marquant, un point archimédien pour la constitution ou la reconstruction de ce qu'on appelle « identité », à défaut d'une meilleure notion. Chaque recherche d'un lieu jadis connu ou à demi oublié, chaque retour vers lui est un saut dans l'abîme. Dans l'abîme de la perception, de la perception de soi-même. […] Le monde, autrefois si familier, apparaît sur l'arrière-plan des souvenirs. La réalité retrouvée refuse de s'intégrer dans l'ensemble des categories de perception, des valeurs et des normes récemment acquises*. (Wertheimer in Rinner, 2006: 181–182)

This thesis does not deal with cultural hybridity and the dilemma of homogenous national cultures as such, however, the discussion of cross-cultural experience provides very helpful insight for the hypothesis and the use of the terms denotes a valuable state of multiplicity. Firstly, the notion of hybridity emphasises the principal predicament of the self that has

departed from the original language / culture and is never again able to feel[4] entirely whole, since like the palimpsest, the underlying original consciousness can never be entirely erased. Secondly, hybridity offers a means of reconciliation to those caught between two worlds. The third space becomes a home in itself, even if it is a home of in-betweens: "I invest my psychic energies in a series of (dis) and (re)locations that allow me to live in […] this 'alien element', which is, and always has been, "not comfortable but home" (Hirsch in Bammer, 1994: 88).

Furthermore, in accordance with my aim, it is necessary to point out the positive angle of hybridity. In spite of the distress of not having a fixed home or sense of belonging, hybridity can nevertheless potentially prove positive in that it offers a wider vantage point. For instance, "[h]ybrids have a specific resource available to them: a range of values, experiences, traditions, which are different from others that circulate in their heads and in the heads of those with whom they mix. That can be enriching both to them and those who meet with them." (Krygier in Besemeres et al., 2007: xviii) The comparison with the original culture exposes the ethnocentric views of one's own culture as being 'normal' as in fact being merely relative and thus the provides an opportunity for heightened self-awareness and personal discovery, since "until he experiences another self as valid, he has little basis for validating his own self." (Hall, 1989: 213) In other words, "[a] fish that has never left its water never knows what water means to it. A fish that has never returned to water will never know the impact of the water on it." (Ye in Besemeres et al., 2007: 68). Craig Storti elaborates:

> At home we are rarely prompted to reflect on our cultural selves […] Once we encounter another frame of reference, however, we begin to see what we never could before. [..] We only notice a difference (something unusual) in reference to a norm or standard (the usual) and that norm we refer to is invariably our own behavior. Thus it is that through daily contact with the customs and habits of people from a foreign culture, our attention is repeatedly focused on our own customs and habits, that in encountering another culture, we simultaneously and for the first time encounter our own. (Storti, 2002: 111–112)

[4] I use *feel* instead of *be* to emphasise the relativity of wholeness of identity.

Bilingual writers confirm this phenomenon of enlightening comparison. For example, Russian / Australian writer Anna Gladkova makes the following observation: "As I learned about other cultures [...] I understood that there are no right or wrong ways of speaking — other norms are just different, but as humans we develop an attachment to the ones we grow up with and then tend to consider them to be the best." (in Besemeres et al., 2007: 141) Immersion in another culture and the double perspective that emerges from the experience not only creates an awareness of other ways of being, but can also fuel a curiosity to learn more about how others experience the world, which can hopefully generate increased understanding of, and consequently tolerance of, different cultures. For example, through exposure to two cultures, Korean / Australian writer Kyung-Joo Yoon has learnt that "there is diversity in what people believe is good and bad" (in Besemeres et al., 2007: 127). Hybridity is therefore viewed not as a negative in the sense that it is a state of being 'neither nor', but rather in a way that it represents a self that is 'not only but also'.

To return to the interplay of a core self and a fragmented identity, the multiplicity of the self can be accounted for through the escalating generation of non-innate facets of identity. Maalouf affirms that identity isn't a comprehensive and fixed entity at birth, and aims to show that it is rather an incremental process that incorporates every step of experience throughout a lifetime[5]:

> Sometimes, after I've been giving a detailed account of exactly why I lay claim to all my affiliations, someone comes and pats me on the shoulder and says "Of course, of course — but what do you really feel, deep down inside?" [...] It presupposes that "deep down inside" everyone there is just one affiliation that really matters, a kind of "fundamental truth" about each individual, an "essence" determined once and for all at birth, never to change

[5] Peter Cowley similarly notes that "[t]here is no neatly packaged, homogeneous, unified thing called Canadianness (or Frenchness, or whatever) which is given, as though a birthright, to native speakers, and denied to the immigrant except insofar as s/he might strive to emulate it. Culture [...] is not a uniform thing, but a process of continual discovery." (Cowley in Besemeres et al., 2003: 7) Identity is thus a cumulative creation on multiple levels.

> thereafter. As if the rest, all the rest — a person's whole journey through time as a free agent; the beliefs he acquires in the course of that journey; his own individual tastes, sensibilities and affinities; in short his life itself — counted for nothing. (Maalouf, 2003: 2)

The cumulative construction of the self suggests (from a sociological viewpoint) that identities are neither constant nor whole since they "are not formed ex nihilo [but] are the product of social interaction." (Riley, 2007: 16) Identity is therefore comprised not only of self-understanding but also by the meanings of one's self in the eyes of other people, which implies that the self is manifold, since it is continually changing according to its position vis-à-vis others: "The 'I' can respond to many 'me's': among them the me of yesterday, tomorrow, several minutes ago, the me of the immediate present, and the me in general. In face-to-face situations, persons respond to various facets of themselves and their performances." (Strauss, 1997: 59) As beings within a societal matrix, the unitary self is exposed as an illusion which leads to the destabilisation of identity (this disunity is clearly magnified when another factor, a new language, is introduced). The struggle for a steadfast identity is increasingly challenging since "ordinary people nowadays [...] confront diverse situations, are subjected to so much social input, play so many social roles, and offer so many situated, false selves, that we have trouble discerning who we really are." (Holstein et al., 2000: 49) Similarly, "[a]s humans we are constantly organizing and reorganizing our sense of who we are and how we relate to the social world. As a consequence, our feelings, desires, and emotional investments, including language investments, are complex, contradictory, and in a state of flux." (Pavlenko, 2005: 225)

Given that individuals do not exist in a vacuum, but are always (despite very rare exceptions) part of some type of society, our identity is therefore unavoidably linked to other people because "[w]e are all social creatures. No matter how hard we try to draw on the inner sources, we still need other people to tell us who we are. With them and through them, we receive and give social information, learn about and reinvent ourselves." (Lvovich, 1997: 69) It could even be said that society and the structures of its consciousness seep into our inner selves. Our beliefs and behaviour will always exist in connection to the world around us: "[a]ccepting whatever comes down the social pike, the self responds to the weight of others' expectations. It is the view of a self that wants desperately to live up to others' sense of who

and what it is." (Holstein et al., 2000: 10) Other people's perceptions of ourselves are thus integral to the formation of our identities:

> *Les réaction des autres nous apprennent ce que nous sommes pour autrui […] les autres provoquent en nous des réactions qui nous dévoilent notre personnalité […] en observant les autres nous leur trouvons avec nous des similitudes ou des différences qui nous permettent de prendre conscience de la valeur de ce qui aurait pu nous paraître, en nous, particulier ou négligeable.* (Bénac, 1988: 100)

It is useful to take a step back and briefly address the origins of this social conception of the self. This view was born along with the self of modern social psychology and is rooted in the work of the American Pragmatists William James, Charles Horton Cooley and, perhaps most significantly, George Mead. The birth of the social self followed a rupture with the way it had previously been perceived in the European Enlightenment as an "idealized, abstract platform from which concepts and judgements emanated" (Holstein et al., 2000: 4), and thus as a self that transcended society. James, Cooley and Mead rejected this view and presented a new vision of "a social self derived from, formed by, and changing with everyday life." (Holstein et al., 2000: 17)

James gave prominence to the multiple self by recognising the impact of other people's impressions of the self; that is: "A man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind." (Holstein et al., 2000: 20) Similarly, Cooley proposed the acclaimed concept of the 'looking-glass self': as in a mirror, people see themselves reflected in others' reactions to themselves and these assessments play a major part in understanding and moulding who we are. Mead (1934) then further entrenches the standpoint that the self is fundamental a social construction that emerges out of social experience. According to Mead, in order to assume the perspectives of others and in turn become self-aware, individuals must first participate in social acts. By taking on the roles of other people, they learn to see themselves as others see them: the standpoint of others provides a platform for getting outside oneself and viewing oneself as others do" (Holstein et al., 2000: 53), and it is through internalising these conceptions that the self develops. Mead therefore concludes that, being largely a social construction, the self "normally divides into

different selves [and] if the self has unity, it is a unity derived from patterns of experience with others." (Holstein et al., 2000: 30)[6]

Given that there are therefore "as many versions of you out there as there are people whose mental space you inhabit" (Joseph, 2004: 8), the self's multiplicity is in fact two-fold, since not only do we assume various roles in relation to different people and situations, but we also exist as different selves according to how we are perceived by others, and they too exist partly in according to our appraisal of their selves. Identity is therefore linked to the evaluations we make of ourselves as well as those that others make of us: "Everyone presents himself to the others and to himself, and sees himself in the mirrors of their judgments. The masks he then and thereafter presents to the world and its citizens are fashioned upon his anticipations of their judgments." (Strauss, 1997: 11)

The previously mentioned notion of wearing masks stems from the view that "[p]eople possess multiple identities because they occupy multiple roles,[7] are members of multiple groups, and claim multiple personal characteristics" (Burke et al., 2009: 3). For example, a woman could alter role according to context from a mother to a wife to an employee to a friend and so forth. Thus the idea of wearing a mask is equivalent to the idea of assuming a persona (persona means "mask carrier" in Greek — Stavans, 2001: 249), and like Bakhtin's concept of the *carnivalesque* (see 2.3.1), is extremely useful when considering a life between languages since "[c]hanging languages is like imposing another role on oneself, like being someone else temporarily" (Stavans, 2001: 249).

[6] Although the social construction of identity is mostly attributed to these pragmatists and to postmodernism, it is in fact also present in the writing of South African prime minister Jan Christiaan Smuts in 1927: "My very self, so uniquely individual in appearance, is [...] largely a social construction. [...] I would never come to know myself and be conscious of my separate individual identity were it not that I become aware of others like me: consciousness of other selves is necessary for consciousness of self or self-consciousness. The individual has therefore a social origin in experience." (Smuts in Joseph, 2004: 8)

[7] Similar issues of changing societal roles are explored by Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, 1959.

A good source of arguments when examining the concept of masks is the work of Sicilian author and playwright Luigi Pirandello (1867–1936). According to Pirandello, we have no true essence or personality, but consist of a collage of roles dictated by society; we are victims of these roles and are unable to liberate ourselves from their oppression: "*L'uomo, se si osserva, s'accorge di essere chiuso dentro una «forma», di rappresentare nella vita una «parte», che si è assunta attraverso le proprie abitudini ed il proprio lavoro, oppure che dall'ambiente, dalla società, dalle contigenze della vita è stata sovrapposta alla sua personalità.*" (Panozzo, 1996: 315) According to Pirandello, we are therefore never able to know our selves entirely, since each one of us is *Uno nessuno centomilla* (1926). This theme is exemplified in Pirandello's play *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (1921): "*Ciascuno di noi [...] si crede «uno» ma non è vero: è «tanti», signore, «tanti», secondo tutte le possibilità d'essere che sono in noi: «uno» con questo, «uno» con quello — diversissimi! E con l'illusione, intanto, d'esser sempre «uno per tutti», e sempre «quest'uno» che ci crediamo, in ogni nostro atto. Non è vero!*" (Pirandello, 1965: 57)

This inconsistency of the personality leads us to question which of the many selves we display is actually real, or, if there is one true core self at all. We can sometimes see ourselves acting in a way we do not even approve of and that is contradictory to a deeper part of ourselves. Likewise, in a crisis situation we do not know which facet of our selves will emerge as dominant, thereby confirming that the self possesses no lasting reality: "*L'uomo, pertanto, non conosce bene sé stesso, né sa essere sé stesso: dal suo subcosciente sorgono, improvvisamente, a guidare e a dominare la sua vita, a modificarla, nuovi sentimenti, nuove forze: sicché nel corso della vita egli diviene di continuo diverso da quello che è, diverso da quello che pensa di essere.*" (Panozzo, 1996: 316) A complete, authentic self is evasive and can exist only in art, which demonstrates itself as superior to life since only theatrical characters have the possibility of being true to themselves through the awareness of their performance: "*a essere vivi, più vivi di quelli che respirano e vestono panni! Meno reali, forse; ma più veri!*" (Pirandello, 1965: 33)[8]

[8] Later it shall be discussed how bilinguals experience the inauthenticity of performance in a second language, but how in fact the awareness of their selves as changeable signifies a 'truer' way of being.

Not only the self, but also life itself is continually changing, and this contrast between life that is always in a state of flux and human beings who try to construct order and define identity causes internal conflict. That is, "[l]ife and form are irretrievably at odds, and man suffers from his failure to reconcile them." (Thompson, 1985: 26) Our realities are forever changing and this provokes difficulties in grasping our identities: "*Tutta la sua realtà d'oggi così com'è, è destinata a parerle illusione domani [...]. La sua realtà può cangiare dall'oggi al domani.*" (Pirandello, 1965: 107) Pirandello's conviction is therefore that the expectations of society trap us in a layering of masks that veil the self in impenetrable personas:

> *L'uomo inoltre constata di non essere neppure capace di capire sé stesso, di non avere una personalità determinata. La forma in cui vive è infatti soltanto una «maschera» sotto la quale si agita una mutevole richezza di possibilità diverse che possono sfociare in più direzioni. Di fronte all'«io» cosciente esistono difatti altri aspetti del proprio «io» che l'uomo non conosce.*
> (Panozzo, 1996: 316)

This lack of a fixed identity and the inability to fully understand the self in turn leads man to a sense of alienation.

3.1.3 Estrangement and identity crisis

When considering the lack of self-understanding, it is pertinent to look at the psychological concept of Carl Jung's theory of 'collective unconscious' and the 'shadow'. Jung (in contrast to Sigmund Freud) distinguishes the immediate personal unconscious, which is a thoroughly personal accumulation of experiences unique to each individual, from the deeper collective unconscious. This second, deeper layer of the unconscious is collective and impersonal in that it does not develop individually, but rather it is present from birth because it predates the individual and is inherited from man's ancestral past. These deep structures of the psyche take the form of archetypes, innate and generally universal patterns that represent, and to some extent dictate, human experience and behaviour. As Jung puts it, "[w]hereas the contents of the personal unconscious are acquired during the individual's lifetime, the

contents of the collective unconscious are invariably archetypes that were present from the beginning." (1982: 165) Archetypes can likewise be described as a universal datum archive of religious and mythological experiences that acts as the foundational formation of personality on which the personal unconscious is built. The shadow represents the relative evil of man's nature and is one of the archetypes that has "the most frequent and the most disturbing influence on the ego" (Jung, 1982: 165). However, facing the disowned aspects of the self that the shadow represents is essential for achieving an understanding of the self. Jung explains:

> The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. Indeed, self-knowledge as a psychotherapeutic measure frequently requires much painstaking work extending over a long period.[9] (1982: 165)

It is necessary for us to have a shadow since we cannot be everything that it would be possible for us to be and we need to select which aspects of ourselves to express to society. The shadow lingers in the unconscious, merging or being assimilated with only certain aspects of the conscious personality whereas other traits firmly resist influence and moral control. These uncontrollable unconscious elements overpower the individual's personality:

> It is often tragic to see how blatantly a man bungles his own life and the lives of others yet remains totally incapable of seeing how much the whole tragedy originates in himself, and how he continually feeds it and keeps it going. Not consciously, of course — for consciously he is engaged in bewailing and cursing a faithless world that recedes further and further into the distance. Rather, it is an unconscious factor which spins the illusions that veil his world. And what is being spun is a cocoon, which in the end will completely

[9] The emergence of self-knowledge through the painful confrontation with the shadow points to the positive heightened self-awareness that arises from the disturbing loss involved in self-translation, which shall be discussed later.

envelop him. (1982: 167)

In addition to the existence of a shadow within the self, another effect of the struggle to understand both the self and others, is the removal of individuals into a shadow which is the periphery of society. Not identifying with the group removes individuals from others and establishes them as outsiders. This phenomenon of a lack of understanding and a profound sense of alienation is characterised by the philosophy of existentialism that questions whether life is actually worth living and reveals the world's absurdity, which is confirmed by death. The movement of Existentialism (that emerged during and immediately after the Second World War) stems from the German philosophy of Martin Heidegger (*Being and Time*, 1927) and Karl Jaspers (*Philosophy*,1932), but evolved with Sartre, who systematised their thoughts in *L'Être et le Néant* (1943), rejecting all transcendence and affirming that nothing validates human existence. Through the other's distancing *regard* the human being finds himself a victim to self-alienation. Camus elaborates on this sense of estrangement in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942), in which he declares that, in a universe lacking light, man feels marginalised: "*Ce coeur même qui est le mien me restera à jamais indéfinissable. Entre la certitude que j'ai de mon existence et le contenu que j'essaie de donner à cette assurance, le fossé ne sera jamais comblé. Pour toujours je serai étranger à moi-même.*" (Camus, 1999: 34)

Heidegger similarly introduces the existential problem of the call of the herd: we are all individuals yet simultaneously want to belong, which creates the struggle of a continual negotiation of one's place in society. This concept underlies the paradox of identity in that "on the one hand, identity is about 'sameness' (its etymological root) [...] on the other hand, identity is about who one is uniquely" (Heidegger in Joseph, 2004: 37). Adopting a new language therefore signifies the desire behind attempting to join a new herd or culture, since in order to belong to a society it is necessary to identify with others and to partake in shared beliefs and behaviour: "We learn not for the abstract goal of attaining knowledge, but in order to participate in communities where we wish to become a member." (Kanno, 2003: 12)

When switching language and culture wider existential feelings of alienation are thus dramatically heightened. The already only partially filled "*fossé*" is further emptied, and in being unable to fully understand the cultural nuances of the unfamiliar society, a

linguistically divided individual automatically relocates to the periphery.[10] Stripped of his / her point of reference, the individual is therefore doubly estranged from his / her self. Nevertheless, from this experience of being 'othered', displaced individuals can, over time, make the transition to integration and reconciliation. However, the crucial question is whether they make this shift in a superficial way (by learning the language and becoming familiar with cultural know-how), or whether the switch in order to merge into the current cultural context requires a deeper identity change or even a modification of their personality. This brings us back to the debate between what constitutes an unchangeable core identity and to what degree this is shaped by the cultural environment. In essence, it is a case of the nature / nurture debate in that it deals with evaluating the extent to which the self is comprised of innate qualities (— nature) or personal experiences (— nurture), which will be discussed later.

Alienation from the self and society thus constitutes unsettling distress for one's identity. In order to better understand this experience it is necessary to look at developmental psychology, more specifically, at Erik Erikson, a psychoanalyst who deeply altered perceptions of human development) and notably coined the term *identity crisis*. For Erikson, the core of identity is rooted in the interplay between the social and the psychic; that is, a person requires a viable social identity, the development of which constitutes "the major psychosocial task linking childhood with adulthood" (Erikson in Côté et al., 2002: 14). People forge a sense of ego identity based on role validation and community integration in a particular culture; in other words, the "self is viewed to comprise a number of 'specific' selves, each of which more or less corresponds to social roles played by the individual. These role-specific selves develop on the basis of learning and repeated experience across similar circumstances." (Côté et al., 2002: 106)

[10] A life on the periphery is documented in Edward Said's memoir *Out of Place* (1999) which is overshadowed by the theme, epitomised in the title, of "alienation" (206), "feelings of isolation" (177) and of being "a shameful outsider" (137). Said's "alien, insecure, and highly provisional identity" (135) is characterised by his "overriding sensation [...] of always being out of place" (3) and of being "a marginal spectator" (139). He laments "the desolation of being without a country" (119) and of "being a non-Egyptian of uncertain, not to say suspicious, composite identity habitually out of place, and representing a person with no recognizable profile and no particular direction." (61)

This view of identity creation can also be seen in terms of three dimensions: the subjective psychological dimension or a sense of self-sameness over time; relationships between the self and others that support the stability of personal and social identities; and the stability of relations in a community. Discontinuity in these realms threatens the stability of identity and can cause distress, resulting in an identity crisis during the transition from childhood to adulthood. As Côté and Levine summarise, for Erikson "these components need to come together during the identity stage, and when they do not, or as they are doing so, an identity crisis is evident. Such an identity crisis is characterized by a subjective sense of identity confusion, a behavioural and characterological disarray, and a lack of commitment to recognized roles in a community." (2002: 15) Erikson first emerged with the concept of an *identity crisis* during the Second World War in order to describe severely traumatised war victims who no longer recognised themselves as having a past and future —, that is, these patients had lost their sense of self-stability over time, causing acute identity disorientation. After the war, Erikson witnessed the same symptoms in profoundly confused young people, in particular delinquents and rebels who waged war internally on themselves an externally on their society. Erikson therefore defines the identity crisis as "a period during which an individual's previous (childhood) identity is no longer experienced as suitable, but a new identity is not yet established" (Côté et al., 2002: 95). This period is during the identity stage of adolescence, during which the individual struggles to validate identity. As Erikson confirms: "[a]s long as the establishment of identity is incomplete a crisis exists which, in its conscious and unconscious aspects, amounts to an identity-confusion" (Côté et al., 2002: 95). Furthermore, Erikson affirms that some form of an identity crisis, even if only very mild, is always present for all young people in the development stage of adolescence. A similar conception is held by Edward Said who identifies adolescence as a time of identity crisis, since it is "that period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working unity, out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood; he must detect some meaningful resemblance between what he has come to see in himself and what his sharpened awareness tells him others judge and expect him to be." (Said in Bayoumi et al., 2000: 28)

In keeping with Erikson's explanation of an identity crisis as a form of extreme de-centering, philosopher Charles Taylor suggests that the crisis arises from a state of disorientation. Taylor equates identity to an orientation within a moral space and to knowing where you are coming from so that "[a] human being exists inescapably in a space of ethical questions: she

or he cannot avoid assessing himself or herself in relation to some standards." (in Côté et al., 2002: 178) In turn, identity dilemmas emerge when the self is jolted out of this moral space and loses its frame of reference:

> People may see their identity as defined partly by some moral or spiritual commitment […] Or they may define it in part by the nation or tradition they belong to […] What they are saying by this is not just that they are strongly attached to this spiritual view or background; rather it is that this provides the frame within which they can determine where they stand on questions of what is good, or worthwhile, or admirable, or of value. Put counterfactually, they are saying that were they to lose this commitment or identification, they would be at sea, as it were; they wouldn't know anymore, for an important range of questions, what the significance of things was for them. And this situation does, of course, arise for some people. It's what we call an 'identity crisis', an acute form of disorientation, which people often express in terms of not knowing who they are, but which can also be seen as a radical uncertainty of where they stand. They lack a frame or horizon within which things can take on a stable significance, within which some life possibilities can be seen as good or meaningful, others as bad or trivial. The meaning of all these possibilities is unfixed, labile, or undetermined. This is a painful and frightening experience. (Taylor, 1989: 27)

This view of identity and crisis provoked by disorientation is vital for my aim, since being uprooted from the language in which one has formed one's sense of self is profoundly bewildering and requires a re-positioning or rather translation into a new cultural linguistic context. It is also further relevant in terms of the heightened consciousness and possibility of growth which it elicits that potentially counterbalances the loss. Edward Said explains that the critical aspect of Erikson's definition is the self-awareness of those who are emerged in the crisis: "The identity crisis solicits above all a recognition of disruption. And to have this recognition one needs a very clear idea that something has been left behind in order that a new development based on a stronger identity might become possible." (Bayoumi et al., 2000: 29)

The idea of an identity dilemma as being provoked through a lack of a fixed point of reference is emphasised by Anthony Giddens, who shows how the predicament of maintaining identity has been further heightened due to conditions affiliated with late modernity, which have "undercut traditional habits and customs, [thereby dramatically changing] the nature of day-to-day social life [and influencing] the most personal aspects of our experience" (Giddens in Côté et al, 2002: 42). He contrasts pre-modern / traditional cultures where identity was strongly mediated by limited choices outlined by customs and traditions, with modern / post-traditional cultures where identity options are less restricted. This openness demands far more analysis and reflection on the part of individuals, and society thus becomes more reflexive.

In pre-modern cultures identity situations were more stable which made it easier to identify an identity change, such as the passage from adolescence to adulthood. In a modern context, however, the self has to contend not only with inner change but simultaneously take into account surrounding social change:

> For most of human history, forming an adult identity was by all accounts a relatively straightforward process. The average person simply assumed and fitted into the culturally prescribed roles that his or her parents and grandparents had themselves adopted. […] As humans have attempted to adapt to modern and late modern forms of social organization, where choice has replaced obligation as the basis of self-definition, identity formation has become a more difficult, precarious, and solitary process for which many people are unprepared in terms of their phylogenetic background. (Côté et al., 2002: 1)

Giddens therefore claims that in post-traditional culture, identity is not static or inherited but rather a reflexive process that involves an individual negotiating through life as a strategist, continually reflecting on his / her actions and constantly constructing. That is, the process of identity formation "now involves an individualized 'strategy' that may be carefully and consciously planned or may be part of a continual struggle with one's inner conflicts and re-sources, or lack thereof " (Côté et al., 2002: 3). Sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas likewise underlines the challenge to identity that modern society brings. Habermas affirms that in traditional societies, "[u]pbringing and participation in social practices allow people to acquire the identities and motivations appropriate to the roles and duties that society's

institutions require in order to function smoothly." (Habermas in Finlayson, 2005: 106) In modern societies, however, "they have no controlling centre and are not held together by any single overarching tradition, world view, or set of rules" (Finlayson, 2005: 106), which allows for the development of more flexible, abstract identities that do not primarily identify with societal roles, such as a mother, son or citizen. This view leads to Habermas' belief that identity, which is moulded in relation to cultural values, is continually under construction and constantly requires management in relation to the prevailing social reality. In other words, the self is not only something we are or "not only a 'social structure', as George Mead put it, but also a valued social construction, reproduced time and again in everyday life" (Holstein et al., 2000: viv). This view is similarly affirmed by cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who argues that identity is "a 'production' which is never complete, always in process" (Hall in Smith et al., 2001: 34).

3.2 Culture as a "tool kit" of interpretative resources for the self

> In forming our sustaining sense of self, we draw on models of identity provided by the cultures we inhabit.
>
> (Eakin, 1999: 46)

When discussing the social formation of the self, it is essential to examine the link between culture and the self, or more specifically, "how the self is realized through participation in cultural practices" (Neisser et al., 1997: 13). In 1871 *culture* was defined as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society" (Burnett Taylor in Riley, 22), however its definition has provoked much debate for many academic generations and it is even said to be one of "the most complex words in the English language" (Eagleton, 2005: 1). A reason why its meaning is "highly polysemic, not to say frustratingly ambiguous" (Riley: 2007: 21) is due to its wide overuse in referring to particular characteristics of varying social groups. In short, the term *culture* has been applied so broadly that its meaning has become diluted and

imprecise (for example, its usage is often synonymous with concepts such as *civilisation*, *refinement*, *customs* or *ethos*).[11]

A very useful way to understand culture is by contrasting it with nature, in that "[n]ature refers to what is born and grows organically (from the Latin *nascere*: to be born); culture refers to what has been grown and groomed (from the Latin *colere*: to cultivate)" (Kramsch, 2009: 4). This distinction underlines the crucial aspect of culture that it is not innate nor "genetically transmissible" (Eagleton, 2005: 34), but is "learned rather than instinctive behavior — something caught from, as well as taught by, the surrounding environment and passed on from one generation to the next" (Pollock et al., 2001: 40). In this way, the term *culture* evokes the traditional nature / nurture debate, asking "[a]re human beings mainly what nature determines them to be from birth or what culture enables them to become through socialization and schooling?" (Kramsch, 2009: 4) Maalouf provides an enlightening scenario to illustrate this controversy: "Imagine an infant removed immediately from its place of birth and set down in a different environment. Then compare the various 'identities' the child might acquire in its new context [...]. Needless to say, the child would have no recollection of his original religion, or of his country or language." (2003: 24) Similarly, Maalouf emphasises the influence of culture in shaping an individual:

> He is not himself from the outset. [...] He doesn't merely grow aware of his identity; he acquires it step by step. The apprenticeship starts very soon, in early childhood. Deliberately or otherwise, those around him mould him, shape him, instil into him family beliefs, rituals, attitudes and conventions, together of course with his native language and also certain fears, aspirations, prejudices and grudges, not forgetting various feelings of affiliation and non-affiliation, belonging and not belonging. (2003: 25)[12]

[11] Culture is further used synonymously with the spirit of a nation, which in turn leads to problematic issues of nationalism. However issues of national identity in this sense will not be addressed since they extend beyond the scope of this thesis.

[12] In his concept of *Bildung*, Johann Gottfried Herder proposes that the formation of the self encompasses the sculpting of innate genetic potential by the cultural context, to the extent that we are all "malleable clay in the hand of climate" (Kontje, 1995: 2). Herder's use of *climate* indicates not

The nature / nurture debate is summarised by French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss in his renowned *Le Cru et le cui* (1964) in which he argues that all myth (the structure of which explains the structures of cultural relations) can be seen in terms of binary opposites, such as 'raw' and 'cooked'. These opposites are symbolic of what is found in nature ('raw') versus that which is a product of human culture ('cooked'). This dichotomy exists in all human societies and human nature acts as a metaphoric cook in an attempt to reconcile the two, cooking the raw, or rather, socialising the intrinsic into the cultural.

The view of culture as representing nurture likewise reinforces the idea of identity as a construction that is validated through integration in society. That is, the process of self-formation relies on cultural know-how because the self is comprised of several social roles that are cultivated through repeated experience in a culture. Cultural fluency is in turn an integral part of successfully existing in society. In other words, culture "is the knowledge members of a society need if they are to participate competently in the various situations and activities life puts in their way." (Riley, 2007:36) It is "what I need to know in order to 'make sense' in and of those situations in the same ways as my fellows and to communicate and behave in ways they find appropriate." (Riley, 2007: 40) Socialisation in a culture therefore constitutes "the implicit knowledge of the world" (Eagleton, 2005: 34) or a set of blueprints that help us to define the world and to understand the boundaries of acceptable social behaviour.

However, culture is more than know-how — it is, more essentially, "the framework from which we interpret and make sense of life and the world around us" (Pollock et al., 2001: 40). In this sense, culture can be seen as a type of 'iceberg', with one part visible above the surface of the water and the other larger part hidden below: "The part above the water can be identified as the surface culture and includes behavior, words, customs, and traditions. Underneath the water where no one can see is the deep culture, and it consists of beliefs, values, assumptions, and thought processes." (Pollock et al., 2001: 40) This stock of cultural knowledge functions as a resource for the individual to navigate through not only society but also life at large: "[o]n the basis of their experience in their culture (or combination of

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only geographical setting but also cultural factors or rather that "external forces affect the development of a given individual" (Herder in Kontje, 1995: 2).

cultures), people organize knowledge about the world and use this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding any new information, events, and experiences that come their way." (Burke et al., 2009: 27) In other words, culture is "man's medium" (Hall, 1989: 16) and moulds our perspective by "designat[ing] what we pay attention to and what we ignore" (Hall, 1989: 85), or rather by establishing the rules for how we play the game of life[13] in society:

> Any individual's conception of culture is not everything he or she knows and thinks or feels about the world. Rather it is what almost always provides his or her interpretation of not only his or her own world, but of the world in general. In this sense, culture is an individual's explanation of the code that people are following in interacting. It is our theory of the "game being played", as Keesing (1974: 89) aptly puts it. At some level, we are aware that there is a "game", but we are not necessarily consciously aware of the rules that we follow, nor could we explain them, if called upon. We know that not everyone in our own society has exactly the same view of how the game is to be played, but we expect that most members of our group share our views. (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 177)

The development of the self is therefore intimately linked to culture in that cultural structures "offer ways of thinking, seeing, and talking — virtual paradigms of experience — to which participants continually turn and, in turn, shape to make sense of their lives and selves" (Holstein et al., 2000: 162). The self is thus moulded through assessment in accordance with the surrounding culture, since "[j]udgments that we make about ourselves are intrinsically bound to cultural values and social expectations" (Côté et al., 2002: 132). In turn, as discussed previously, individual character is, to some extent, socially conditioned and a link can be observed between the characteristics of a particular society and the types of individual social characters that it nurtures:

[13] The metaphor of life as a game can also allude to the notions of the *carnivalesque* and role playing with different masks.

> [s]elves do not exist in isolation; self-knowledge never begins from scratch. Each of us lives — and has grown up in — some specific cultural setting. That setting was the context in which we developed our ideas about human nature in general and about ourselves in particular. Different cultures may stress different kinds of self-concepts and thus, to some extent, support the development of different selves [...]. [P]eople are first of all ecological and interpersonal selves — active embodied agents in the natural and social environments. Their self-concepts will surely reflect at least those characteristics, no matter where they live or what else they may believe. (Neisser et al., 1997: 4)

Culture can therefore be seen as supporting the self by providing "culturally endorsed formats" (Holstein et al., 2000: 12) of identity. These formats facilitate the sharing of thought and behaviour within a community by providing "a set of public symbolic forms that people can use to express meaning" (Geertz in Côté et al., 2002: 122). These forms thus function as a cultural "tool kit" (Côté et al., 2002: 122) of available interpretative resources or frameworks of behaviour used by the individual for self-construction. The image of a 'tool kit' similarly reverberates with Claude Levi-Strauss' metaphor of the previously mentioned *bricoleur*:

> As a bricoleur, the self constructor is involved in something like an interpretive salvage operation, crafting selves from the vast array of available resources, making do with what he or she has to work within the circumstances at hand, all the while constrained, but not completely controlled, by the working conditions of the moment. In this metaphor, self construction is "always ineluctably local" (Geertz 1983), a practical and artful response to prevailing circumstances. (Holstein et al., 2000: 153)

It is important, however, to remember that although culture is a very significant source of input on which the self draws to form itself, it is not a template that produces a fixed identity, but instead, as already shown, it offers motifs of interpretation. That is, culture "is not a set of prescriptions or rules for interpretation and action; rather, it's a constellation of more or less regularized, localized ways of understanding and representing things and actions, of assigning meaning to lives" (Holstein et al., 2000: 161). Culture does not automatically

stencil ready-made selves, instead individuals *use* shared cultural resources with which they identify forge their selves:

> [W]hile organized settings provide accountable modes of interpretation, we must emphasize that settings do not determine how selves are constructed. Local cultures or formal organizations supply resources for interpretation, not injunctions or absolute directives. Selves constituted in a particular site or organization may take on the general qualities that the setting or organization promotes, but practitioners of everyday life are not "cultural or organizational dopes" (Garfinkel, 1967), mere extensions of organizational thinking. They exercise interpretive discretion, mediated by the complex combinations of meaning that competing professional and institutional affiliations might offer. (Holstein et.al, 2000: 167)

This tool of cultural evaluation is nevertheless integral to the development of the self, and in turn the cultural construction of the self points to the difficulty experienced when an individual is displaced from his or her original culture and transported into another culture, since discordance could arise between an identity that was sustained by one culture but not by another. If the 'tool kit' acts as a basis for interpreting the surrounding culture, and in turn the world and the self, then changing the culture can severely interfere with the individual's meaning-making resources, or rather, to continue the metaphor employed by Myers-Scotton (2006: 177), the game is changed and the individual is no longer familiar with the rules. It can be deduced that someone with a more comprehensive cultural 'tool kit', that is, someone with exposure to various differences or subcultures or with an awareness of gender and class differences within their own overarching culture, would probably be in a better position to decipher another culture than a less sophisticated person. Nevertheless, deciphering a new culture without the appropriate tools of cultural literacy is a challenging task and not having a sense of belonging and empowerment can be a deeply alienating experience.

As discussed previously with reference to existentialism, individuals who lack cultural know-how are isolated from the 'herd' or social group. The dynamics of group identity play a crucial role in belonging ("To identify themselves as members of a community, people have to define themselves jointly as insiders against others, whom they thereby define as

outsiders." — Kramsch, 2009: 8) and membership in a group is a pivotal source of security, a sense of stability and self-worth:

> Self-esteem based on worthiness is often rooted in the reflected appraisals process in which people feel that others accept and value them. With high levels of self-worth, people have a degree of existential security that provides value and meaning to their lives. When one is a member of a group and is similar to others in thought and action, one will receive recognition, approval, and acceptance from other group members, thus verifying their social identity as a group member; and in turn, they will experience positive feelings. Thus, feelings of self-worth rise when individuals join groups and feel accepted and are judged valuable on the basis of who they are and not what they do. (Burke et al., 2009: 121)

The impact of the social group is clear in the development of children where "cultural shaping of the self takes place through various forms of interaction [in particular] through enduring relationships (particularly with parents and siblings), in attachment formation and conflict" (Neisser et al., 1997: 177). Active participation in cultural activities thus provides individuals with a sense of belonging in a wider social context through which they generate meaning: "Children find their place in the functioning social network through such cultural acts as carrying out rituals and participating in the routine of daily life. Such activities also foster an awareness of the self as a unique individual within that broader society." (Neisser et al., 1997: 177)

Identification with a social group is therefore indeed one of the primary means for self-identification and self-formation. Individual members at according to the requirements of the collective group and in turn the group influences the individual via comparison and categorisation. In other words, "an elaborate system of mutual influences between characteristics of the individual and characteristics of society" (Burke et al., 2009: 3) exists and therefore "forms of collective identity […] influence our thinking and behavior in multiple ways" (Griswold, 2004: 114).

3.3 Conclusions

In considering the role of culture in identity formation, it is important to maintain an awareness of its relativity. Firstly, every culture is not homogenous, but rather composed of several varying subcultures, and furthermore of individuals who, even within a collective group, may vary widely. Secondly, even within a homogenous culture, distinct situations will provoke an array of diverse reactions and only certain select cultural entities will have an impact on personal development, since "it is obvious that the child will unconsciously accept the various elements of culture with entirely different meanings, according to the biographical conditions that attend their introduction to him." (Mandelbaum, 1951: 596) Furthermore, not all cultural traits "are equally diffused as integral elements in the idea-systems of different individuals. Some modes of behavior and attitude are pervasive and compelling beyond the power of even the most isolated individual to withstand or reject." (Mandelbaum, 1951: 517) Lastly, it is essential to view culture in terms of identity formation as a whole, meaning culture is not the only element that contributes to the development of the self. It should therefore be acknowledged that although our cultural identities are particularly important, they are not the sole influence on the self but one amongst many others, since "important as culture is, it is not uniquely significant in determining our lives and identities. Other things, such as class, race, gender, profession, politics, also matter, and can matter powerfully." (Sen, 2006: 112)

Nevertheless, in keeping with my aim, it has been shown that culture does indeed play a strategic interpretative role in the formation of the self and in turn, in creating a feeling of belonging within society. Selves are sculpted through socialisation in that culture serves as a means for individuals to make sense of the world and themselves and we use the evaluation and recognition of others in order to assess our own identities. The cumulative construction of the self in relation to culture and the other testifies to the nature of identity as fluid and open to interpretation as opposed to given and static. This dynamic nature of the self accommodates the possibility of translation into another language and culture. In sum, in considering the relationship between the self and culture, it is essential to understand "the tool kit of resources available to different members of the culture and how skilful various members are in constructing and completing strategies of actions that achieve certain ends (or identities) for them." (Côté et al., 2002: 123) As will be explored in the following chapter, the impact of culture on one's sense of self and the challenge of (re)constructing an identity

becomes far more evident in the face of self-translation. Not only does this confirm the influence of culture on the self and thus the difficulty of translating a culturally entrenched identity, but, on the flip side, it alludes to the positive increase in self-awareness. The experience of the other and the expansion of one's cultural horizon impose an unavoidable comparison that places the self under the spotlight, thereby allowing previously unconscious elements of the self to surface.

Chapter 4
The construction of the self in language

4.1 The coexistence of language, culture and the self

> And where does the deepest material of the self lodge itself if not in language?
>
> (De Courtivron, 2003: 4)

After having examined the social and cultural construction of the self, it is necessary to turn to the link between language and identity and "how one creates the other" (Bammer, 1994: xxi). Although there are several markers of identity (such as gender, age, race, religion and social class), the focus of this thesis is on language and how it functions as a "person-shaping" (Besemeres, 2002: 19) device that does not only represent the self and the world, but constitutes and constructs them. This view raises central questions as to what extent an individual's personality, thought processes and world views are moulded by language (and its coexisting culture) and, even, as to whether a "self even [feels like it] exists without sufficient language." (Kanno, 2003: 16) Determining in what way and to what degree the self is bound to language is paramount to my aim, since it dictates the degree of loss and possible gains in self-translation. Furthermore, it underlines how the multiplicity of the self and the necessity for identity construction is further complicated when the self is displaced in a new language; that is, "[h]ow much more difficult the fragmentation is when you don't quite have 'the words to say it'." (De Courtivron, 2003: 4)

Language can thus be seen as a medium through which the self is not only known but also fashioned in that it provides "the means of expressing the self to others, and also of structuring and representing the self" (Neisser et al., 1997: 177). Language parallels self-formation ("[we are all] engaged with language in a lifelong project of constructing who we are" — Joseph, 2004: 14) by initiating and fostering the socialisation process: "[W]e are inducted into personhood by being initiated into a language. We first learn our languages of moral and spiritual discernment by being brought into an ongoing conversation by those who bring us up." (Taylor in Besemeres, 2002: 34) In other words, language bidirectionally links the individual and society:

> Language focalises, patterns and objectivates human experience. Language is the principal means by which an individual is socialised to become an inhabitant of the world shared with others and also provides the means by which, in conversation with others, the common world becomes plausible to him. On this linguistic base is erected the edifice of interpretive schemes, cognitive and moral norms, value systems and, finally, theoretically-articulated 'world views' which, in their totality, form the world of 'collective representations' [...] of any given society. (Riley, 2007: 18)

It can thus be deduced that "man enters into active possession of consciousness, into active cognizance of reality, through the ordering, shaping powers of language" (Steiner, 1998: 78). In accordance with Lacan's mirror stage (see 2.1), awareness of the self emerges (at approximately two years of age) more or less simultaneously with language acquisition, making language "the principal component and validation of our self-awareness" (Steiner, 1985: 181). If consciousness parallels language acquisition, then the implications are that language plays a role in shaping thought.

Firstly, it is pertinent to clarify the intrinsic (although not always inseparable) interdependence between language and culture. Culture exists in and is applied through language in that "language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives [and] is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways." (Kramsch, 2009: 3) The fact that social knowledge and cultural references are encoded in language therefore underlines that language learning requires a simultaneous initiation into the accompanying culture. Language serves as a carrier for cultural norms and "the words people utter refer to common experience. They express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share." (Kramsch, 2009: 3) It therefore "takes more than linguistic skills to move freely and competently in a foreign culture" (Besemeres et al., 2003: 4). Karen Ogulnick elaborates:

> Beyond knowing words and grammar, learning a language involves acquiring a role, and knowing how to act according to that social definition. It is knowing, sometimes tacitly, sometimes consciously, what others approve and disapprove of, how to sit, how to enter a room, how to read nuances, when to speak and when to be silent, how to accept a gift, how to ask for a favor, how

to ward off unwanted invitations. (2000: 170)

If language therefore "reflects codified cultural ways of viewing the world" (Neisser et al. 1997: 178), then it could in turn be assumed that "the natural act of thinking is greatly modified by culture" (Hall, 1989: 9), or rather that culture functions as a series of frameworks for thought and behaviour. In other words, culture "directs the organization of the psyche, which in turn has a profound effect upon the ways people look at things, behave politically, make decisions, order priorities, organize their lives, and, last but not least, *how they think*" (Hall, 1989: 212).

Our thoughts are affected by culture in that, unconsciously immersed in it (until confrontation with another culture), it to some degree conditions our beliefs and our perception of reality: "deep cultural undercurrents structure life in subtle but highly consistent ways that are not consciously formulated. Like the invisible jet streams in the skies that determine the course of a storm, these hidden currents shape our lives." (Hall, 1989: 11) Classification of the world is therefore somewhat culture-specific; that is, although each individual is unique, certain common characteristics appear among people who share the same linguistic and cultural tradition, since "learning of a specific cultural tradition begins while the young individual's perceptual, cognitive and interpretative capacities are still being formed, and it shapes those capacities." (Joseph, 2004: 36) Given that culture is encoded in language, language in turn can be said to mould the thoughts and culture of its speakers, and as Wittgenstein famously declared, each language therefore predisposes its speakers to view reality in a particular way: "*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache sind die Grenzen meiner Welt*." (*Tractatus*, 1922) This pivotal belief that different languages seem to encompass reality in different ways was already proposed in 1667 by Gottfried Leibniz who importantly proposed that language is not merely a vehicle of thought but rather its determining medium: "Thought is language internalized, and we think and feel as our particular language impels and allows us to do. But tongues differ as profoundly as do nations. They too are monads, 'perpetual living mirrors of the universe' each of which reflects or, as we would now put it, structures experience according to its own particular sight-lines and habits of cognition." (Steiner, 1998: 78) This view is later echoed by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who announced that "[e]ach language describes the world quite literally in its own terms forming a unique mode of thought and expression" (in Riley, 2007: 9).

Other language theories go one step further than the notion of language "always bending our perspective" (Arteaga, 1996: 264) and declare that it in fact "permeates our very thinking" (Kramsch, 2009: 77); that language is "at one and the same time the tool, the contents and the form of human thought, and every act of knowledge is only possible through the medium of language." (Riley, 2007: 9) There are further claims that personality is forged by and exists through language: "Language lights up the inner personality and its consciousness; language creates them and endows them with intricacy and profundity — and it does not work the other way. Personality itself is generated through language." (Voloshinov in Koven, 2007: 3) The implications of language's integral role in constructing the self are therefore dramatic for a self that is uprooted and transported into a new language. A new languages signifies the need for a new cultural background as well, since if language moulds thought then indeed "the adoption of a new language, particularly by a writer whose tool is language, means a gradual and unconscious transformation of his patterns of thinking, his style and his tastes, his attitudes and reactions." (Kellman, 2003: 291) However, before examining these implications for self-translation, it is necessary to further understand the relationship between language, thought and personality and thus it is pertinent to address the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

4.1.1 The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

In assessing whether or not language determines thought, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis contributes to the basic principles of the argument. The validity of the hypothesis has been widely contested and this thesis does not endorse linguistic determinism, which is particularly problematic, limited and somewhat outdated. However, in reviewing the debate of the validity of the premise, my aim is to highlight the aspects of linguistic relativity that are central to this thesis, such as its implication that a language contributes to sculpting a particular way of perceiving reality for its speakers, and consequently particular nuances of expression for the self. These concepts support my principal interest in the complexity of replicating the self in another language.

Edward Sapir (1884–1939) was an anthropologist and linguist, who under the influence of his teacher Franz Boas (1858–1942) and with reference to the work of Humboldt, consolidated

significant ideas on the relationship between language, culture and personality. Sapir mentored Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941), who was a chemical engineer, but who dedicated his spare time in the last ten years of his life to linguistics, studying Native American languages, such as Hopi. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis denotes the concept that the way people think is affected by the cultural and cognitive categories encoded in language, which means that speakers of non-identical languages would think in distinct ways. More specifically, the principle of linguistic determinism states that "people's thoughts are determined by the categories made available by their language" (Pinker, 1994: 57) and its milder version, linguistic relativity, affirms that "differences among languages cause differences in the thoughts of their speakers" (Pinker, 1994: 57).

Endorsing the link between the self and culture, Sapir deduces that "the language habits of people are by no means irrelevant as unconscious indicators of the more important traits of their personalities." (Sapir in Mandelbaum, 1951: 17) Sapir clarifies, however, that culture is not given or innate but is gradually learnt and absorbed to varying degrees in individual personality according to the context and personality of the individual, that is, "We then see at once that elements of culture that come well within the horizon of awareness of one individual are entirely absent in another individual's landscape. [...] It is obvious that the child will unconsciously accept the various elements of culture with entirely different meanings, according to the biographical conditions that attend their introduction to him." (Sapir in Mandelbaum, 1951: 596) Similarly, individuals within the same culture radiate towards different pursuits according to their personalities, for instance, "[a]ggressive military patterns cannot be equally congenial to all personalities; literary or scientific refinement can be developed only by individuals of highly differentiated personalities." (Sapir in Mandelbaum, 1951: 563) In addition to variations within a single culture, Sapir correctly notes (despite the generalisation of his assumptions) that varying characteristics of nations in turn impact on the individual:

> The socialization of personality traits may be expected to lead cumulatively to the development of specific psychological biases in the cultures of the world. Thus Eskimo culture, contrasted with most North American Indian cultures, is extraverted; Hindu culture on the whole corresponds to the world of the thinking introvert; the culture of the United States is definitely extraverted in character, with a greater emphasis on thinking and intuition than on feeling;

> and sensational evaluations are more clearly evident in the cultures of the Mediterranean area than in those of northern Europe. (Sapir in Mandelbaum, 1951: 563)

In considering the connection between personality and culture, Sapir turns to the issue of integration into a new culture and to the need for replacing one point of reference with another. This issue is particularly pertinent for self-translation and points to the disorientating effect of transfer from the culture that the self has relied on for expression into a new culture:

> It is a dangerous thing for the individual to give up his identification with such cultural patterns as have come to symbolize for him his own personality integration. The task of external adjustment to social needs may require such abandonment on his part and consciously he may crave nothing more passionately, but if he does not wish to invite disharmony and inner weakness in his personality, he must see to it, consciously or unconsciously, that every abandonment is made good by the acquisition of a psychologically equivalent symbolism. (Sapir in Mandelbaum, 1951: 519–520)

These considerations culminate in Whorf's principle of linguistic relativity, which claims that language filters perception and experience, or rather, "[o]nce words have been created to refer to an experience (e.g. time, space, different kinds of snow) these concepts then acquire an organizing power that guides the individual's cognitive process" (Javier, 2007: 22). Whorf begins by pointing to the link between reality and how it is linguistically conceived. He affirms that it is difficult to separate an object from the linguistic symbol that refers to it and that "things, qualities, and events are on the whole felt to be what they are called." (Whorf in Mandelbaum, 1951: 11) This connection implies in turn that we "see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation" (Mandelbaum, 1951: 162) and that "[w]e dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages." (Whorf in Pinker, 1994: 59) This leads to the conclusion that different languages represent different social realities: "The worlds in which different societies live are worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached." (Whorf in Mandelbaum, 1951: 162); the "picture of the universe shifts from tongue to

tongue."[14] (Carroll, 1956: vi) Language therefore "shape[s] our innermost thoughts" (Carroll, 1956: v) and common perceptions of the world are shared by people with the same linguistic background.

However, in spite of the usefulness of these principles for my aim in justifying the sense of disorientation and alteration experienced in self-translation, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis must be approached with an awareness that much of the logic is unsound and extreme (for example, the above-mentioned claim that the worlds in which different societies live are actually separate worlds), and it must be noted that since its conception, the hypothesis has been widely contested. Initially, there was criticism from Lewis Feuer (*Sociological Aspects of the Relation between Language and Philosophy*, 1953), as well as from psychologists Roger Brown and Eric Lenneberg (*Cognition in Ethnolinguistics*, 1953), who succeeded in largely discrediting linguistic determinism by conducting tests to disprove the colour perception theory, which is based on the supposition that languages classify colours differently. Steven Pinker (whose arguments are also controversial) confirms the myth of the theory, affirming that "[n]o matter how influential language might be, it would seem preposterous to a physiologist that it could reach down into the retina and rewire the ganglion cells" (1994: 62), and that in fact "the way we see colors determines how we learn words for them, not vice versa" (1994: 63). Similar myths that Pinker disclaims are the dozens of Eskimo words for *snow* and the different conception of time in Hopi.[15]

[14] George Steiner also supports the idea of languages encompassing distinct *weltanschauungs*, since they "differ as profoundly as do nations" and are "perpetual living mirrors of the universe" (1998: 78). Similarly bilingual writer Julien Green conveys his conviction that "[a] language is not only a means of expressing oneself, it is also, it is particularly, a mode of seeing and of feeling. Each race reconstructs the universe according to its own ideas." (1985: 238)

[15] Despite the refutation of different concepts of time by Pinker, bilingual Linda Petrucelli testifies how her perception of time did change in another language: "Even my notions of time became less rigid and less linear. There are no tenses per se in Taiwanese. Verbs are not declined but are used to denote degrees of completed or incomplete action. Time words (yesterday, now, later) are used if more precision is required." (Ogulnick, 2000: 161) Further evidence of bilinguals in support of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis will be provided later on.

A detailed criticism of the hypothesis is also given by Emily Schultz who argues that "those of Whorf's statements taken to demonstrate his espousal of conventional linguistic determinism or conventional objectivism are full of loopholes" (1990: 47). She highlights that arguments that defend the hypothesis abound in ambiguities, and she significantly raises the issue of the translatability paradox which reasons that "it is always possible to translate across languages, and if this were not so, Whorf could never have revealed how the Hopis think." (Kramsch, 2009: 13) In other words, "Whorf would be vulnerable to the translatability refutation, since his own ability to learn exotic languages testifies to the fact that the categories of English did not stand in his way" (Schultz: 1990: 28). Most importantly, therefore, if linguistic determinism was valid then "how could we acquire a second tongue or traverse into another language-world by means of translation?" (Steiner, 1998: 98)

One of the most resolved stances against the hypothesis is that of Steven Pinker, who insists that Whorf's arguments do not hold their ground upon closer examination because the hypothesis is "all wrong" (1994:57) and nothing more than "a conventional absurdity" (1994: 57). Whereas Whorf maintained that "[t]here is no one metaphysical pool of universal human thought [and that] thinking is relative to the language learned" (Carroll, 1956: x), Pinker expands on the argument presented by Carroll that "[thought] does not depend on grammar but on laws of logic or reason which are supposed to be the same for all observers of the universe [and there is] a rationale in the universe that can be 'found' independently by all intelligent observers, whether they speak Chinese or Choctaw." (1956: 208) Similarly, "[t]alking, or the use of language, is supposed only to 'express' what is essentially already formulated nonlinguistically. Formulation is an independent process, called thought or thinking, and is supposed to be largely indifferent to the nature of particular languages." (Carroll, 1956: 207) In other words, "there is a strand of robust common sense that insists that a stone is a stone whatever you call it" (Kramsch, 2009: 89). Pinker supports his own claim that language is not equivalent to thought by providing evidence against linguistic determinism. Firstly, he validly emphasises the possibilities of translation and multilingualism, as well as the coining of new terms (if we are indeed prisoners of our speech, then how can new terms arise and be coined?). Secondly, he reinforces the case of non-verbal thought, for example, that of deaf children or Helen Keller, or the creative thinking of artists, as well as babies who have been shown to have innate concepts of addition (Pinker, 1994: 69). Pinker also provides further claims as to why thought is not dependant on language:

> We have all had the experience of uttering or writing a sentence, then stopping and realizing that it wasn't exactly what we meant to say. To have that feeling there has to be a "what we meant to say" that it is different from what we said. Sometimes it is not easy to find any words that properly convey a thought. When we hear or read, we usually remember the gist, not the exact words, so there has to be such a thing as a gist that is not the same as a bunch of words. And if thoughts depend on words, how could a new word ever be coined? How could a child learn a word to begin with? How could translation from one language to another be possible? (1994: 57–58)

Pinker therefore maintains that thought is possible without language: that is, language does not determine thought, however, if you have a language, your thought is linked to it and can influence or manipulate it in some way depending on cultural and communicative needs. In contrast to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, he therefore proposes that our thoughts are "couched in some silent medium of the brain — a language of thought, or 'mentalese' — and merely clothed in words whenever we need to communicate them to a listener" (1994: 56). Mentalese is the hypothetical representation of concepts in the brain that encapsulate the meaning of words and sentences: "People do not think in English or Chinese or Apache; they think in a language of thought. […] Knowing a language then, is knowing how to translate mentalese into strings of words and vice versa." [16] (1994: 81–82)

However, Pinker's rejection of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is criticised by Anna Wierzbicka, a supporter of Sapir, who maintains that in spite of exaggeration and scientific evidence, "no one with genuine cross-cultural experience could deny that [the hypothesis] also contains a great deal of truth" (1997: 6). She insists that to people who intimately know two or more different languages and cultures take it for granted that language is linked to specific patterns of thoughts and that "The fact that neither brain science nor computer science has anything to say about links between ways of speaking and ways of thinking and about differences in

[16] A similar reasoning of "the existence of meaning somewhere beyond or below the words in which it is formulated in any of their languages" (Beaujour, 1989: 33), is supported by multilingual par excellence, Vladimir Nabokov, who rejects the premise that language influences thought, declaring "I don't think in any language. I think in images." (Beaujour, 1989: 28)

ways of thinking associated with different languages and cultures hardly proves that such links and differences do not exist." (1997: 5) Evidence of how a change in language shifts thinking, self-perception and behaviour and how the speaker "does not speak the language but is rather spoken by it" (Pavlenko, 2006: 13) is found in extensive observations by bilinguals, such as Christina Kotchemidova, who highlights the deep way in which the self is tied to language and its accompanying cultural universe:

> [A] foreign language makes you *think* in a different way, since it carries a specific perception of reality inherent in it. For example, in English we say, "What is your name?", the presumption being that you *have* a name, you are in possession of a name that is your own, and therefore you are very much in control of your own identity. In Russian the expression is, "*Kak tebia zavout?*" [How do people call you?], implying that you are a passive object that has been *given a* name by others. In French, "*Comment t'appelles-tu?*" has always struck me as rather narcissistic, as if I'm constantly *calling myself* and am therefore constantly preoccupied with myself. […] So I ask myself: Which is true? Which one expresses the actual relationship between myself and my name? (Kotchemidova in Ogulnick, 2000: 128–129)

Before concluding, it is appropriate to emphasise that if, as Wierzbicka and certain bilingual experience confirms, linguistic relativity stands (and a new language allows access to different perceptions of the world), then there may be benefits that emerge from having access to more than one language, since if languages is seen as shaping identity "then monolingualism is a deficiency disorder. It limits our versions of self, society, and universe." (Kellman, 2000: viii) In other words, if, according to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, our self-expression and world-views are limited by the inherent properties of the language we speak, "then multilingualism is emancipation. It enables us to entertain feelings and thoughts unavailable to the monolingual. Like the sculptor equipped to work with marble, clay, steel, or bronze, the translingual author can exercise the freedom of gratuitous expression, the luxury of exploring a medium merely for the sake of plumbing its possibilities." (2000: 36) Likewise, "[i]t is extremely difficult for a monoglot to disassociate thought from words, but he who can express his ideas in two languages is emancipated" (Beaujour, 1989: 7). The implications of this freedom for individuals who are highly self-conscious of words, such as writers, are that bilingual writers seeking a word in their mother tongue may 'find' the word

they seek in their other language. Furthermore, not only is a bilingual liberated from the confines of language but also from those of his / her personality. Bilingual Kotchemidova explains: “Changing one’s cultural identity is quite stimulating. One can easily be overwhelmed with one’s own self. This is especially energizing if you’re bored with yourself to death.” (Ogulnick, 2000: 130) Similarly, unlike monolinguals, bilinguals have access to various language and identity games: “Not only can they shift to and from their languages or mix languages within a single sentence, they can also exploit associations across languages, and be two different persons and live in two different worlds when one of these becomes too boring or troublesome’.” (Vaid in Pavlenko, 2006: 156)

In conclusion, despite the ambiguous and sometimes implausible speculations of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, there is still “something right about it” (Schultz, 1990: 8). That is, there are nevertheless certain elements of the hypothesis that provide a useful basis for studies of language and culture and their relationship with identity, and thus in turn for central arguments of my thesis, such as the observation that language “is a carrier of an infinitely nuanced expressiveness” (Mandelbaum, 1951: 13). Thought can exist somewhat independently of language and translation (to some degree) is possible, meaning that linguistic determinism must be rejected, however, linguistic relativity stands. In other words, although the strong version of the hypothesis cannot be validated, a weaker version is generally accepted on the basis that “The way a given language encodes experience semantically makes aspects of that experience not exclusively accessible, but just more salient for the users of that language.” (Kramsch, 2009: 13) Essentially, it is useful to maintain a sense of balance and simultaneously recognise the way language manifests in individuals according to specific contexts as opposed to the universal facets of language, since as George Grace states “[i]t is surely clear upon reflection both that language affects thought and that thought affects language.” (1987: 118) Moreover, in terms of my aim, as Gustavo Firmat summarises, the “ultimate validity [of the hypothesis] is irrelevant for understanding the bi-/multilingual experience: what is crucial is that many bilinguals relate to their languages in ways that enact some version of this hypothesis” (Firmat in Pavlenko, 2006: 29). Although the concept of linguistic relativity is therefore vital for my aim, it is likewise indispensable for the purpose of self-translation to acknowledge a certain detachment of language from the self, since

> [l]anguage is evidently felt to have the potential for an unwelcome moulding of 'personality'; its pull comes to be anticipated, resisted. Such a struggle could not take place if the person and the language were simply fused. The same complex interdependence of self and natural language is evinced by the linguistic migrant's contrary struggle not to be assimilated without trace into the new language. (Besemeres, 2002: 21)

4.1.2 The challenges and multiple layers of translation

Referring back to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, it is useful to correlate the premise of linguistic relativity with the reality-construction view of language, and to contrast it with the mapping or universalist view. Above all, the comparison of these two opposed views illuminates the crucial question of "whether or not translation, particularly between different languages, is in fact possible" (Steiner, 1998: 76).

In accordance with Pinker's belief in mentalese, the universalist view assumes that "all languages are mappings of a common world, and that anything that can be said in any language ultimately refers back to this common world." (Grace, 1987: 7) Out of this premise arises the intertranslatability postulate, which affirms that because the underlying structure of language is universal, "anything can be said in any language — that is, that any content that can be expressed in one language can be expressed in any other language" (Grace, 1987: 7), and therefore translation is possible. More importantly for my aim, this would in turn imply that the self can be expressed equally in any language, or rather that it is possible to be the 'same' person in different languages.

On the other hand, the intertranslatability postulate is rejected by the reality-constructionist view that claims that there is no reality outside the one we construct with our language. Constructivism presumes that "a language is shaped by its culture, and a culture is given expression in its language, to such an extent that it is impossible to say where one ends and the other begins, i.e. what belongs to language and what to culture. [...] That is, it is impossible to draw a clear line between thinking, i.e. bringing a thought into being, and encoding the thought, i.e. putting it into words. That what can be said, and what can be talked

about, may be quite different from one language-culture system to another." (Grace, 1987: 10) This therefore implies that the world exists, but different people construct it and experience it in different ways. In keeping with my aim, this denotes that if reality is set in language then the self would resist translation into another language.

In assessing these two contrary approaches and the feasibility of translation, it is essential to return to the previously discussed way in which language is "pregnant with culture" (Ogulnick, 2000: 130). Difficulties in transfer between languages arise because "the problem, of course, is that languages are not only languages, they are also worldviews — and therefore, to a great extent, untranslatable." (Huston in De Courtivron, 2003: 66) One of the key challenges of translation is therefore that in order to fully penetrate a language "we have need of a kind of knowledge other than that contained in grammars and dictionaries" (Grace, 1987: 92), and even then the barriers persist since "there are idioms, concepts [and] regionalisms whose translation from one language to another is almost impossible" (Javier, 2007: 92). That is, concepts that exist in the mother tongue may not necessarily be totally interchangeable with another language. For example, Keckses and Papp point out that English term such as 'sweepstakes' and 'potluck' do not have equivalents in Hungarian, Japanese or Russian. They claim that this lack of correspondence of terms is due to embedded cultural and social differences:

> A typical example is the concept of "potluck dinner", which is very popular in American culture. There is a good explanation for it: Americans like socializing and being in the company of others, but they do not necessarily want to pick up the expenses (or all expenses) of these get-togethers. Therefore everyone is expected to contribute to the party with food or drinks. This approach is almost unacceptable for a Russian, Japanese, or Hungarian, whose culture requires a host to be responsible for the guests. Although bilingual speakers of English and Japanese, English and Russian, or English and Hungarian understand this sociocultural phenomenon as an outsider, they usually do not as an insider no matter how high the level of their multicompetence is. (2000: 111)

Keckses and Papp also underline other spheres of untranslatability and tension where concepts from one language do not easily transfer to another language. The first is the

existence of polysemy and lexical plurality ("Polysemy in one language is lexical plurality [i.e., many distinct words] in another and vice versa." — Keckses and Papp, 2000: 70), largely due to "differences in the metaphorical use of lexical items in the two languages" (Keckses and Papp, 2000: 70). The second is the existence of "key words" and "frequency" (Wierzbicka, 1997: 15), for example, "though a particular English word can be matched in meaning with a Russian word, if the English word is very common, and the Russian rarely used (or vice versa), this difference suggests a difference in cultural salience" (Wierzbicka, 1997: 12). These types of cultural barriers therefore cause a lack of complete correlation in translation.

In addition to the challenges of translating between languages, it is fundamental to highlight the awareness, as George Steiner points out, that communication not only across languages, but also within the same language, "inevitably involves translation and interpretation" (in Edwards, 1985: 17). Steiner believes that because each person expresses themselves in relation to their own particular referential world of personal and contextual history, two people can never fully understand each other: "No two speakers mean exactly the same thing when they use the same terms; or if they do, there is no conceivable way of demonstrating perfect homology. No complete, verifiable act of communication is, therefore, possible." (Steiner, 1998: 263) This notion finds a parallel in Pirandello's play, *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autre*, in which he shows how words are inadequate, since not only is modification inevitable "whenever concepts are transferred from one spirit to another" (Thompson, 1985: 2), but in trying to understand another person, we interpret their words according to our own interior reality: "*E come possiamo intenderci, signore, se nelle parole ch'io dico metto il senso e il valore delle cose come sono dentro di me; mentre chi le ascolta, inevitabilmente le assume col senso e col valore che hanno per sè, del mondo com'egli l'ha dentro?*" (1965: 46) This sense of alienation in the face of unsuccessful communication is further confirmed by Karen Ogulnick:

> Because our personal histories shape how we see the world, and because no two people experience the world exactly the same way, even when the same language is assumed to be spoken, understanding remains incomplete. No matter how empathic and connected we may feel to another person, we cannot reach in and stand exactly where someone else is standing, feel exactly what someone else is feeling, or know exactly what another person is thinking. The

> awareness that all understanding is partial permits us to grasp that even people who are ostensibly speaking the same languages can interpret the same thing in a radically different manner. [...] [W]hat one person might assume to be informal may be formal to another; an environment that makes one person relaxed may make another uptight; what might seem intimate to one person another may experience as invasive. (1998: 136–137)

Each individual therefore has a unique cultural frame of reference ("inside our language is our history, personal and political" — Kaplan, 1993: 98) which prevents him from ever being in complete synchronicity with another, even if they share the same overarching national culture: "No two human beings share an identical associative context. Because such a context is made up of the totality of an individual existence, because it comprehends not only the sum of personal memory and experience but also the reservoir of the particular subconscious, it will differ from person to person. There are no facsimiles of sensibility, no twin psyches." (Steiner, 1998: 178)

In order to be able to nevertheless communicate and overcome the specificity of every individual's 'personal language', some type of translation is therefore required in every speech act. Steiner therefore declares that "any model of communication is at the same time a model of translation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance" (1998: 47):

> Steiner simply means that the symbolic value of language, the historical and cultural associations which it accumulates and the 'natural semantics of remembrance' all add to the basic message a rich underpinning of shared connotations. It is in this way that we translate when we communicate, and this ability to read between the lines, as it were, depends upon a cultural continuity in which language is embedded, and which is not open to all. Only those who grow up within the community can, perhaps, participate fully in this expanded communicative interaction. (Edwards, 1985: 17)

Firstly, translation between "different ways of talking in the same language" (Grace, 1987: 142) is therefore not unlike translation between two different languages and secondly, both within and between languages some form of translation proves equally unavoidable because the 'sender to receiver' model of any semantic process is like that of the 'source-language to

receptor-language' model and both always involve a fundamental "operation of interpretative decipherment, an encoding-decoding function or synapse. […] In short: inside or between languages, human communication equals translation." (Steiner, 1998: 48) In turn it must be noted that, if communication within a single language involves translation, then translation across languages becomes in some way double. Not only is translation from one language to another "a special, heightened case of the process of communication and reception in any act of human speech" (Steiner, 1998: 436), but also the process of translation becomes more complex: "there are too many things that can complicate communication even in a monolingual context and this is even more so when more than one language is involved." (Javier, 2007: 90) Javier elaborates:

> Communication between two individuals in a monolingual condition involves the process of transmitting (decoding and encoding), verbally and nonverbally, different perceptions, experiences of various kinds, beliefs, thought processes, worldviews, individual and group identities, specific cultural characteristics, as well as the affective components associated with these perceptions, experiences, beliefs, and thoughts [...] When the communication occurs between individuals whose worlds have developed in different geographical, cultural, and linguistic contexts (Ervin, 1963; Whorf, 1956), as in the case of the bilingual experience, it is even more difficult to gauge accurately what is being communicated. (Javier, 2007: 8)

To sum up, when examining the viability of translation it is clear that translation, at least to some degree, is obviously possible, which in turn sustains the possibility of self-translation. That is:

> We *do* speak of the world and to one another. We *do* translate infra- and interlingually and have done so since the beginning of human history. […] Translation is 'impossible' concedes Ortega y Gasset in his *Miseria y esplendor de la traduccíon*. But so is all absolute concordance between thought and speech. [...] Deny translation, says Gentile in his polemic against Croce, and you must be consistent and deny all speech.[...] To dismiss the validity of translation because it is not always possible and never perfect is absurd. (Steiner, 1998: 264)

However, the ability to generally translate across languages does not take into account the difficulties of translating the subtle complexity of various nuances that bilinguals (especially writers who tend to possess another level of sensitivity) feel to be part of their very selves because "to those who savor the textures and resonances of words themselves, every syllable is, like a snowflake, unique, and [for example,] what the pope says in Latin could never be identical to what he says in Polish, or English, or Vietnamese, or Arabic." (Kellman, 2000: 23) As Dante emphasises in his *Convivio*, the unique feel of a language eludes translation: "[n]othing fully expressive, nothing which the Muses have touched can be carried over into another tongue without losing its savour and harmony. The strength, the *ingero* of a language cannot be transferred." (Steiner, 1998: 253) Bilingual writers confirm this view: Luc Sante states that "when French lyricism is translated into English, the English version always sounds lead-footed, boorish, resolutely unsexy" (Sante in Lesser, 2005: 78); André Brink states that "[i]n every instance the 'translation' becomes a rethinking, a recasting of the original in terms of the medium of the new language"; and Ha Jin similarly comments that his language choice doesn't determine the content of what he writes but does affect how he writes it "because the feeling, the sound, the sentiment of English differs a great deal from Chinese. Also, English has a different literary tradition and a different reference system that's culturally bound. All these cannot help but influence my way of writing." (Brink in Kellman, 2003: 81) This subtlety of expression becomes particularly evident in poetry, which poses notable problems for translation since "no poet could accept the idea of linguistic equivalence" (Michaels in Lesser, 2005: 231), and "[a]ttacks on the translation of poetry are simply the barbed edge of the general assertion that no language can be translated without fundamental loss." (Steiner, 1998: 255)

Furthermore, it is of primary importance to my aim to underline that the process of translation[17] involves not only loss but, especially, always a certain degree of transformation

[17] I would like to clarify that for this thesis that *translation* will be employed to denote both interpretation and translation: that is, general transfer from one language to another, whether spoken, written or of the self. In other words: "A translation is the communication of information from one language to another [that] refers to the interlingual, sociolinguistic, cultural transfer of any message from one individual to another through various modes of written [or] oral means or combination thereof." (Javier, 2007: 90)

in which “meanings get changed” (Ogulnick, 2000: 141). The translation process, in which a message is transferred from one language to another, always takes place “via a transformational process. The barrier is the obvious fact that one language differs from the other, that an interpretative transfer, sometimes, albeit misleadingly, described as encoding and decoding, must occur so that the message ‘gets through’. [...] The received message is thinned and distorted.” (Steiner, 1998: 29) Although the message is not necessarily “thinned and distorted”, but could perhaps be amplified and enriched, some sort of alteration is nevertheless bound to occur.

When assessing the experience of the self translated into a new language, this element of change is critical. Firstly, it accounts for the need for (re)construction, since in a similar way that “[n]o language, no traditional symbolic set or cultural ensemble imports without risk of being transformed” (Steiner, 1998: 315), so too the self (which it has been shown is intimately tied to language and culture) risks transformation when a language shift occurs. That is, given how the self is embedded in language, a change in language signifies a certain change in the self. For example, bilingual Christina Kotchemidova declares: “I find myself acquiring a different cultural identity in every language that I speak” (Ogulnick, 2000: 130) and another bilingual also testifies how deeply rooted her self is in language: “Spanish determined the confines of my values and attitudes. I am doomed to the language and its grooves.” (Desnoes in Arteaga, 1996: 253)

Secondly, the modification that occurs sheds light on the manifestation of loss in self-translation, since because two languages are “never equivalent” (Sante in Lesser, 2005: 78), “[s]omething enormous is always lost in translation. Something insidious seeps into the gaps.” (Tan in Lesser, 2005: 26) Steiner confirms that in translation both within and between languages, “there are characteristic penumbras and margins of failure. Certain elements will elude complete comprehension or revival.” (1998: 29) Due to the fact that a translation depends on a layering of literal and other meanings, of ambiguity and tone, all of which are difficult to capture entirely, there are always slips of meaning in translation. Aspects of the self could thus slip through during the transfer of layers and be lost. Even within one’s own language there is an element of loss between what is conceived in the mind and what is able to be expressed in words and, especially, in writing: “Between the birth of the idea and its translation into words, something is lost. The process of expression is even more difficult in the second language.” (Okara in Kellman, 2003: 185) Therefore, “[d]espite the general trans-

latability from one language to another, there will always be an incommensurable residue of untranslatable culture associated with the linguistic structures of any given language." (Kramsch, 2009: 12) It should be emphasised, however, that the transformation involved in translation does not only allow for loss but can also include change in a positive form.

4.2 Bilingualism: Two languages, two selves?[18]

> Two languages, two lands, perhaps two souls...
> Am I a man or two strange halves of one?
>
> (Joseph Tusiani in Kellman, 2000: 34)

4. 2.1 Defining bilingualism

Discussions on the link between language and thought and on the incongruencies involved in translation, draw attention to the primary question of whether people with more than one language "may perceive the world differently, and change perspectives, ways of thinking, and verbal and non-verbal behaviors when switching languages." (Pavlenko, 2006: 29) It is fundamental to this thesis to better understand the workings of the bilingual mind and the degree to which each language governs the self. It is interesting to note that "more than 50% of the world's population speak[s] not only one language but more" (Keckses et al., 2000: x), and that the twentieth-century saw a considerable increase in multilingualism "as migration, technology, postcolonialism, and globalization dissolved borders and increased cross-cultural mobility" (De Courtivron, 2003: 4). But what does it mean to be bilingual? Does is mean "[l]iving in two languages, between two languages, or in the overlap of two languages" (De Courtivron, 2003: 4)? One of the most succinct definitions of bilingualism is given by linguist Ulriel Weinreich (1968): "The practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the person involved, bilingual." (Hoffmann, 1991: 15) *Bilingualism*

[18] I am borrowing and adapting this title from a dissertation by Philip Hull (1990) entitled *Bilingualism: Two Languages, Two Personalities?*

is thus the term that characterises interaction with the world in two or more languages, one usually being the speaker's mother tongue.

A person can become bilingual at any age and due to a wide range of reasons, such as having parents who speak separate languages, living in an officially bi- or multilingual country, imposition of another language for political reasons, and conditions of displacement: immigration, education or expatriation (known as elite bilingualism). The varying conditions under which a language is acquired influence its use and proficiency. For example, simultaneous bilinguals (children who acquire a language before three years old) and childhood bilinguals "typically achieve higher levels of linguistic competence and proficiency than do late bilinguals" (Pavlenko, 2005: 8). However the degree of bilingualism attained is attributed more to "psychological factors" (Grosjean, 1982: 179) than to whether languages are acquired simultaneously or successively. The context of acquisition further affects whether an individual maintains his or her original language, or whether a language shift or attrition takes place. For example, bilingualism in migrants is a fluid process across generations that usually involves bilingualism in the mother tongue and the dominant language of the country to which immigration takes place. This type of bilingualism normally occurs only in second generation speakers "with a likely reversion to monolingualism (but in the dominant language, not their parents' mother tongue) by the third generation." (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 53) It must therefore be underlined that, due to the variation of acquisition and contexts of use, being bilingual "doesn't imply complete mastery of two languages" (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 3) and that "bilinguals are rarely equally fluent in their languages" (Grosjean, 1982: vii):

> [Bilinguals] normally use their languages — separately or together — for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. [...] Levels of fluency in a language will depend on the need for that language and will be domain-specific, hence the 'fossilised' competencies of many bilinguals in their different languages. As the environment changes and the needs for particular skills also change, so will the bilingual's competence in these various language skills. New situations, new environments, new interlocutors will involve new linguistic needs and will therefore change the language configuration of the person involved. (Milroy et al., 1995: 259)

There therefore "seems to be nothing like a balanced bilingual" (Keckses et al., 2000: 46), or as bilingual Julien Green declares, "I am more and more inclined to believe that it is almost an impossibility to be absolutely bilingual." (1985: 186) Firstly, the bilingual's dominant language may alter during the course of a lifetime, since "bilingualism and multilingualism are not static conditions […] Individuals go through phases in their lives when one of their languages becomes weaker, or stronger, as the case may be; or they add new languages to their daily communicative repertoire" (Hoffmann, 1991: 6). Furthermore, the preferred language in which "a bilingual feels more at home" (Hoffmann, 1991: 22) may or may not coincide with the dominant one.

The lack of balance in bilinguals applies not only to their linguistic proficiency, but likewise to their cultural know-how. It is important to clarify that bilinguals are not "de facto bicultural" (Grosjean, 1982: 157). This is evident in the case of English-speaking Scots or French-speaking Bretons who are monolingual yet bicultural, or similarly, in second- or third-generation English-speaking immigrants in the United States, such as American Italians, Jews or Poles (see Grosjean, 1982). Likewise, there are people who regularly use two languages but are monocultural, for example in Switzerland or Luxembourg where "people may be bi- or trilingual but monocultural" (Grosjean, 1982: 157). The level of cultural adeptness in bilinguals will similarly depend on the context of language acquisition and will fluctuate accordingly. Interestingly, however, "[u]nlike bilingualism, where the two languages can be kept separate, biculturalism does not usually involve keeping two cultures and two individual behaviors separate." (Grosjean, 1982: 160) For example, a German-English bilingual writes: "I can't deny that I am American, yet because of my German upbringing I have different beliefs and ways of living and doing things. There are strong elements of my character which are undoubtedly German, but there are times when I might react totally 'American'." (Grosjean, 1982: 161)

The above unevenness and fluidity point to one of the most challenging aspects of defining bilingualism — the required degree of proficiency needed in each language. When categorising bilingualism, some researchers include the need for "native-like control of two languages" (Bloomfield in Romaine, 1995: 11) or "approximately the same degree of perfection as unilingual speakers of those languages" (Christopherson in Hoffmann 1991: 21), as well as the ability to likewise identify with and function "in accordance with the sociocultural demands" (Skutnabb-Kangas in Hoffmann, 1991: 26) On the other hand,

"Haugen sees 'the point where a speaker can first produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language' as the beginning of bilingualism [and] others, such as John McNamara, see a minimal degree of competence, in one of the four language skills (speaking, writing, reading and understanding speech) as sufficient." (Macnamara in Hoffmann, 1991: 22) Similarly there is confusion as to what exactly constitutes a person as a native speaker. Certain researchers argue that "nativelike competence is only possible in one language" (Keckses et al., 2000: 5) and Kramsch suggests that "it is not clear whether one is a native speaker by birth, or by education, or by virtue of being recognized and accepted as a member of a like-minded cultural group" (2009: 80).

The debate about what exactly delineates bilingualism emphasises the fundamental concept of relativism when identifying bilinguals. Bilingualism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that necessitates the recognition that "there can be no clear cut-off points. As bilingualism defies delimitation, it is open to a variety of descriptions, interpretations and definitions." (Hoffmann, 1991: 14) Similarly, "[o]f course, one cannot define a degree of perfection at which a good foreign speaker becomes a bilingual: the distinction is relative." (Bloomfield in Hoffmann, 1991: 15) Bilingualism should therefore be considered as "something entirely relative" (Hoffmann, 1991: 16), since "[i]n most contemporary, complex societies there is no such straightforward one-to-one correspondence of person, culture, and language" (Koven, 2007: 2). Furthermore, relativity must be engaged when considering the view of "the bilingual individual as being the equivalent of two monolinguals in terms of both language identity and competence" (Riley, 2007: 60), and by contrast, the view that "[b]ilinguals are not the sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals but have a unique and specific linguistic configuration." (Milroy et al., 1995: 259) Amin Maalouf provides valuable insight into this relativity:

> How many times, since I left Lebanon in 1976 to live in France, have people asked me, with the best intentions in the world, whether I felt "more French" or "more Lebanese"? And I always give the same answer: "Both!" I say that not in the interests of fairness or balance, but because any other answer would be a lie. What makes me myself rather than anyone else is the very fact that I am poised between two countries, two or three languages and several cultural traditions. It is precisely this that defines my identity. Would I exist more authentically if I cut off a part of myself? [...] So am I half French and half

> Lebanese? Of course not. Identity can't be compartmentalised. You can't divide it up into halves or thirds or any other separate segments. I haven't got several identities: I've got just one, made up of many components in a mixture that is unique to me, just as other people's identity is unique to them as individuals. (2003: 1–2)

Furthermore, the difficulty of clear classification extends to the use of the term *bilingualism* as opposed to other similar terms, such as *multilingualism* and *plurilingualism*, which are often "used almost interchangeably with bilingualism" (Hoffmann, 1991: 9). Riley, who affirms that the differences between monolingualism, bilingualism and plurilingualism are "quantitative rather than qualitative" (2007: 61), provides several examples of the overlapping use of differing terms:

> Take, for example, the terms 'multilingual' and 'plurilingual'. If you consult technical discussions of sociolinguistics or works of reference, you will find that these two terms are sometimes treated as synonyms, or that they are used to refer to different phenomena: some authors prefer to use 'multilingualism' for social contexts such as 'a multilingual town/ country', reserving 'plurilingualism' for a form of individual sociolinguistic competence. And sometimes you will find the opposite. The Dictionnaire Larousse de Linguistique et des Sciences du Langage (1994) states that 'multilingualism is synonymous with plurilingualism' [...] In The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language (1997) multilingualism is 'Said of a person / community with several languages' and the entry for 'plurilingualism' is simply 'See multilingualism'. Romaine (1995) uses the term to apply both to social contexts and to individuals, referring for example to a person as having been 'raised multilingually'. Similarly in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning (Byram 2006) one reads that 'the term (bilingualism) is often used to include trilingualism and multilingualism'. (2007: 54–55)

For the scope of this thesis, I shall be following the suggestions that bilingualism should be taken to "include the use not only of two languages, but of any number of languages" (Hoffmann, 1991: 16), and that "bilingualism is used as a cover term for multilingualism" (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 2). I shall therefore be using *bilingualism* to refer to individuals who

live with two or more languages in their daily lives. Both of the works examined in this study are written by bilinguals with exceptional levels of proficiency in their two languages and this competency is essential for the experience of alteration of the self in the other language to take place, however, my focus in this study is not on discerning the linguistic degree of bilingual competency of individuals, but rather on exploring "where bilingual individuals position themselves between two languages and two (or more) cultures, and how they incorporate these languages and cultures into their sense of who they are" (Kanno, 2003: 3).

4.2.2 Language choice and 'double selves'

The unevenness of competence in various aspects of bilinguals' languages and cultures is one of the factors that prompts language choice. The oscillation between bilinguals' languages is most visible in the practise of code-switching, which is "the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation" (Grosjean, 1982: 145). It is mostly "rapid and automatic" and occurs "quite unconsciously" (Grosjean, 1982: 145,149), but "[b]ilinguals, particularly older ones, are normally able to control the amount of code-switching they do" (Hoffmann, 1991: 113). Code-switching is employed for many reasons, both personal and contextual. A switch may occur due to mental fatigue, emotional strain or a lack of competence "when an individual is not comfortable or lacks the vocabulary in the language he / she is speaking" (Blackledge et al., 2004: 204). It may also occur when "certain items trigger off various connotations which are linked to experiences in a particular language" (Hoffmann, 1991: 115). Code-switching is further motivated by attitude and can be used as "a tool for the negotiation of interpersonal relations" (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 413) to affirm identity. By associating with or disassociating themselves from a particular social group via language crossing, "speakers perform cultural acts of identity"[19] (Kramsch, 2009: 70). A similar element of language mixing is lexical borrowing, which instead of switching across phrases or sentences, involves single lexical items. The incentives for lexical

[19] Code-switching in a more insubstantial form, usually lexical borrowing, can also be used for fashionable prestige or status. For example the centuries-old use of French in other European languages, such as Russian or German to display education, or the current use of English to identify oneself as a global citizen, or the use of Latin phrases to reveal academic training.

borrowing are almost identical to those for code-switching, that is, when the bilingual struggles to find a word in one language and therefore uses that word in the other, a particular word does not have an exact equivalent in the other language or the equivalent is unknown by the bilingual, or similarly, the scenario of the bilingual resorting to the word that is most familiar or used out of the two languages and lastly, "the 'most available word' phenomenon leads the bilingual to borrow from the other language, especially when he or she is tired, lazy, or under stress." (Grosjean, 1982: 311)

My concern is not with the stance conveyed in relation to a group through language choice, however, a mention of code-switching is pertinent to my thesis in that language choice importantly highlights the inability to fully express the same concept in a different language. In other words, bilinguals "report that they switch when they cannot find an appropriate word or expression or when the language being used does not have the items or appropriate translations for the vocabulary needed. Some notions are just better expressed in one language than another." (Grosjean, 1982: 150) The inadequacy of accurate expressions provided by one language therefore implies that the self may also have difficulty in being authentically expressed in another language.

Bilinguals' sense of not always being able to express the same concept linguistically or emotionally in their second language, leads to the impression of "being a 'different person' in their two languages" (Koven, 2007: 11). Considering bilinguals' reflections, such as, "[d]oes a little sea horse look different if it no longer is called *tatsu-no-otoshigo* (the lost child of the dragon) but 'the little horse from the sea'?" (Tawada in De Courtivron, 2003: 147), some scholars believe that the question of whether bilinguals have one or more personalities is "naive and simplistic" (Pavlenko, 2006: 1), or merely an extension of a monolingual display of different identities according to multiple registers and contextual requirements. However, evidence from bilinguals and bilingual writers overwhelmingly suggests that the "drama of duality, embedded in bilingualism" (Pavlenko, 2006: 5) must be treated as "a unique linguistic and psychological phenomenon" (in Koven, 2007: 244). But, is the perception of changing selves really a case of "[l]earn a new language and get a new soul" (Grosjean, 1982: 282)?

Initially the impression of changing selves generated a belief in bilingualism as having some type of dissociative identity disorder with distinct behaviour and emotion of independent

personalities being generated by each language. Thus bilingualism was seen as provoking emotional and mental instability, and even slight mental 'retardation'. For example, Adler (1977) claims that the bilingual "is neither here nor there; he is a marginal man [...] His standards are split, he becomes more inarticulate than one would expect of one who can express himself in two languages, his emotions are more instinctive, in short, bilingualism can lead to a split personality and, at worst, to schizophrenia." (Adler in Grosjean, 1982: 282) However, it has since been clarified that "bilinguals are no more likely to become psychotic than monolinguals" (Haugen in Grosjean, 1982: 282), and the "current consensus in the field, based on decades of research, is that bilingualism per se is not the cause of problems in emotional and social adjustment" (Pavlenko, 2005: 27). For example, the shifts that occur with language change are rather attributed to "the influence of the external situation" (Beaujour, 1989: 44), and Grosjean maintains that "what is seen as a change in personality is simply a shift in attitudes and behaviors corresponding to a shift in situation or context, independent of language." (1982: 282) To support this stance, Grosjean quotes bilinguals who make the following claims to confirm the constancy of one personality against varying situations: "I use the two languages in different situations and therefore I would act differently even if it was in the same language". Similarly, another bilingual complains about 'not being the same person' when express herself in English as opposed to her native French: "When I try to analyze these situations, I realize that it is more a matter of context. I obviously tend to associate one language with its context and therefore feel quite awkward when using one specific language in the wrong setting." (Grosjean, 1982: 283)

However, Grosjean's view on language shift diminishes the "profound effect of language on the experience of self" (Koven, 2007:19) and reduces bilinguals' sense of shuffling personalities across languages to "merely experiencing language-independent changes in context" (Koven, 2007: 19). Although the view of bilingualism provoking schizophrenia is extreme and no longer supported by contemporary research, it is nevertheless valuable as a metaphor for explaining the feelings of bilinguals who undeniably testify to having a type of split identity with conflicting character traits in each language. Even Grosjean himself later underlines this phenomenon, for example, he quotes a French-English bilingual who affirms: "I am deeply convinced and fully aware that I switch personality when I switch language. I know that I am more aggressive, more caustic, when I speak French. I am also more rigid and more narrow-minded in defending my assertions." (in Grosjean, 1982: 279) Similarly other bilinguals maintain: "I'm much nicer and quieter and more serious in French; much more

loud and foul-mouthed and slangy in English" (in Pavlenko, 2005: 112); "I have a different personality when I speak English, than when I speak German I'm more serious" (in Hegi, 1998: 90); "I feel that my personality does change when I change languages" (in Grosjean, 1982: 279); and "Speaking English, I had a new personality, a sunny, sharp-tongued kid" (Lam in Kellman, 2003: 87).

Perceptions of 'double selves' can thus rather be attributed to factors such as relating distinctive experiences to a particular language, having different levels of proficiency, or to linguistic and cultural differences. If, as has been shown previously, the self is to some degree constituted by language and culture, then the fact that a bilingual's "two languages are often associated with two different cultural systems" (Hull, 1990: 1) would seem to imply the existence of two different ways of perceiving the world within each bilingual. That is, "living with a 'forked-tongue'" (Anzaldúa, 1987:55) implies that to some extent, the behaviour may be forked in accordance with the characteristics of each culture. This is confirmed by a bilingual's comment: "Each language has its own cultural history and I have my own personal history in each. It is not a schizophrenia but definitely two different ways of being me." (in Pavlenko, 2006: 24) Given the link between language and behaviour, different linguistic contexts would therefore elicit differences in personality. For example, Karen Ogulnick underlines how the change in language impacted on her behaviour in Japan. When she watched a video that a friend made of her at the end of her second year in Japan, she is stunned by how Japanese also affected her physically: "I watched this non-Japanese woman, sitting demurely on her knees, delicately covering her mouth with her hands as she giggled, speaking in a high-pitched tone of voice. She seemed so Japanese. I knew that she had my face and hair, but I could hardly recognize the rest of myself." (2000: 170) Wierzbicka observes similarly: "I had to force myself to read this transcript because I think I was afraid of being confronted with my English-speaking persona talking to people about my life. Would it still be my life? Would it still be my voice?" (Besemeres et al., 2007: 111) Besemeres emphasises that these feelings of being a different self in another language emanate from the "lingua-cultural psyche [which is a] more binding" (2002: 20) and more profound phenomenon than role-switching in that "each language projects a range of psychological attributes. An individual in a sense inhabits the model of person implied by the given language." (2002: 20)

A study by Michèle Koven (2007) contributes to this argument of correlation between socialisation in a language and the projection of a specific persona. Analysing French-

Portuguese bilinguals, Koven concludes that they "assume different sociocultural identities in each language that are experientially real, and palpable both to speakers and to listeners." (32) Several participants stated that they perceive the world in a different way when they speak Portuguese and that speaking Portuguese "yields a different sensation" (76). These feelings are sometimes so deep that they result in the observation of being different people or having different personalities in each of their languages. Koven points out very importantly that "these participants most probably do not use the term personality as a psychologist might. Nonetheless, by personality, they seem to mean a profound shift in how they experience themselves." (79) For instance, one bilingual reported: "When I speak Portuguese... I have trouble recognizing myself ... I have the impression of being another person." (1) Many speakers discussed how they expressed their feelings differently in each language and attributed these varying experiences of the self to "the kinds of socioculturally recognized personas speakers can perform in each." (244) For instance, in Portuguese, the language of family, Linda [one of the bilinguals in Koven's study] appears more reserved and finds it difficult getting angry and using swearwords (which were prohibited by her mother); whereas in French, the language of peer socialisation, she is more assertive and vulgar. This example emphasises how the existence of 'double selves' could be ascribed to "who they are or can be in each language" (77), which is linked to the sociocultural context in which the languages were acquired. Javier confirms that such discrepancy in affective behaviour can be due to the bilingual feeling more or less emotionally connected to or detached from the language: "A bilingual may find, for instance, no compulsion to curse in a second language while showing a great deal of propriety in this regard in the first language." (2007: 37)

Indeed, it seems that "languages may create different, and sometimes incommensurable, worlds for their speakers who feel that their selves change with the shift in language." (Pavlenko, 2006: 26) For example, these psychological effects clearly manifest in the interaction of bilinguals' relationships in which language choice takes on a deeper significance in revealing the non-transferable power that one of the languages holds to encapsulate intimacy. The characterisation of intimacy through language is distinctly revealed in Richard Rodriguez's memoir (1982), in which he documents how the introduction of English "shattered the intimate bond that had once held the family close" (30). In an attempt to aid his progress, Rodriguez's teachers convinced his parents to speak English at home instead of Spanish. Rodriguez attributes the loss of deep family bonds and home vivacity to the loss of Spanish, which was "associated with closeness" (30): "the special

feeling of closeness at home was diminished […] We remained a loving family, but one greatly changed" (22). As he "shared fewer and fewer words" (20) with his parents, he felt himself growing apart from them: "Those *gringo* sounds they uttered startled me. Pushed me away." (21) Similarly Andrea Witcomb poignantly identifies the loss of Portuguese as the cause of a loss of emotional connection in her relationship with her father. Witcomb perceived her very close childhood relationship with her father as being "defined by the Portuguese language" (in Besemeres et al., 2007: 85). After immigrating to Australia, where her father never again spoke Portuguese to her, therefore leaves a certain void of affection:

> Our relationship was now to be mediated through the English language. We lost our daily rituals, such as the little ditty he would say to us when we went to bed or the singing of Portuguese folk songs. I also lost a certain emotional landscape — a landscape in which he was an unquestioned figure of authority but which also allowed him to express emotion. (in Besemeres et al., 2007: 93)

Just as a switch in language can signify a loss of intimacy, so too does it have the ability to augment closeness. For instance, bilingual Susan Driscoll reflects on how, although they had previously been used to an English-speaking relationship, the switch into speaking Korean together for long periods of time, allows her to connect more deeply with her Korean mother by sharing her mother tongue: "It felt like we were two different people when we spoke in Korean together [...] we connected in a way that had never been known to us." (Driscoll in Ogulnick, 2000: 84) Bulgarian-born bilingual writer Elias Canetti relishes in a similar closeness that arises when his mother starts speaking German to him, as opposed to Ladino, outside of his lessons: "It was a sublime period that commenced. [...] I sensed that I was close to her again [...] I was reborn under my mother's influence to the German language, and the spasm of that birth produced the passion tying me to both, the language and my mother." (1983: 70–74) German is so representative of affection to the author because it is the language that characterised the love and intimacy in his parents' marriage (and his mother's use of German with him therefore likewise makes him feel part of her loving affection): "The dreadful cut into her life, when [...] she lost my father, was expressed most sensitively for her in the fact that their loving conversations in German were stopped. Her true marriage had taken place in that language." (1983: 70) Canetti is so convinced by the extreme power of language to encapsulate closeness that he believes that his father's death was caused by his

knowledge of his mother's "linguistic adultery" (Canetti in Kellman, 2000: 24) in sharing 'their' language with another man:

> Her infidelity had consisted in speaking German, the intimate language between her and my father, with a man who was courting her. All the important events of their love life [...] had taken place in German. [...] He refused to speak to her until she confessed; for a whole night he kept silent and again in the morning he maintained his silence, convinced that she had been unfaithful to him. (302–303)

In her memoir (1997) Gerda Lerner further testifies to the power of language to characterise and rekindle intimacy. As a Jewish Viennese refugee in the United States, Lerner was "repelled" (40) by German and spoke only English. When she met up with her sister (who had been living in England), from whom she had been separated, they spoke English and "neither liked the persona presented by the other" (Pavlenko, 2005: 192). Again during their next visit, their "daily interaction was stiff, formal and full of mutual irritation" (43). On their third meeting they found themselves singing childhood folksongs unconsciously in German and suddenly they "were smiling and hugged each other with the spontaneity that had been missing all those years" (43). Thereafter, however, they continued to communicate in English, until when in 1973 they were speaking German and sharing childhood jokes "language unlocked the gates and memory took over" (44) and their closeness was restored:

> when we said goodnight to each other there was a deep transformation of feeling between us. Nothing needed to be said; we both knew we had found each other, after all those years. What had done it was the mother tongue, the language going even deeper than formal speech, the actual spoken dialect of childhood. (45)

Language choice in managing relationships can therefore be determined by the history of the linguistic interaction between two people and the symbolic value of the language, which can even take sacred precedence over fluency. For instance, people often speak a particular language to each other simply because their relationship has always taken place in, and been characterised by, that language: "It is indeed rare to find bilingual friends or relatives who do not have an 'agreed-upon' language of interaction when the situation or topic do not impose a

particular language. Violation of this 'agreement' is likely to create an unnatural or even embarrassing situation" (Grosjean, 1982: 136). For example, Besemeres states: "My sister and I have always spoken English together. To speak Polish when we're by ourselves would feel artificial." (2007: 134) On the other hand, for Besemeres' mother, Anna Wierzbicka, Polish is the language that encapsulates intimacy with her daughters:

> Usually, if at some point during our conversations Clare [Mary Besemeres' sister] shifts unconsciously into English, I ask her to move back to Polish, and she does. This time, however, I made no attempt to revert to Polish, and I heard myself pressing on in English. The longer this went on, the greater (I felt) the emotional distance between us. It seemed that a chasm had opened: this was not our usual, close, Polish-based relationship. […] The distance I felt speaking English to Clare hurt no less than the disagreement which triggered that shift to English in the first place. It seems to me that it was that sudden feeling of distance, of being hurtfully misunderstood. (in Besemeres et al., 2007: 106)

Yasuko Kanno likewise comments on a classic case of displacing the relationship through a language shift. Conversations between her and other *kikokushijo* [Japanese students who have returned to Japan after having lived and studied abroad] had always taken place in Japanese, which meant that they only knew each other "in the selves who think in Japanese" (1997: 100). When one of them once proposed trying to switch to speaking in English, they were unable to maintain their sense of closeness: "we could not really talk much despite our effort. After all, everything we have known about each other, in information and experiences, is through Japanese, so when we shift into English all of a sudden, it feels like we have gone back to being total strangers with one another." (1997: 100) Similarly Luc Sante states that he us "almost physically" (1998: 284) unable to speak to my parents in English: "It would feel as if we were surrounded by the Gestapo, exchanging nonsensical pleasantries studded with code words. Or maybe it would be as if I had invited them to a wild party I was throwing for my friends." (1998: 284)

These perceptions of different languages representing different personas and characterising different ways of interacting are, in accordance with the core examination of this thesis, explored by bilingual writers who "often treat their languages as distinct instruments that require them to play different tunes" (Pavlenko, 2006: 14). For Rosario Ferre, "[w]riting in

English is like looking at the world through a different pair of binoculars: It imposes a different mind-set." (Pavlenko, 2006: 14) Bilingual author Julien Green also documents in *Le langage et son double* (1985) how "*chaque langue a sa personnalité, son expression privilégiée*" (*Avertissement*). He recounts the experience of having started writing a book in French and then switching to English and feeling that he had become someone else:

> With a very definite idea as to what I wanted to say I began my book, wrote about a page and a half and, on rereading what I had written, realized that I was writing another book, a book so different in tone from the French that a whole aspect of the subject must of necessity be altered. It was as if, writing in English, I had become another person. I went on. New trains of thoughts were started in my mind, new associations of ideas were formed. There was so little resemblance between what I wrote in English and what I had already written in French that it might almost be doubted that the same person was the author of these two pieces of work. (196)

In his essay *Bilinguisme, dialogisme et schizophrénie* (1985) French-Bulgarian Tzvetan Todorov also documents his experience of an incongruency of selves. He asserts that each of his languages "can correspond to but half of [his] being" (in Arteaga, 1996: 210) and that this "twin affiliation [renders him] inauthentic [because it is] impossible to create a whole being out of those two halves" (in Arteaga, 1996: 212): "the double parole proves impossible, and I find myself split into two halves, one as unreal as the other" (in Arteaga, 1996: 211). In an attempt to theorise this state, Todorov draws on Bakhtin's notions of polyphony that "refer to the presence of several independent and often conflicting voices within a single text" (Pavlenko, 2006: 4). These conflicting ways of expression compel Todorov to recognise his "schizophrenic situation" (in Arteaga, 1996: 213).

As stated previously, the experience of schizophrenia is no longer believed to be an actual consequence of bilingualism and many bilinguals harmoniously accept their duality. However, as Todorov's claims and as the above examples emphasise, many "language migrants have to varying degrees experienced their languages as mutually exclusive" (Besemeres, 2002: 15), and "bicultural bilinguals may exhibit different verbal behaviors in their two languages" (Pavlenko, 2006: 26). Indeed, as bilingual Anna Gladkova testifies, the

differences in the perceptual worlds contained in languages create the impression of a 'double self':

> I notice that there are basic ideas that I find hard to communicate when speaking in English because they belong to the part of my personality that has been shaped by the Russian language […] It seems to me that my personality is oriented towards certain concepts and words which feel entirely natural and are very important to me. As soon as I translate them into English they sound marginal, weak and unconvincing. (Besemeres et al., 2007: 143)

4.2.3 Language-specific emotionality

The above evidence of bilinguals expressing inconsistent emotional selves in different languages points to the crucial questions of whether "their actual feelings [are] affected by the language they speak" (Pavlenko, 2005: 23) and whether, given the inequivalence of languages, they are able to channel feelings equally in both languages. To shed light on this question, it is necessary to examine the translatability of emotion concepts and understand whether or not emotion concepts in one language can "neatly map onto the emotion lexicon of another" (Pavlenko, 2005: 77).

As opposed to the nativist paradigm that sees "all emotion concepts [as] primary, basic, and pancultural, whether particular languages have words for them or not" (Pavlenko, 2005: 79), and the universalist approach, backed by Pinker, which asserts that "we experience emotions regardless of whether they are named by our language" (Pavlenko, 2005: 79), the most useful approach for this thesis is "the view of emotions as culturally relative, rather than universal" (Besemeres in Pavlenko, 2006: 36). This relativist or social constructionist view interrogates the existence of basic emotions, reasoning that due to every language containing its own insular vision of the world, even basic emotion concepts are culturally constructed and thus resist complete translation. Wierzbicka explains that the emotional lives of people are significantly sculpted by their culture: "Every culture offers not only a linguistically embodied grid for the conceptualization of emotions, but also a set of 'scripts' suggesting to people how to feel, how to express their feelings, how to think about their own and other

people's feelings, and so on." (1999: 240) Similarly, "emotions are 'language dependent' because the raw or bodily experience of an emotion must be filtered through a cultural meaning making system, that is, language, before it can be defined as an emotion." (Panayiotou in Pavlenko, 2006: 187)

Some languages, for instance, have emotion terms that do not find exact equivalents in other languages (the emotion exists but is not classified lexically), and are thus transported as loan words. Examples include the German concepts of *Angst*, which is not otherwise accurately expressed in English, "*Schadenfreude*" (Pavlenko, 2005: 92), which lacks a similar word in English, indicating cultural inappropriateness in expressing joy at another's misfortune. Likewise, *frustration* does not exist in several languages, since it is "a highly culture-specific concept, very characteristic of modern Anglo culture, with its emphasis on goals, plans, and expected achievements" (Wierzbicka, 1999: 72). In addition to vocabulary itself, "differences exist in the evaluation of emotion-causing events and their consequences; for instance, exhibiting signs of one's dependence may be seen as positive and desirable among the Japanese but as shameful and childish among Westerners" (Pavlenko, 2005: 90). Furthermore, language expression varies due to culture-specific uses, such as the diminutive to indicate affection in Italian or Spanish or the use of culture-specific metaphors or idioms. (Pavlenko, 2006: 118) For example, Tim Parks draws attention to his in-laws fussing over their granddaughter:

> It's what the Italians enthusiastically call *fare festa a qualcuno*, which, literally translated, means 'to make a party of someone' and combines the ideas of welcoming them and smothering them with physical affection. Comparison of this expression with the slightly disapproving 'to make a fuss of' speaks worlds about the difference between Italian and English approaches to such occasions. (1995: 106)

Due to these incongruencies, despite translation equivalents of many emotion terms, these equivalents could still be insufficient in terms of the different meanings and degrees of importance that they are given in diverse cultures. That is, in spite of grasping the translation, there may be a lack of "a corresponding experientially acquired concept that would allow them to categorize events, situations, and phenomena in terms of culturally and socially specific terms" (Pavlenko, 2005: 83). Examples of bilinguals' frustration with emotion terms confirm

these ideas, with Wong claiming "I often find myself handicapped when it comes to the expression of my cultural-specific emotions" (Besemeres et al., 2007: 73), and Yoon recognising: "I have come to understand that language shapes the way people think and feel, and vice versa. [...] There were so many instances when I realised that I had to adjust myself to fit into the categories of English in order to express my emotions." (Yoon in Besemeres et al., 2007: 120)

Another barrier in the transferability of emotions is humour, the competence of which is "a form of mastery not merely of the rules of a language, but also of the unwritten cultural norms of the speech community" (Vaid in Pavlenko, 2006: 156). The ability to use and understand humour differs across languages because it signals how cultural values prescribe whether it is appropriate to use humour and in what way. Furthermore bilinguals might use humour more in one language or find it easier to joke about a specific subject "perhaps because there is less emotional baggage associated with that topic when one talks about it in that language." (Vaid in Pavlenko, 2006: 176) In other words:

> One can imagine that the impetus to joke about certain things in a particular language community may be heightened if those things are considered, for whatever reason, more taboo among members of that community. Given that what is considered taboo or inappropriate may well differ across cultures, one may find that whereas one may joke a lot about some things in a particular speech community it may be completely unnecessary to joke about those same things in another community. Thus, bilinguals belonging to the two communities may use humor quite differently when operating in one or the other cultural mode. (Vaid in Pavlenko, 2006: 176)

The notion of certain topics carrying less emotional weight in one language than another again indicates "the way the bilingual's languages are intimately connected to the emotional life of the bilingual person" (Javier, 2007: 117), and in turn, the perception of having 'double selves'. This awareness can create "emotional splitting" (Javier, 2007: 38) in which certain elements are expressed freely in one language and not another. Usually the greater emotionality is linked to the mother tongue and its avoidance creates emotional detachment. The switch to another language (usually acquired later on) "functions as an interactional strategy that allows [bilinguals] to gain distance and exercise self-control" (Pavlenko, 2005:

135).

Words or feelings that are deemed too intense or even somewhat taboo in one language therefore find expression through the liberation offered by the distancing effect of another language (this parallels the possibility of reinvention created by writing in another language — see 2.2). Swearwords are usually perceived as stronger and linked to feelings of shame in the mother tongue, which is why the "language learned later in life also allows speakers to use taboo and swearwords, avoiding the feelings of guilt and discomfort internalized in childhood with regard to these expressions." (Pavlenko, 2005: 136) Bilingual Sylvia Molloy, for instance, comments that "body parts deemed unmentionable were named in Spanish, much in the way nineteenth-century medical texts named them in Latin." (Molloy in De Courtivron, 2003: 71) Similarly bilinguals may employ a certain language for flirting or easier expression of love and desire. For example, Kellman remarks that "[a]nglophones often find it easier to say either *merde* or *ti amo* than their English equivalents" (2000: 27) and bilingual Ferré admits: "I love to make love in Spanish; I've never been able to make love in English. In English, I get puritanical. I could never do a belly dance, dance a flamenco, or do a zapateo in English." (Kellman, 2003: 137) Bilingual Vladimir Vertlib, categorising his languages according to their associations, also turns to one language above others for the expression of love:

> *Vielleicht war das der Grund, dass ich meine ersten Liebesbriefe auf Englisch schrieb. Deutsch kam nicht in Frage, und Russisch war ganz und gar unmöglich, […] weil Russisch die Sprache der frühesten Kindheit, der Eltern, der Emigration war, an Bahnhöfe, Flughäfen und provisorische Unterkünfte erinnerte. Russisch war zutiefst unerotisch …* (Vertlib in Niederle, 1999: 319).

In a similar way, one language may offer a way of liberation from the cultural confines imposed by the other language. In her memoir (1997), Kyoko Mori laments not having "a voice for speaking [her] mind" (16) in Japanese, because the cultural etiquette requires women to speak in a "little-bird voice" (17). Mori feels that this "childish squeak" (16) "squeeze[s] [her] throat shut" (18) whenever she tries to express her true feelings because "in Japanese, it's rude to tell people exactly what you need or to ask them what they want" (6). For Mori, learning English therefore represents "a process of acquiring a voice" (18). Furthermore, as Pavlenko remarks, freedom from trauma can be obtained by discarding the language which characterises this emotional distress:

> [Russian] is also a language that attempted to constrain and obliterate me as a Jew, to tie me down as a woman, to render me voiceless, a mute slave to a hated regime. To abandon Russian means to embrace freedom. I can talk and write without hearing echoes of things I should not be saying. I can be me. English is a language that offered me that freedom. (2005: 22)

Leonard Michaels likewise notes: "My mother had gone to high school in Poland and was fluent in Polish, but refused to speak the language even when I asked her to. Her memory of pogroms made it unspeakable." (Michaels in Lesser, 2005: 224) Alice Kaplan also uses her acquired language, French, to construct a world in which she can escape from the suffering of her father's death and the difficulties of adolescence. For Kaplan, learning French was connected to her father because "French made [her] absent the way he was absent, and it made [her] an expert the way he was an expert. French was also a response to [her] adolescence, a discipline to cover up the changes in [her] body [she] wanted to hide." (1993: 203) In Kaplan's memoir (1993) Kaplan reveals how French became a language in which she could hide, a language "for covering pain, not expressing it" (58): "If life got too messy, I could take off into my second world. [...] There was a time when I even spoke in a different register in French — higher and excited, I was sliding up to those high notes in some kind of a hyped-up theatrical world of my own making." (216) The alternative reality that French and escaping to France represents saves her from facing the trauma of her mourning:

> I can't stand not to be in France in June, the month of my birthday and the month my father died. The smells and sounds in the air are too strong at home — the newly cut grass, the fireflies, all the sounds of his death. So every year around the same time, I start speaking to myself in French and dreaming in French, and swearing in French when I'm driving my car. (207)

The ability of one language to create detachment is fascinatingly explored in psychoanalytic observations of bilingual therapy patients who "may strategically exploit the lesser intensity of their second language in order to avoid evoking painful material" (Koven, 2007: 23). Buxbaum (1949) and Greenson (1950) document how in therapy, bilinguals invoke contrasting versions of themselves depending on the language of the treatment. For example, Greenson documented the case of a bilingual patient who suggested two conflicting self-

definitions by describing herself as "a 'scared dirty child' in German [but] as a 'nervous refined woman' in English" (Greenson in Javier, 2007: 44). This woman sometimes refused to speak in German, claiming to have the sensation that when speaking in German of "hav[ing] to remember something [she] want[s] to forget." (Greenson in Javier, 2007: 44) She also felt that obscene words were "much easier to say and were much cleaner in English. A chamber-pot becomes alive if you say *Natchttopf*. It is ugly, disgusting, and smells bad. In English a chamber-pot is much cleaner." (Greenson in Javier, 2007: 44) Similarly Buxbaum treated a woman who "refused to speak in German because this language was associated with memories of a 'forbidden infantile curiosity and a guilty sexual relationship'" (Buxbaum in Javier, 2007: 44). Through the use of their second languages and the refusal to conduct treatment in their mother tongues, these patients therefore avoided anxiety and "the emergence of deeply seated infantile conflicts" (Javier, 2007: 44).

4.2.4 Authenticity and the language of the 'true' self

The above discussion of emotionality alludes to the perception of the first language as largely representing "the language of emotions and the second the language of distance and detachment" (Pavlenko, 2005: 30). This conjecture in turn raises issues of the mother tongue being associated with the 'true' self and likewise problems of authenticity of expression in another language. It is therefore pertinent to firstly understand what is meant by *mother tongue* and how it relates to the self.

Although *mother tongue* is "generally understood to mean the dialect or language that one grew up speaking in the home" (Joseph, 2004: 183), definitions "are neither straightforward, nor unproblematic" (Blackledge et al., 2004:161). For instance, "the language one knows best or uses most may not be the one cited as the mother tongue" (Pavlenko, 2004: 162) and it may not be the language currently used. The mother tongue is therefore not determined solely by proficiency or dominance, but can also be "the language for which a person has the most allegiance or affection" (Mills in Blackledge et al., 2004: 174). For example, despite less profound competence, a bilingual may "feel a stronger affective attachment to another language which was learned and used in the home" (Romaine, 1995: 22). One way of evaluating a mother tongue is to determine which language the bilingual dreams in as this

might reveal some deeper layer of thought. However, this also presents ambiguous results and language choice seems to be based on "the person, the topic, or the situation being thought about [that is,] when asked about dreams, bilinguals respond that when they do speak in a dream, it may be in either language [...] the people involved in the dream and the situation appear to trigger the language." (Grosjean, 1982: 275) For example, Steiner reports that he dreams in all his three languages "with equal verbal density and linguistic-symbolic provocation [and that] the idiom of the dream follows, more often than not, on the language [he has] been using during the day" (1998: 120), and Said similarly confirms that he "dream[s] in both" (in Aciman, 1999: 96). It is thus essential, as with the concept of bilingualism, to emphasise relativity when considering the mother tongue, since not only may some bilinguals feel that they have more than one first language, but "one's mother tongue can change over the course of a lifetime." (Romaine, 1995: 22) It should also be mentioned that due to the fact that "there may be no direct link between the language first learned and the birth mother" (Mills in Blackledge et al., 2004: 165), the term *first language* is often preferred, but the two "are used interchangeably" (Keckses et al., 2000: 2).

For the purpose of this thesis the focus is not, however, on identifying and defining the mother tongue, but rather on drawing attention to the way in which it is tied up with the sense of self-definition. Mother tongue must be recognised not only as a first language, but above all as "a primal term, a metaphor that carries with it the overtones of mother earth, motherland, a crucial identifier of connectedness, rootedness, and belonging [that] lies at the core of the personality." (Mills in Blackledge et al., 2004: 166) The mother tongue thus assumes a deeper value of being the "language that is closest to [the] heart" (Keckses et al., 2000: 2) and to which one feels a particularly close emotional bond of self-identification.

Bilinguals often identify the first language as the language of "primeval, visceral emotionality" (Pavlenko, 2005: 152) that embodies the "deeper self" (Pavlenko, 2005: 180). For example, bilingual Nemiroff confirms that "German is [his] 'ur-language' [and that] it touches on [his] deepest emotions" (Ogulnick, 2000: 14). Bilingual Mukherjee similarly comments that the mother tongue "nam[es] the world and all its emotions" (Mukherjee in Lesser, 2005: 11). Likewise bilingual Ye explains how her first language is strongly linked to her sense of self:

> It is the language that shaped my earlier and most lively experiences, that makes me who I am. […] The sounds of our mother tongue are like no other sounds. They are the first sounds coming from within ourselves, giving tangible forms to our thoughts and feelings, which put us in touch with the outside world and with the people around us. They are the sounds that are most dear to us. Of all the sounds that we can hear, they are the most meaningful to us. (Besemeres et al., 2007: 61, 66)

This core sense of self in the mother tongue is derived from its connection to the experiences of childhood and "a tendency to equate the language of childhood with childhood itself" (Lesser, 2005: 8). As I shall discuss shortly, the implications of this association are crucial for self-translation, since the loss of the childhood language is equated with the loss of the self. The inclination to see the mother tongue as "an invisible umbilical cord" (Ye in Besemeres et al., 2007: 66) is exemplified in the nostalgic reflections of bilingual M.J. Fitzgerald, who relates her childhood with the Italian language, declaring that "home is the words" (Fitzgerald in Lesser, 2005: 142). She feels that the sea can only be truly described by the Italian word *azzurro*: "The word blue, an anodyne descriptive term, does not convey that childhood sea, but *azzurro* brings it all back with a violence in memory that invariably hits me like a punch in the stomach. […] No words in English have this power, to take me back home to childhood." (Lesser, 2005: 134, 144)

But why is the language of childhood felt to represent the self more viscerally? Why are "deep memories, resonances, sounds of childhood [believed to] come through the mother tongue" (Lerner in Pavlenko, 2005: 224)? As stated above, the mother tongue is not necessarily the dominant language, so proficiency alone is not responsible for the degree of connection or disconnection felt. An understanding of the power of childhood experience seems rather to lie in the "ways in which a child's personality and emotional development are closely linked to the context in which the first concepts were formed." (Mills in Blackledge et al., 2004: 163) Pavlenko suggests that language acquired in childhood will be highly emotionally charged and prompt strong emotional reactions, since "childhood provides an emotional context of learning because emotional regulation systems are developing." (Pavlenko, 2006: 277) That is, the childhood language is so fundamental to emotional identification because socialisation takes place in the private domain of the home:

> A first language is universally learned in a highly emotional context, the context of attachment to caregivers. In contrast, second languages vary in the emotionality of their context. They can be acquired in the emotional context of attachment to caregivers and peers, or may be acquired in formal settings such as school or work, settings with fewer intense personal attachments (Schumann, 1997). Early age of acquisition thus functions as a proxy for a more emotional context of learning. (Pavlenko, 2006: 273)

It is similarly useful to consider the 'language independence phenomenon' that implies that "experiences and memories are stored and mediated separately by each language" (Javier, 2007: 42). This signifies that emotions linked to experiences in the mother tongue are more accessible in this language, and likewise that emotions that developed through experiences in a second language are more available through that language. Schrauf therefore claims that the retrieval of memories is most vivid and meaningful in the language in which they were experienced. For instance, when recollected in the first language, childhood memories "may be more numerous, more detailed, more emotional or more vibrant than when retrieved in the second language" (in Javier, 2007: 78). Anna Wierzbicka, for example, relates the difficulty of trying to interpret in English a childhood event that was experienced in Polish. She relates how when telling a story she became aware of her inability to relate it accurately and precisely in English: "No doubt it was not an accident that it was in telling that particular part of my story (my memories of the Warsaw Uprising) that English failed me most. Those memories [...] had no analogues in anything that I have lived through in my Anglophone life." (Besemeres et al., 2007: 112)

The barriers of transfer from one language to another again point to how self-development is rooted in the context of language development. When a bilingual speaks a certain language it "activates a 'language-specific self' that acts as filter through which memories are both encoded and retrieved. Thus memories of childhood events are 'filtered through' a socioculturally constituted, linguistically mediated, first-language self" (Javier, 2007: 79) and the same likewise applies to the filtering of the self through a second language. This categorisation of bilinguals' experiences in separate languages throws light on bilinguals' feelings that the childhood or "first language corresponds by right to reality" (Besemeres, 2002: 18), and suggests that intensely emotional memories may lose some intensity and emotionality when they are articulated or translated in another language. This clearly has

parallel implications for the transfer of the self into another language and offers a possible motive for the feeling of having more than one self or of being unable to fully communicate the self of one language in another language. That is, the "greater emotional arousal associated with their first language compared to their second language" (Pavlenko, 2006: 257) reinforces the perception of split selves and posits the mother tongue as the vehicle of the 'true' self.[20]

Furthermore, due to the fact that "the language in which someone has lived since childhood is interwoven with the whole of who that person has been" (Besemeres, 2002: 19), when a new language is acquired the bilingual often perceives him or herself as inauthentic in that language. Whereas emotional connections in the mother tongue feel natural, real and come "straight from [the] heart" (Ye in Besemeres et al., 2007: 65), expressions in other languages learned later in life can feel unnatural, "fake and artificial" (Pavlenko, 2005: 147). For instance, as seen in Koven's study and as bilingual Dewaele comments here, expressing anger in a particular language may not have the same force or spontaneity: "We also argue in English which feels really fake to me […]. It feels so sterile arguing in English like I'm not actually getting rid of any of the emotional pressure" (Pavlenko, 2006: 137). The first language is also favoured for expressing affection, and bilinguals raising their children in a language environment different to their mother tongue "at times find themselves unable to interact with the children in a language that is not the language of their own childhood" (Pavlenko, 2005: 133). For example, Wierzbicka relates how she struggles when describing her granddaughter in English because her mother tongue, Polish, "is endowed with an emotional force that English doesn't have" (Besemeres et al., 2007: 98), and therefore she feels blocked in using typical English terms of endearment:

> I feel I couldn't use any of these [English] expressions about my little granddaughter, not only because they all leave me cold (not being anchored in my childhood experiences and thus having no visceral emotional resonance) but because their meaning does not fit my own way of thinking and feeling,

[20] It should, however, also be noted that "not all experiences can be coded linguistically since some [...] experiences can remain organized at a prelinguistic or presymbolic level" (Javier, 2007: 24), which could account for bilinguals' feeling of a gap between languages in that "there is something that cannot be totally and fully expressed in any of the[ir] languages." (Javier, 2007: 24)

and so they would not sound ‘true’ to me. (Besemeres et al., 2007: 98)

Similarly Lvovich affirms that although her daughter is more American, she speaks to her in her own mother tongue, Russian, and “know[s that her] daughter would sense the awkwardness and the wrongness if [she] spoke English to her.” (1997: 103) Another bilingual also reports that “[w]hen [her] children were born [she] wanted to use English just so that they would be accustomed to it from an early age but [she] just couldn’t. It sounded untrue.” (in Pavlenko, 2005: 133) It must be pointed out that again, these language choices are not governed by proficiency but rather by “the speaker’s desire for internal satisfaction derived from the use of a language that feels emotional and ‘natural’” (Pavlenko, 2005: 134), and although it is clear that a lack of competence in a language would contribute to a lack of naturalness, the emphasis is more on differences of emotionality and the association of words with an emotional world.

Impressions of inauthenticity can result in bilinguals feeling like they are “playacting” (Besemeres et al., 2007: 130). One bilingual confesses “I don’t feel quite real in German sometimes […]. I feel I’m acting a part.” (Pavlenko, 2006: 18), and another similarly, “I feel less myself when speaking any language other than German but not in a bad sense. I feel more like I am acting a persona.” (Pavlenko, 2006: 18) Bilingual Nancy Huston believes that this is an unavoidable consequence of immersion in a new language: “[a] person who decides, voluntarily, as an adult [...] to leave her native land and adopt a hitherto unfamiliar language and culture must face the fact that for the rest of her life she will be involved in *theatre, imitation, make-believe.*” (De Courtivron, 2003: 55) In keeping with previous mention of the *carnivalesque* and masks (see 3.1.2), Pavlenko likens this experience of detachment to Jungian theories of differentiating between the private self and the public projected persona or mask. That is, “when you use your first language you are yourself with all of your acquired habits but using another language you need to have a Mask (or Persona according to C.G. Jung) and it may give you a sense of being another Person” (2006: 18). This element of performance is endorsed by Huston who feels “like a linguistic transvestite [with] each transatlantic flight bec[oming] an exercise in metamorphosis” (De Courtivron, 2003: 164). Another bilingual likewise touches on the state of role-playing: “just using the appropriate words, I look reserved in English, rational in French, affected in Italian, as the respective cultures require. I am putting on different faces [...] to the point of not being myself.” (in Ogulnick, 2000: 130) Pavlenko emphasises, very importantly, that these feeling of being a

different person are in fact more precisely feelings of having a different persona in another language.

If acquiring another language entails adopting a new persona, then the crucial question is therefore: "So where is the real you? Huh? Let's say you decide to rip away the mask — what kind of face will be revealed?" (Huston in De Courtivron, 2003: 60) For Julien Green, ripping off the mask reveals the language which he feels lies deeper than the other: "a man may speak half a dozen languages fluently and yet feel at home in only one; that is the language in which he will think when he is alone." (1985: 186) This belief in a core mother tongue is clearly valuable in terms of feeling psychologically rooted and has consequences for identity when it is suppressed, as shall be discussed shortly. However, not all bilinguals are able to identify a single language in which they feel most comfortable. George Steiner, for example, conceives the existence of a 'true' mother tongue buried beneath the masks differently. In trying to ascertain whether a 'true' self or single language of the real self exists, Steiner proposes viewing his languages as a layering of "geological strata" (1998: 122). Although he experiences all of his first three languages "as perfectly equivalent centres" (1998: 120) of himself, he nevertheless wonders if there is "a first language after all, a *Muttersprache* vertically deeper than the other two?" (1998: 122): "In what language am *I,* suis-*je,* bin *ich,* when I am inmost? What is the tone of the self?" (Steiner, 1998: 125) He proposes a common underlying magma of the mind from which the various languages vertically emerge:

> And if there is a common centre, what geological or topological simile can provide a model? During the first eighteen to twenty-six months of my life, did French, English, and German constitute a semantic magma, a wholly undifferentiated agglomerate of linguistic competence? At some deep level of energized consciousness or, rather, pre-consciousness, do they still? Does the linguistic core, to continue the image, stay 'molten', and do the three relevant language streams intermingle completely, though 'nearer the surface' they crystallize into distinct formations? (1998: 123)

If a molten core exists in the depths of multiple existing languages, then Steiner is certain that, when speaking one language, there must be a certain "interference" (1998: 124) from the other languages that are still underlying even when they are not being spoken: "Is there a discernible, perhaps measurable sense in which the options I exercise when uttering words

and sentences in English are both enlarged and complicated by the ‘surrounding presence or pressure’ of French and German?” (1998: 124)

These reflections again conjure up the image of the palimpsest, which I am endorsing as a central metaphor along with that of ‘scar tissue’, as opposed to that of Steiner’s strata and molten core. The palimpsest signifies that if there is a language that is felt to be that of the true self, then it can be understood as the text that appears most clearly on the parchment of identity. Due to the “intertraffique of the minde” (Steiner, 1998: 124), even if the other languages undergo attrition and “atrophy like a limb that has fallen asleep too long” (Beaujour, 1989: 40), they are not entirely erased but are faintly visible underneath. Mukerjee parallels this metaphor by likening the workings of her languages to layers of paint: “My mother tongue was a linguistic primer, a thin whitewash over all that is pre-conscious and pre-rational. It was in English that I began to analogize. Successive coats of French and English have faceted Bangla, but it still shines through.” (Lesser, 2005: 23) Similarly Leonard Michaels employs the symbolism of currents: “Yiddish is probably at work in my written English. This moment, writing in English, I wonder about the Yiddish undercurrent. If I listen, I can almost hear it.” (Lesser, 2005: 220) In addition, Shirley Lim confirms that elements from other languages are carried over and present: “Like so many bilingual authors, I write in one language, English, even as the sociopolitical, cultural forces, and relationships that shaped and continue to shape me have been articulated and articulate themselves in languages and dialects other than English — Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, Mandarin.” (Lim in De Courtivron, 2003: 44)

Due to the fact that bilinguals functioning in their mother tongue are therefore nevertheless “affected by the knowledge of their second language” (Sachs in Pavlenko, 2006: 226) and vice versa, the “act of translation comes through with a great deal of noise, static and otherwise” (Shammas in De Courtivron, 2003: 126). Bilingual Ye also experiences this penetrating noise like hovering magnetic fields: “I knew that when I spoke English, it was always caught up in the waves of the magnetic fields created by my mother tongue or by Mandarin, my second language, in which I learned to write. I could always hear the loud background noise. They have always formed the inner layer of my English.” (Ye in Besemeres et al., 2007: 63) This static is therefore the side-effect of self-translation and equivalent to the fissures that emanate from the friction between the interconnected fluidity of language layers in the self.

In concluding, it must, however, be pointed out that although the mother tongue is usually the language that evokes the most intense emotional reactions and childhood memories, especially in late bilinguals, Pavlenko highlights that it is not always so. This is because a number of factors determine emotionality, such as proficiency, age and context of acquisition, and personal history of trauma. Pavlenko provides evidence of a personal experience in which she experiences similar feelings in English on her mother's death in Philadelphia as she did in Russian when she lost her boyfriend in Kiev: "This time the feeling is more acute, more profound [...] But still I recognize it. The feeling did not change just because I live in a new place and in a new language." (2005: 228) This reflection leads her to the following resolution that transfer into a new language and culture does not fully transform one's feelings: "My own experience of having lived as an adult in two languages and cultures tells me that if we think of emotions as inner states, some of my own most basic feelings, including love and grief, remained unchanged." (Pavlenko, 2005: 228) Pavlenko therefore concludes that "to think of the first language as the language of emotions or the self and the second language as the language of detachment is to oversimplify the relationship between languages, emotions, and identities in bi- and multilingualism" (2005: 236), since the language that complies to reality and "feels right" (Pavlenko, 2005: 236) can fluctuate. Furthermore, through the process of socialisation and emotional involvement, such as family ties, friendship and romantic involvement, the ties to the second language may therefore "conflict with or even supersede those established with the mother tongue" (Pavlenko, 2005: 36). The implications of this possible repositioning are of fundamental importance for self-translation, since second-language words "may become as emotionally meaningful and resonant as those of the L1 [first language], and elicit a similar or even higher emotional response" (Pavlenko, 2005: 214). This signifies that despite the hold the mother tongue has on the self, there is a possibility of a reconciliation of the self in another language.

4.3 Losses and gains in translating the self into a new language

> To speak a foreign language is to depart from yourself.
>
> (Kazin in Pavlenko, 1997: 87)

If the mother tongue is usually felt to be so tightly bound up with a sense of identity and belonging, then what happens to the self when the mother tongue must be taken over by another language? Given the strong tie between language and self, the loss of language can "threaten to strip the speaker of his or her self" (Bammer, 1994: xxi), and in this way it can even be "dangerous to try to break the maternal cord connecting a man to his own language. When it is ruptured or seriously damaged his whole personality may suffer disastrous repercussions." (Maalouf, 2003: 133). Displacement can therefore provoke an identity crisis in that the self is dislodged from the point of reference and worldview provided by the original language and culture. Being removed from the familiarity of everyday life and of the categorisations of the world in a particular way "creates a sense of dislocation. […] one's sense of identity and continuity gets short-circuited in a new physical and emotional environment" (Ogulnick, 2000: 3).

The challenge of self-translation likewise involves the necessity of translating "a formerly unquestioned sense of self" (Besemeres, 2002: 35) rooted in the mother tongue into a new language, which means struggling against memory and linguistic incongruency to find an equivalent in the present self. The difficulty, as with textual translation, stems from the struggle between remaining faithful to the original while simultaneously adapting to and making sense of the new context. The self and its culturally embedded values must be revised, but the inaccuracies of translation from one set of cultural perceptions to another create an inevitable fissure between the original and translated versions (see 4.1.2). In other words:

> [W]ho he or she has been need not and perhaps cannot be entirely replaced by who he or she is newly expected to be. For one thing, the language migrant's native self-orienting concepts [...] remain embedded in a transported language, which, however devalued relative to the new one, exists in some form alongside it. [...] The second language has to contest the first. The concepts which originally 'enter[ed] the ordering and articulating' of the person's

> experience and influenced how she 'saw the shape' of her life coexist (however conflictingly) with another such ordering and articulating body of concepts, which project their own, different life-shape for the migrant. (Besemeres, 2002: 26)

The "lengthy and difficult internal struggle" (Beaujour, 1989: 44) of self-translation therefore involves not only the loss of one language (usually the mother tongue), but also (re)learning how to be oneself in another language. Besemeres underlines the twofold nature of this depletion, since it entails not only the loss of the first language, but also "an active loss, more painfully complicit, incurred by living in the second language, taking on the beliefs it configures and hence displacing and 'betraying' the beliefs embodied by the native language." (2002: 9) As bilingual Irene Ulman acknowledges, a certain "void" (Ulman in Ogulnick, 2000: 31) is created, which constitutes one of the (perhaps irreversible) losses of the self between languages: "It's […] me adjusting my language to fit my sense of who I am. At times it can feel like I'm looking at myself from a distance, and it can take away from the immediacy of an experience and create moments of 'in-betweenness', or a kind of time lag." (Besemeres et al., 2007: 52) The separation from the first language "make[s] us strangers to ourselves" (Pavlenko, 2005: 22), leading to a sense of detachment and self-consciousness. This recalls the imagery of personas and masks, and seems to suggest that the masquerade is therefore not entirely ended by self-translation in that elements of incompatibility and estrangement persist. In other words, "[t]he acquisition of a second tongue destroys the 'naturalness' of the first; from then on, nothing can be self-evident in any tongue; nothing belongs to you wholly and irrefutably; nothing will ever 'go without saying' again." (Huston in De Courtivron, 2003: 62)

This dislodging of the self through the shifting frame of reference is identified by Aneta Pavlenko as the loss which constitutes the first phase of self-translation. Providing a vital foundation for the reasoning of my hypothesis, Pavlenko defines self-translation as "a two step process, which entails an initial phase of continuous loss followed by a second phase of gain and (re)construction[21]" (1997: 81). Drawing on Eva Hoffman's interpretation of her

[21] It must be noted that the use of parenthesis in "(re)construction", which I appropriate in the title of this thesis, confirms the view of the self as a continual construction conceived in language. This formation is then extended when the self settles in to a way of being in a new language.

personal experience (1989), Pavlenko identifies the first step in the process of self-translation as the loss of linguistic identity, which is heralded by the symbolic loss of a name (Pavlenko, 1997: 81). As mentioned previously (see 3.1.1), a name is a particularly salient point of reference for identity and the name in the mother tongue comes to be seen as a marker of the 'true' self.[22] For example, Ricardo Rodriguez's baptism into "*Rich-heard Road-ree-guess*" (1982: 9) "inaugurates his transformation" (Besemeres, 2002: 169) from a disadvantaged Spanish child to an American adult distanced from his family. After the alteration of a name comes the aching loss of "the inner speech, the private voice we use for talking to ourselves" (Pavlenko, 1997: 82), which is usually paralleled by the gradual attrition of the mother tongue.

The first phase of self-translation therefore begins with the loss of language and all it encompasses for the self. Language is seen as such an essential need that "to be without a language, or to be between languages, is as miserable in its way as to be without bread" (Kaplan in Bammer, 1994: 63), and Simone Weil similarly insists that "[n]o human being should be deprived of his *metaxu*, that is to say, of those relative and mixed blessings (home, country, tradition, cultures, etc.) which warm and nourish the soul and without which, short of sainthood, a *human* life is not possible." (Weil in Iyer, 2000: 111) Separated from their language forced bilinguals, such as immigrants, experience augmented feelings of alienation and marginalisation (see 3.1.3) as well as the phenomenon of *anomie*, which denotes "feelings of rootlessness, social isolation and personal disorientation [as well as] feelings of chagrin or

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[22] The different aspects of the self that a translated name can emphasise are also pointed out in Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*: "In English my name [Esperanza] means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing." (Cisneros, 1991: 10) Natasha Lvovich also interestingly emphasises the different feeling and "multicoloured picture" that a name has in each language because "[w]ith different sounds or combinations of sounds varying across languages, there appears the whole sensory picture and gamma of colors for each particular language" (1997:15) That is, "[her] daughter's name, Pauline [...] is a combination of gray and pink and resembles in French the feel and looks of the little stuffed mouse that she had been carrying with her from Moscow to Europe and to America. [...] Pronounced in English, however, the sensation of the name changes into something colder, almost icy, and the pink is whitish and hard, not at all like the stuffed Jewish mouse." (1997: 15)

regret as [they lose] ties in one group, mixed with fearful anticipation of entering a relatively new group" (Hoffmann, 1991: 145). As bilingual Eva Sallis observes, this in turn plunges the self into dislocation: "Learning Arabic was an unravelling, slow at first. I was undone. It became compulsive because there seemed to be no way to retreat, to repair this unravelling without undoing more in a search for material to remake myself." (Besemeres et al., 2007: 152)

Finding the self "slit and torn" (Maalouf, 2003: 37), the individual enters a third space (see 3.1.2) in which he / she is "caught between worlds" (Anzaldúa, 1987: *Introduction*): "An exile is not just someone who has lost his home; it is someone who can't find another, who can't think of another. Some no longer even know what home means. They reinvent the concept with what they've got" (Aciman, 1999: 21). The original home is to some degree lost, but the new home "*wird aber oft niemals wirklich Heimat sein*" (Scholl, 1999: 93), which leaves the language migrant feeling at sea:

> In search of their own, personal where and who, the displaced subjects find themselves on either side of the border, or, oftentimes, in the borderland itself, 'lost in translation', condemned to live forever in a no man's land of in-between. Some are quite satisfied with 'a home on the border'. (Pavlenko, 1997: 85)

For example, Helen Wolf admits that she has two exiles but no country and has ultimately come to the realisation that the identity that she strove to find is in fact "located at the elusive point where my two exiles meet, I also like to joke that this places me most accurately in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Which, I think, is an apt metaphor for someone who has never felt on firm ground anywhere." (Wolf in De Coutrivron, 2003: 164) Other bilinguals similarly emphasise "a feeling of being territorially lost" (Witcomb in Besemeres et al., 2007: 94) and dislocated: "I felt hobbled and helpless, like the washerman's donkey, belonging neither here nor there" (Lal in Besemeres et al., 2007: 34), as well as feeling isolated: "I don't feel that I totally belong to either of my two cultures" (Wong in Besemeres et al., 2007: 79).

The loss of language and original home comes to be seen as an (irrecuperable) loss of wholeness of the self. The newly acquired language feels more like a "stepmother tongue" (Pavlenko, 2006: 20), suggesting that although a loving and nurturing relationship can

develop, it can never fully replace the biological bond of the birth mother tongue in which the individual perceived him or herself to be natural and whole.[23] Even Nabokov confirms this loss in stating that by abandoning his language, he "risks his physical and spiritual wholeness" (Nabokov in Beaujour, 1989: 42), and describes his seemingly effortless switch from Russian to English as "exceedingly painful — like learning anew to handle things after losing seven or eight fingers in an explosion" (in Kellman, 2000: 54). These impressions are echoed by other bilinguals such as Ye, who feels that she cannot "fully express [herself and] though [English] has become [her] main language for communication, is just a shadow of [her]self", which makes her realise how important it is "to have a coherent sense of self, and to be sustained by it, from my body to my heart-mind" (Besemeres et al., 2007: 59). Ha-Yun Jung similarly has the sense of "not feeling whole in Korean or in English", which in turn makes him question whether "just one language" (Lesser, 2005: 160) can ever suffice to make himself understood.

Although we have all been exiled from the past and childhood, the strong association of childhood with the mother tongue leads those who are divided from their first language to believe that "something of that lost experience still exists somewhere, accessible (if at all) only through language"[24] (Lesser, 2005: 8). At sea, grappling with identity, the anchoring offered by the childhood tongue becomes even more revered. The mother tongue becomes "the madeleine, the way back" (Lesser, 2005: 24). The inability to recapture the past of the original language and the simultaneous lack of a past in the new language creates a fissure across which the deep emotions of the mother tongue struggle to reach the present. The individual is immersed in "anxiety about the lack of wholesome oneness, angst over the inability to bring together one's incommensurable worlds, and sadness and confusion caused by seeing oneself as divided, a self-in-between, a self in need of translation." (Pavlenko, 2006: 5) Having been divided between French and Spanish since early childhood bilingual

[23] Again I must emphasise that this 'wholeness' is in itself something of an illusion, since the self is never totally coherent, but, in the midst of disorientation, the former self is elevated to a greater coherence than it actually was so that it gives the individual something to cling on to. Furthermore, the image of the stepmother in fact points to the possibility of reconciliation in that the love of a stepmother, although somewhat different, can equal that of a birth mother.

[24] In a similar way that authors create "textual homes" (2.3.3), so to do language migrants find a portable sense of home in language.

writer Claude Esteban confirms this element of loss involved in translation: "I found it difficult for many years to overcome a strange laceration, a gap not merely between two languages but also between the mental universes carried by them; I could never make them coincide within myself." (Esteban in Pavlenko, 2006: 5)

The multiple losses incurred by the transition into another tongue are, however, gradually balanced, or perhaps possibly even surpassed, by the recreation of the self, which includes the repositioning of the present self in relation to the past self. This reorientation constitutes the second phase in Pavlenko's analysis of self-translation. Pavlenko distinguishes four essential steps in this phase of (re)construction, namely the assumption of others' voices, the subsequent birth of one's own new voice (often firstly in writing), the reconstruction of one's past via translation therapy, and finally, "continuous growth into new positions and subjectivities" (1997: 81). The first move entails recreating the self through social interaction and relationships with others until the void of expression is replaced with a translated and appropriated position.

As discussed previously (see 2.3.3), for the authors of language memoirs, the process of writing functions as a therapeutic means of reconciliation, combining the usual properties of autobiographical writing with the additional aim of reuniting the self across languages. The writing, or rather 'rewriting' of the past self that existed in the language of childhood provides, in addition to the new language, another means of distancing, and in turn is a vehicle for reflection:

> This rewriting of one's life story in another language represents above all translation therapy, the final stage of the healing process, prompted by the need to translate oneself and to ensure continuity by transforming and reintegrating one's childhood into one's new past. Without this move, one would be left with an unfinished life in one language, and a life, begun at midstream, in another. (Pavlenko, 1997: 83)

It is necessary, however, to point out that the rewriting of the self, like identity itself, is never complete. Although in mirroring textual translation, "each act of translation is an endeavour to abolish multiplicity and to bring different world-pictures back into perfect congruence" (Steiner, 1998: 246), entire congruency is elusive. The self undergoes a transformation,

incurring certain losses and gains and ultimately reaching some sort of wholeness, which is, however, a wholeness typical of a 'third space'. The un-wholeness of this whole is symbolised in the remnants of an accent:

> [a]n accent is the tell-tale scar left by the unfinished struggle to acquire a new language. But it is much more. An accent marks the lag between two cultures, two languages, the space where you let go of one identity, invent another, and end up being more than one person though never quite two. (Aciman, 1999: 11)

Thus, like with a palimpsest, the accent penetrates the new language and reflects aspects of the former self, making a clear text elusive. Nevertheless, the actual process of rewriting the self underlines the viability of self-translation. That is, it is necessary to recall that self-translation is possible "because the second language's concepts can [eventually] be to some extent taken on, internalized, in a way that parallels the acquisition of the first language" (Besemeres, 2002: 19). This in turn points to the path of reconciliation, since "as excruciating and anguishing as the journey through the borderland may be, for many there is a light at the end of the tunnel" (Pavlenko, 1997: 84). It is therefore essential, despite the pain and loss entailed in self-translation, to highlight the emergence of possible gains. As Eva Hoffman herself summarises, [25] it is necessary to keep in mind the relativity of language loss and the varying nature of its emotional impact on each individual:

> There are people for whom leaving one's mother tongue is a liberation; they feel they can invent new personae in new words, or finally express their true personality — a self that had been inhibited in their first language because of cultural constraints or early inhibitions. There are others who refuse the graft of an acquired speech altogether, perhaps because of some initial psychic rigidity, or just because the prospect of such profound change is too frightening. There are those who feel it is easier to say forbidden things in a

[25] This mature understanding is arrived at by Hoffman in her essay (2003) that serves as a postscript to *Lost in Translation* (1989) and is the result of reflections on the subjectivity of her own memoir at the time of writing it.

> language that does not brim with childhood associations and taboos and those for whom the adopted speech is a formal instrument, a psychic mask within which no transgression or breakage of decorum is possible. In other words [...] the kind of relationship one develops with an acquired language is deeply influenced by the kind of bond one had with one's mother or father tongue. (in De Courtivron, 2003: 53)

As seen with the possibility of the emotionality of the second language surpassing that of the first, many new bilinguals succeed in reconstructing themselves in another language in a way that positively includes new aspects of the self and a heightened self-consciousness. As mentioned previously, considering that there could be "a world of human experience which is closed to speakers of only one language" [26] (Besemeres et al., 2007: xv), the distinct vision that another language provides can be a means of liberation and enrichment. Similarly, "the more languages you know, the more open-minded, intellectually alert and perceptive you are likely to be." (Riemer, 1992: 5) For example, bilingual Molloy testifies that a new language can expand what a person finds funny through the appreciation of a different cultural type of humour: "I realized I could be funny in English in a way I could not in Spanish." (De Courtivron, 2003: 72) The exposure to other worldviews encapsulated in language and culture brings on an awareness of the limits and insularity of one's own understanding as well as the consciousness of the shaping of the self by language. That is, it leads us to "acknowledg[e] our multiplicity — that we are different selves in different contexts — and that there are many different standpoints from which people attempt to view the same reality" (Ogulnick, 1998: 142). For example, Lvovich notes that interaction with foreign friends enables one to learn about one's own nation and identity: "only the view from the outside and about the outside reveals much about the inside. I realized at that time that learning foreign languages with their cultures helped me to be more self-reflective and analyze things that had been considered as given and unquestionable." (1997: 27)

[26] This concept is alluded to in V.S Naipul's *Half a Life* (2001): "Ana was now at a language school in England. She said, 'I wanted to break out of the Portuguese language. I feel it was that that had made my grandfather such a limited man. He had no true idea of the world. All he could think of was Portugal and Portuguese Africa and Goa and Brazil. In his mind, because of the Portuguese language, all the rest of the world had been strained away." (154)

Acquiring a new language thus "allows one to transcend the self, to experience other perspectives and ways of being" (Ogulnick, 2000: 117). In this way, another language can provide a linguistic means of expressing that which cannot be expressed in the other language. For instance, Japanese women appreciate the way in which English allows them to express themselves "less stereotypically and more honestly, directly, and assertively" (Pavlenko, 2005: 138) than they would in Japanese due to the linguistic and cultural confines of the subtlety and politeness of Japanese. The opportunity that a new language offers to rise above and reinvent the self "to develop new ideas [and] to experience different emotions" (Ogulnick, 2000: 117) therefore indicates the expandability of the self in that the appropriation of another language "is seen as an extension of self and personhood, [and as] an extension of the range of meanings of which the individual is capable." (Riley, 2007: 219) Similarly,

> [b]y learning another man's language, you lose yourself to find yourself, you in a sense double yourself, you get a second character or personality — or you at least modify your character or personality, since you come to think and feel like him through your knowledge and understanding of his language. And by so doing you enlarge your field of consciousness, heighten your awareness, increase your powers of perception. (Krige in Kellman, 2000: 48)

The self is therefore not only 'lost in translation' but also found and above all, modified. In this way, the second language learning "necessitates reconstruction of one's linguistic, cultural and social identity, or at the least the development of new ones" (Pavlenko, 1997: 80), and the multiplicity and continual evolution of the self is affirmed.

4.4. Conclusions

In conclusion, keeping in mind Pavlenko's interpretation of self-translation as a twofold process of loss followed by eventual reconstruction, it is necessary to highlight the dual consequences of self-translation — in other words, the losses and potential gains. Although the immersion in a second language undoubtedly incurs losses and anguish as the self is dislodged from the associations that formed its identity, another language can also present individuals with the opportunity "to create new, more mature, appealing, and sophisticated

emotional selves" (Pavlenko, 2005: 215). These negative and positive transformations that the self undergoes, as well as bilinguals' perceptions of having different selves in different languages, again endorse the notion of a fluid and multiple self in continual construction.

The transformation of the self and the surfacing of new aspects are supported by the analogy of a palimpsest as a porous layering of identity. This image questions whether a 'true' language does or can exist, and although it acknowledges the appearance of a dominant language, it encourages a view of relativity. It embraces the awareness that firstly, the currently foremost language can shift its position in the interlayering of texts, and secondly, that the other languages continue to shine through in some way. It further exposes the possible incongruency between the self formed in the original language and the self that exists in the new language, and suggests how, given the interdependence between language and identity, aspects of the self could slip through this exchange of layers and be lost or principally, altered. A fixed and united rewriting of the self is thus elusive and the transposition of a new language on the self reveals the shadow of the underlying self of the past: the wound is healed but the 'scar tissue' lingers, irreversibly altering the skin.

Lastly, it must be acknowledged that although the challenge of defining and understanding the self is characteristic of the general human condition, the additional complex dimension of internal conflict created by living across and between more than one language heightens identity dilemmas and likewise the scale of loss and expansion. That is, "*le principe même de notre identité est la complexité*" (Schmeling in Rinner, 2006:15) and when the self needs to translate itself, this complexity acquires yet another layer.

Chapter 5
Exile and loss in *Lost in Translation* and *Heading South, Looking North*

5.1 Introduction

> *Comment être soi dans une langue autre?*
> (Devergnas in Besemeres et al., 2003: 3)

The switch from the original language marks the loss of the hold on the anchored self. This prompts Eva Hoffman and Ariel Dorfman to question what aspects of their languages as well as their selves are lost, and perhaps not found but altered, in the estranging process of dislocation. For Hoffman immigration signified "a great sense of rupture [...] There was a real sense of shock and perhaps something like a cultural trauma" (with Kriesler, 2000: 1). For Dorfman exile was similarly profoundly disorientating and destructive: "Exile is like a journey into death where you lose everything that gives meaning to your life." (Dorfman, 2010) Displacement stretches these authors between countries and languages, provoking problems of transfer and fracturing of the self, and in turn necessitating translation and (re)construction of the self. As author Ilan Stavans notes in his own language memoir *On Borrowed Words: A Memoir of Language*: "the switch from one passport to another is a dramatic mutation in identity, a metamorphosis by which the immigrant's life is forever defined." (2001: 179)

Eva Hoffman's autobiographic narrative *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1989) has been classified not only as "the most detailed description of language socialization and acculturation to date" (Pavlenko, 1997: 81), but also as the book that can be said to have launched the genre of language memoirs. Also, and perhaps most importantly, the book coined the term *self-translation* to describe "the experience of being forced to translate between two conceptual and emotional worlds, associated with one's native and learnt languages" (Besemeres et al., 2003: 1). As Besemeres points out, although Salman Rushdie refers to immigrants as "translated men" (1991), Hoffman's model of self-translation "emphasises the immigrant's sense of being at once translator and translated" (2002: 9).

In 1959 at age thirteen, Hoffman immigrated to Canada (and then later to America) from Poland with her family. The exile from her beloved Cracow in turn becomes an exile from her childhood self that was embedded in the sociolinguistic context of her birthplace. This uprooting strips her of her tools for interpreting the world, leaving her whole life and her very self 'lost in translation'. This notion is used as a metaphoric device as she traces the "gradual personality change" (Pavlenko, 1997: 81) that she undergoes as a result of the discordant ways of being encompassed by Polish and English. The central theme, encapsulated in the title and subtitle of the memoir, is therefore her attempt to make the transition between her Polish and English selves or, rather, she is mainly concerned with "the vicissitudes of coming into English and trying to transpose [her]self into a new verbal and cultural idiom." (Hoffman in De Courtivron, 2003: 49) Ultimately Hoffman manages to navigate the transfer and is able to (re)construct herself in such a way that she learns to live with both aspects of her self.

The theme and process of getting 'lost in translation' is reinforced through the symbolic structure of Hoffman's book. *Lost in Translation* is divided into three parts — *Part I: Paradise, Part II: Exile* and *Part III: The New World.* Each part is strongly indicative of the emotional states and progression of the narrator.[27] Although the focus of representation is thematic as opposed to chronological, the parts also mostly correspond to her experiences in each country: Ewa leaves her *Paradise* in Poland, is then forced to suffer the rupture of *Exile* in Canada as 'Eva', until Ewa / Eva[28] finds her place in *The New World* in America.

Paradise is a nostalgic and affectionate recollection of Hoffman's childhood in the stable, unquestioned Eden of Cracow. If *Part I* denotes Eden then *Part II* "offers up the myth of Eden and the Fall as a template for Hoffman's loss of Poland and Polish." (Kellman, 2000: 74) In *Exile*, Hoffman is expelled from being Ewa and plunges into being Eva, which constitutes the trauma of estrangement from her country and from her self. In other words, she feels the pang of her 'expulsion' from her first language and experiences "postlapsarian angst over [the] reluctant separation" (Kellman, 2000: 74). Marianna Hirsch suggests that the

[27] A symbolic structure denoting the journey of self-translation is also employed in Marjorie Agosín's *The Alphabet in My Hands: A Writing Life*, which is divided into *Part 1: Childhood* and *Part 2: Journey to the other America*.

[28] I shall distinguish between Ewa and Eva to signify the moment when self-translation, or the consciousness of her self embedded in language, began.

essence of these two parts is captured in two photographs of the author. The first photograph that portrays *Paradise* is found on the front cover of the book. It is in black and white and shows Ewa "smiling self-confidently" (in Bammer, 1994: 75) with her arm affectionately round her younger sister Alina, both wearing autumn coats, hats and boots, with a background of sparse trees. Ewa is in Poland, "the home which in her book is cast as paradise and the safe enclosures of Eden." (in Bammer, 1994: 75) During *Part II*, however, Hoffman describes another, rather contrasting photograph that denotes the estrangement from herself that Eva felt during this period. It is a photograph of her family taken about a year after their arrival in Vancouver: "I reject the image it gives of myself categorically. This clumsy looking creature, with legs oddly turned in their high-heeled pumps, shoulders bent with the strain of resentment and ingratiation, is not myself." (1989: 110) In *Part III*, however, the final part of the memoir that covers Hoffman's student years and subsequent career, the reconstruction of the author's self becomes evident as her willingness to engage in her new reality increases, thereby bringing about an eventual reunion of her two worlds.

Ariel Dorfman is also acutely aware of the dilemma of self-translation across language and culture. In *Heading South, Looking North: a bilingual journey*, he records his search for a unified identity, shuttling physically and psychologically between the two Americas and their languages. Again the title sets the main theme of duality by evoking the image of the author being simultaneously drawn to both South and North America. Dorfman is caught in a linguistic, geographic and political tug-of-war in which he wills himself twice to become monolingual, yet his resolution is overpowered by various social and historical forces, especially the Chilean coup of 1973, which parallels his personal path. That is, "Dorfman's personal biography is inseparable from inter-American history, and his life has been connected in uncanny repetition to many of the region's most significant historical events." (McClennen, 2010: 1) Stating that his memoir is "among other things, an exploration of how we shape history as it shapes us, how a language speaks us as much as we speak it" (in Lesser, 2005: 209), Dorfman therefore reflects on language and its pivotal role in the development of his personal and political self (even the cover of the book captures this duality: a photo of the young Dorfman is superimposed on a photo depicting the Chilean revolution which is juxtaposed with a photo of the Statue of Liberty).

Towards the end of his narrative Dorfman learns to accept that eclipsing either language is not possible. He is of both the North and the South, and reconciles himself to a world and a self where English and Spanish co-exist. The use of the word *journey* in the subtitle makes reference to the journey as an ancient topos that indicates life as a voyage and thus summonses Dorfman's complex process of identity navigation (see 2.2 on the *Bildungsroman* and the journey as a narrative archetype representing identity formation). Furthermore, *journey* indicates that Dorfman's "travels in bilingualism and cross-culturalism persist, that they began well before his exile from Pinochet, and that they have not ended" (McClennen, 2010: 200), thereby enforcing the central idea of identity as a lifelong process of construction.

The distinct structure of *Heading South, Looking North* similarly further emphasises the key themes, mainly Dorfman's position as "a Janus face, a being who straddles the north and the south, always tied to both to some degree." (McClennen, 2010: 86) The nonlinear structure of the memoir, which Dorfman describes as "cinematic [...] going back and forth in time" (Postel, 1998) reflects the fogginess of memory and principally embodies his shifting allegiances and the ruptured process of his identity construction, which is "a back and forth operation, a crossing and recrossing of the borders of [his] own mind." (in Lesser, 2005: 213) Following the juxtaposition of the title, the memoir is divided into two parts — *Part I: North and South* and *Part II: South and North*. Each of the parts in turn has seven chapters with titles that alternate between *The Discovery of Death...* and *The Discovery of Life and Language...* Apart from the first two chapters which focus on *an Early Age*, all of the chapters on the *Discovery of Death* are centred on the coup of 1973 until Dorfman's exile. The other chapters on the *Discovery of Life and Language* document Dorfman's life chronologically up until the coup. Dorfman describes these two alternating sequences that centre on traumatic, near-death moments as follows: "One is how death is stalking me, moving me towards exile, and towards becoming the man who is now sitting here with you, uttering these words. Then there's the other sequence in which the little boy, the adolescent, the young man moves towards that encounter with death without knowing it." (with Postel, 1998) In addition to signifying the internal identity shifts that Dorfman undergoes, the oscillation between the author's personal development and the events surrounding the coup indicates their interdependency and an awareness of "how dates and places can change one's life forever" (McClennen, 2008). In other words, the "antagonism between understanding his identity as composed of choices exercised by freewill and as determined by social and historical forces persists throughout the text." (McClennen, 2010: 194) The fifteenth and last

chapter entitled *Epilogue: A Final Chapter in Which We Deal with Life and Language and Death One More Time* unites both sequences and symbolically announces Dorfman's ultimate reconciliation and that "[t]he book is really about being fractured and about becoming whole" (Dorfman with Postel, 1998).

This chapter will therefore focus on the loss and sense of absence that Hoffman and Dorfman incur when switching languages as they explore their experience of disorientation. With reference to previous discussions of language and identity, cutting the umbilical cord to the mother tongue can prove profoundly unsettling, placing the self under a magnifying glass and revealing the fragmented nature of identity.

5.2 Displacement and loss

> When the mermaid of the fairy story migrates from sea to land,
> exchanging her tail for legs and feet, she must live also with permanent pain.
>
> (Sallis in Besemeres et al., 2007: 151)

5.2.1 The perceived coherence of the state of pre-loss

In these memoirs the predominant motif of loss and uprooting is contrasted with the longing for a cohesive, unaltering and undisputed sense of self. In *Lost in Translation* this perceived wholeness prior to loss, is represented in *Part I* and corresponds to "the Edenic construction" (Hirsch in Bammer, 1994: 77) of the author's childhood in Cracow, a city that she "loved as one loves a person" (4)[29]. To the young Ewa, Cracow is not only her unquestioned home, but incarnates "both home and the universe" (5). It is the place where she feels "utter contentment" and the place that has nurtured her dreams ("my childhood, my pleasures, my safety, my hopes for becoming a pianist" — 4).

[29] When clearly quoting from *Lost in Translation* (1989) and *Heading South, Looking North* (1998) in Chapters 5 and 6, I shall provide only the page numbers.

Above all, Cracow is seen as the ultimate nirvana in that it contains an uninterrupted sense of self that is rooted in the Polish language: "Polish words described the world effortlessly, and I loved the sense that the world was thus word-shaped — loved it with an intensity that bordered, sometimes, on a sort of childish ecstasy, or preesthetic bliss." (in De Courtivron, 2003: 52) In this way, Hoffman equates the very formation of her identity to the Polish language and culture, with which her coexistence was "unusually happy and harmonious" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 52): "All it has given me is the world, but that is enough. It has fed me language, perceptions, sounds, the human kind. It has given me the colors and the furrows of reality, my first loves." (74) This interpretation coincides with the belief (see 4.2.4) that the mother tongue is the seat of the deepest emotions and of the original or true self. Hoffman explains how sometimes people equate their first language to their true language that corresponds to reality in a unique way and contains an "aura of sacrality. Because we learn it unconsciously, at the same time as we are learning the world, the words in one's first language seem to be equivalent to the things they name. They seem to express us and the world directly."[30] (in Aciman, 1999: 49) The author thus equates her sense of self to Polish and the existence she led in it:

> the country of my childhood lives within me with a primacy that is a form of love. [...] The absoluteness of those loves can never be recaptured: no geometry of the landscape, no haze in the air, will live in us as intensely as the landscapes that we saw as the first, and to which we gave ourselves wholly, without reservations. [...] All we have to draw on is that first potent furnace, the uncomparing, ignorant love, the original heat and hunger for the forms of the world, for the here and now. (74–75)

In a similar way that Poland provides a "pure [and] unthreatened" (Besemeres, 2002: 39) identity, so too does Hoffman see her childhood, its memories and its language as the "source of stability and integrity for the self" (Besemeres, 2002: 38):

[30] Luc Sante similarly maintains that although his "second language has turned out to be [his] principal tool, [his] means for making a living, and it lies close to the core of [his] self-definition, [his] first language, however, is coiled underneath, governing a more primal realm." (1998: 123)

> How absurd our childish attachments are, how small and without significance. Why did that one, particular, willow tree arouse in me a sense of beauty almost too acute for pleasure, why did I want to throw myself on the grassy hill with an upwelling of joy that seemed overwhelming, oceanic, absolute? Because they were the first things, the only things. It's by adhering to the contours of a few childhood objects that the substance of our selves — the molten force we're made of — molds and shapes itself. (74)

Hoffman craves the certainty of self she felt as a child, yet, away from Poland, cannot rekindle that sense of wholeness. This pressing attempt to "recapture the past" (222) is symbolised by the photography that Eva and her childhood friend Zofia analyse during their surprise reunion in New York. Looking at the photograph they "feel the madeleine's sweet cheat: 'Oh my God,' Zofia keeps saying, in mixed delight and befuddlement. We can't jump over such a large time canyon. The image won't quite come together with this moment." (222)

After Hoffman's immigration, childhood and Polish come to represent the time when she was "not yet divided!" (74). In the "hovering moment" (4) as her move to Canada is imminent, Ewa has a "premonition of absence" (4) and of an "enormous, cold blankness" (4) for which she will need "a whole new geography of emotions" (4). The contrast with the fullness of her "mythic place of origin and plenitude to another space of exile" (Hirsch in Bammer, 1994: 88) is clear. Ewa feels her "first, severe attack of nostalgia, or *tęsknota* — a word that adds to nostalgia the tonalities of sadness and longing" (4), and in preparation she starts to distance herself from the people and places she has loved and that now cause her pain, "like some gnawing scruple, or splinter lodged in a thumb"(23). She is highly sensitive, "like a mimosa" (82) and starts to become conscious of the transition she will go through: "As I wander around Cracow with my friends in the last few days, everything becomes heightened […] Ordinary streets become luminous with the light of loss." (88) This awareness marks the start of the crucial switch (induced by the introduction of another language) when the natural, unconscious way of being can no longer be taken for granted and must be recognised for the construction that it is. The self and language no longer feel inherent: "When we learn a language in adulthood, we know that the words in it 'stand for' the things they describe; that the signs on the page are only signs — arbitrary, replaceable by others." (Hoffman in Aciman, 1999: 49) This is the moment when we leave "the home of our childhood and origin,

which is a given" (Hoffman in Aciman, 1999: 60) and must now embark on the active construction of "the home of our adulthood, which is achieved only through an act of possession, hard-earned, patient, imbued with time, a possession made of our choice, agency, the labor of understanding, and gradual arrival." (Hoffman in Aciman, 1999: 60) As she steps onto the ship that will take her and her family to Canada, Ewa is therefore "pried out" (4) of her unequivocal paradise and into the "great unknown" (89) of the world and of her self. The "fluid current of life [...] suddenly stopped flowing" (88): "I was being pushed out of the happy, safe enclosures of Eden." (5) She marks the train journey that took her to the ship as the moment that splits her self in two: "From now on, my life will be divided into two parts, with the line drawn by the train." (100) As the sea voyage on the *Batory* ship ends, Ewa feels severed from her grounding roots: "The brief *Batory* interlude is over, and so is the narrative of my childhood." (95)

In *Heading South, Looking North,* Ariel Dorfman does not mourn the loss of a childhood Eden in itself, but rather longs for a unitary, stable, monolingual self. However, he does affirm the formative power of language and recognises Spanish, the language which first touched him at birth, as an instrument for perceiving and existing in the world, a way of defining the self. Most importantly, language presents a means of salvation from exile, the "first exile" (12) being birth. That is, if Hoffman's mythic 'Fall' is from the Eden of her Polish childhood, Dorfman is rescued from the 'Fall' of birth into oblivion by the nurturing of Spanish:

> I was falling, like every child who was ever born, falling into solitude and nothingness, headlong and headfirst, and my mother, by her very words, by the mere act of formulating her fear in a human language, inadvertently stopped my descent by introducing me to Spanish, by sending Spanish out to catch me, cradle me, pull me back from the abyss. I was a baby: a pad upon which any stranger could scrawl a signature.[31] A passive little bastard, shipwrecked, no ticket back, not even sure that a smile, a scream, my only weapons, could help me to surface. And then Spanish slid to the rescue [...]

[31] See Maalouf (3.2)

> Spanish was there at the beginning of my body or perhaps where my body ended and the world began, coaxing that body into life as only a lover can, convincing me slowly, sound by sound, that life was worth living, that together we could tame the fiends of the outer bounds and bend them to our will. That everything can be named and therefore, in theory, at least in desire, the world belongs to us. That if we cannot own the world, nobody can stop us from imagining everything in it, everything it can be, everything it ever was. (12–13)

However, already early on in the memoir, Dorfman hints at the lack of Spanish's endurance to protect and fully encompass his identity: "It promised, my Spanish, that it would take care of me. And for a while it delivered on its promise." (13) He alludes to the looming threat of English, which would, against his will ("by men in shadows who had other plans for me" — 13) conquer him, as Spanish had done to his parents: "[it] wrenched them from the arms[32] of their original language." (13) Indeed, when he is two years old, Dorfman is forced by political reasons into the English language when his father has to flee Argentina due to fascism. However, he soon abruptly rejects his first language for the allure of America and its media culture: "I fell in love, not only with the language, but I fell in love with everything that came with it." (Dorfman, 2010) However, at the age of twelve, Dorfman enters another politically driven exile (McCarthyism expelled his left-wing father from the United States). Despite his resistance to leave his beloved America and its language, he nonetheless finds himself not simply "at the mercy of Spanish" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 32), but drawn to it like a "lover who had been patiently awaiting my torrid return" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 33) and he soon 'betrays' his English in an attempt to become fully Latin American.

The duality of Dorfman's languages and his exile from childhood therefore take on a less linear character (in accordance with his entire memoir), as he moves between languages, reaching for the one that will save him from the 'Fall' of a split identity.[33] Like Hoffman, he is highly sensitive ("this extreme sensitivity, that has always boiled out of me" — 12), thus

[32] This image of embracing arms again reinforces the nurturing quality of a mother tongue.

[33] Said also perceives his sense of self as "split in different parts" (281) that constitute an "unreconciled duality" (143)

elevating his level of consciousness and making him conducive to self-reflection regarding these transitions.

5.2.2 Loss and the Jewish question

In both *Lost in Translation* and *Heading South, Looking North*, the theme of displacement is emphasised by the underlying motif of the "wandering Jew" (Stavans, 2001: 7). Both authors are Jewish and although they are not orthodox and their Jewishness is not an overt topic in their memoirs it is nevertheless significant in that it augments their mark of exile. Being Jewish, the authors automatically inherit a legacy of the awareness "of the challenges of exile, the courage required to start over in a strange land, and the inevitable sense of loss such move[s] entail" (Agosín, 2000: xx). This tradition of loss is thus accompanied by the knowledge of "the need to reinvent oneself" (Agosín, 2000: 59). The authors' Jewishness therefore serves primarily as a symbol of dislocation, loss and a fractured identity, which adds a third dimension of uprooting to their already dual identities, but also as a metaphor for a "chameleon"-like (Stavans, 2001: 185) state of forced adaptability. As Stavans remarks, the Jewish condition is also characterised by a history of linguistic multiplicity: "as a Jew in a long chain of generations, I was a wandering soul, inhabiting other people's tongues." (2001: 224). In this way, Hoffman and Dorfman are linked to Jewish history and to

> a people forced to wander through lands that echo with the sounds of alien tongues [since] for most of their troubled history, knowledge of several languages has been a crucial survival mechanism; language has been crucial both to the survival of their distinctive culture and to their accommodation with the surrounding nations that threatened them. More so than for any other people, language has defined Jewish culture. [...] two, three, or more languages formed the basis of the total polysystem by which Jewish culture functioned during any given era. (Kellman, 2000: 85–86)

The Jewish predisposition to exile similarly anticipates the condition of being "disoriented as ever, without a place to call home."[34] (Stavans, 2001: 215) This brings about not only the need for the creation of some sort of internal portable home, but also the longing for "a lost paradise and a promised land" (Hoffman in Aciman, 1999: 53), which, in a similar way to the elevated memory of childhood, takes on an imaginary dimension of representation. That is:

> The Jews have had the most prolonged historical experience of collective exile; but they survived their Diaspora — in the sense of preserving and maintaining their identity — by nurturing a powerful idea of home. That home existed on two levels: there were the real communities that Jews inhabited in various countries; but on the symbolic and perhaps the more important plane, home consisted of the entity 'Israel', which increasingly became less a geographic and more a spiritual territory, with Jerusalem at its heart. While living in dispersion, Jews oriented themselves toward this imaginative center of the world, from which they derived their essential identity. (Hoffman in Aciman, 1999: 41)

In *Lost in Translation* Hoffman admits being drawn in by the sense of belonging that Israel appears to offer and feels that her identity would be more secure there than in Canada: "But if leave we must, I want to at least go to a place that [...] I've heard called our 'real home.' […] This is where Jews can feel that they are in their own place, at nobody's mercy" (85). Although Ewa's parents decide against partaking in the common fight for a true home for Jews in Israel, their immigration is propelled by their Jewishness, which points to the socio-historic and political forces that bring about displacement and the link between the personal and political threads of a story. The family's exile is not a forced exile ("they wanted it" — 4), however they are acutely aware of anti-Semitism and feel ill at ease as Jews in Communist Poland ("it is also hostile territory" — 84). Thus they "are driven by harsh circumstance, but the element of voluntarism, of choice, is there for [them]" (in Aciman, 1999: 42). Ewa's father is lured by the promise of Canada, which appears to be "the real land

[34] Agosín comments how she also grew up with this inescapable legacy of exile: "My grandmother was the daughter of immigrants, as were all my relatives. The suitcases strewn around the house resonated loudly. The words Diaspora, exile, refugee featured prominently in my childhood lexicon." (2000: 66)

of milk and honey" (84), and when in 1956 the ban on emigration for Jews is unexpectedly lifted, they seize the opportunity to leave "a war-ravaged, impoverished country" (with Kreisler, 2000). Their departure is both voluntary and necessary[35]; it is one of those "departures that [is] neither entirely chosen nor entirely forced, and that [is] chosen and forced at the same time" (83). Ewa is thus aware of this "undesired burden" (Kellman, 2000: 85) of anti-Semitism and, like Marjorie Agosín who feels that "[b]eing Jewish was like having an open wound that never healed" (2000: 22) or like "suffering from a chronic illness" (2000: 35), Ewa associates Jewishness with pain: "Jewishness, until now, has been filled with my mother's tears" (32). However, she cannot escape her roots in Jewish suffering and her family's persecution during World War II (close relatives were deported and killed and her parents barely survived in hiding): "the pain of this — is where I come from, and [...] it's useless to try to get away" (25), "I can't draw away from it" (24).

Being Jewish is therefore an undeniable part of her identity ("So being Jewish is something definite; it is something that I am." —32), and Hoffman claims that she "fully identifie[s]" (Kreisler, 2000) herself both as a Jewish person and as a Polish person and aims to "integrate these two parts of the psyche which were equally formative, equally important in [her] growing up" (Kreisler, 2000). Jewishness is therefore an additional element in her dichotomy, which is exacerbated by further identity dilemmas when she moves to Canada. Although Stavans recognises the positive aspect of Jewish hybridity ("I cherish it as an asset, for it gave me the world-view I have as a diaspora Jew: a chameleon" — 2001: 185), Eva considers it a reason for the difficulty she has in recreating her self in Canada, since it distracted from the identity challenges of other exiles:

> I think, sometimes that we were children so overshadowed by our parents' stories, and without enough sympathy for ourselves, for the serious dilemmas of our own lives, and who thereby couldn't live up to our parents' desire —

[35] The decision of Marjorie Agosín's Jewish family to leave Chile is similarly voluntary, but is tied to politics, since it is their only choice if they do not want to live under a dictator: "Salvador Allende was a doctor and my father's friend. When he died, we left. No one threw us out. No one blindfolded us. But we knew that a life of gags and fear was pointless. That's why we left, to no longer be from a place of gendarmes and repugnant dictators. Suddenly night fell and, tired, we learned the names of other cities and other lands." (2000: 101)

> amazing in its strength — to create new life and to bestow on us a new world. And who found it hard to learn that in this new world too one must learn all over again, each time from the beginning, the trick of going on. (230)

However, at the same time, Eva later draws on the legacy of strength and the will to survive. Feeling unanchored, Eva's Jewishness briefly offers a sanctuary and a point of stability, in terms of retaining dignity in isolation and difficult times:[36] "That's what it means to be a Jew — a defiance of those dark and barbaric feelings. Through that defiance, one upholds human dignity." (33) This attitude helps her in some way to transcend her pain and find honour:

> I learn to measure myself against no one and to feel at home everywhere. Not envying is the condition of my dignity, and I protect that dignity with my life. In a sense, it is my life — the only base I have to stand on […] I have my essential humanity, that essential humanity which I learned to believe in as a Jewish girl in Poland, and which I've now salvaged with the help of withdrawal and indifference. (139)

Withdrawal and alienation from society and from the self is another trait that reverberates with the Jewish condition and that often goes hand in hand with "isolation [and a] sense of being on the margins of history" (Stavans, 2001: 185). Already as a child Ewa is made conscious of the mark of otherness that Jewishness brings when her mother says: "They'll tell you that you are worse than them [...] but you must know that you are not. You're smart, talented — you're the equal of anybody.'" (32), and she realises that sadly it is not always taken for granted that "Jews are human the way other people are human." (33) Stavans confirms that being a Jew in Mexico relegates him to "always be[ing] a welcome guest in a rented house, one [he] can never fully own" (2001: 23) and Agosín similarly testifies that "[t]o be Jewish in Chile was to be an intruder, a guest who spoke the same language, went to the same school, played hopscotch, but was nevertheless strange, ugly, big-nosed." (2000:

[36] In a similar way, for other displaced Jews such as Ilan Stavans, their Jewishness can provide a sense of belonging and abstract rootedness in a portable homeland: "I was still as disoriented as ever, without a place to call home. […] My response was a reawakening of my own Jewishness." (2001: 216)

31) Being Jewish therefore emphasises issues of a lack of belonging and estrangement, of being "always the other,[37] always translated" (Agosín, 2000: 35).

The heritage of estrangement and the fate of the archetypal wandering Jew is also felt by Ariel Dorfman who asserts that his "family is almost branded with this idea of the exile, of wandering" (2010). Although Dorfman and his father were persecuted for political reasons, his grandparents' fled anti-Semitic persecution, enforcing a legacy of forced migrations and loss that he inherits and passes on: "like any child of immigrants, like my parents before me, like my own sons in their own uprooted lives when it would become their turn to change countries the way others, perhaps most of those who read these words, change brands of cereal." (41) He seems to accept that the state of exile and homelessness is a type of family legacy imposed by history: "Twice I had made the attempt to settle down, twice I had adopted a country and a culture and a language, and both times I had found myself fleeing, I had found myself homeless in spite of all my efforts, and now it was all going to begin again, all over again." (275) In other words, Dorfman's "Jewish heritage, which is more cultural than spiritual, signals patterns and tropes that continue to influence his life: exile, wandering, loss, struggle, and the search for a community." (McClennen, 2010: 3)

With exile also comes Dorfman's fate of bilingualism that was carried down from his parents ("My father was bilingual and remains so to this day" — 21; "A world that would demand of my mother, as it demands of all immigrant children, that she abandon the language of her ancestors" — 17) who moved between languages:

> The trajectory of my life is one of exiles. Every time I've gone into exile, or my parents have gone into exile, there's a change in language. The story begins at the opening of the twentieth century, when my parents had to flee Europe. My father left Odessa [...], my mother Kishinev [...]. They each ended up in Argentina, where they met — in Spanish. They were both bilingual —

[37] This sense of otherness and lack of belonging is also felt by the protagonist of W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, who is an orphaned Jewish boy from Prague who is adopted by a Welsh couple. He declares that he is "ill at ease" (125) and "from nowhere, so to speak" (262), belonging neither in London nor "indeed anywhere else in the world" (254).

> my mother in Yiddish[38] and Spanish, my father in Russian and Spanish. (with Postel, 1998)

Like Hoffman, Dorfman's identity struggle is therefore not only between his Spanish and English selves, but is further complicated by his Jewish background: "I was a hybrid, part Yankee, part Chilean, a pinch of Jew, a *mestizo* in search of a center."[39] (220) For Dorfman the Jewish condition further reinforces the importance of memory and the need to write to honour the dead. Agosín suggests that "for Jews in general, remembering is [not only] a way of rescuing the past" (2000: 58), but that "[t]o forget was impossible. Oblivion added humiliation to the torment that had been war. For Jews, oblivion is high treason." (2000: 126) In this tradition Dorfman pays homage to the voiceless victims of Pinochet's regime. That is, "Jewish themes influence [Dorfman's] treatment of exile when he turns to storytelling as a way of preserving history and memory." (McClennen, 2010: 20)

In conclusion, although their Jewishness is not a dominant argument in either memoir, it is nevertheless significant in that it underlines the key themes of exile, homelessness and a fractured, multilingual identity, since "being Jewish ha[s] to do with what was hopelessly lost" (Agosín, 2000: 58). It likewise highlights the necessity for revision and translation of the self and an inherited predisposition to endure this process.[40] That is, considering the challenges of deciphering a new culture, it could be deduced that a Jewish background that constitutes an inherently more complex experience of culture might equipt these authors with a more sensitive cultural 'tool kit' (see 3.2) and a greater (underlying) awareness of the multiplicity of identity.

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[38] Stavans mentions how for his displaced parents and grandparents in Mexico, Yiddish represented "the conduit of tradition" and "a tool of continuity" (2001: 77)

[39] Stavans recognises a very similar hybridity that includes both the Jewish and Latin American facets of his "hybrid identity" (2001: 30): "I was a Yiddish-speaking Mexican Jew, and it was time I came to terms with that fact." (2001: 216)

[40] Stavans succinctly and humorously summarises how being Jewish highlights and further elaborates on identity dilemmas: "Abbe Eban said it better: Jews are like everybody else ... except a little bit more." (in Kellman, 2003: 114)

5.3 Loss of language and the self

> The act of speaking a different language threatens to strip the speaker of his or her self.
>
> (Bammer, 1994: xxi)

5.3.1 Renaming and redefining the self

As mentioned previously, separation from a home and a mother tongue can severely impact on the stability of identity and one's connection to the world. Hoffman's arrival in Canada thus signals her entry into *Exile*. Even before leaving Poland, Ewa felt negatively about her new country ("my mind rejects the idea of being taken there" — 4) and when she arrives she resists her new environment, both linguistically ("I don't want to let the sounds in: I don't think I like English" — 91) and otherwise: "These peaks and ravines, these mountain streams and enormous boulders hurt my eyes — they hurt my soul. They're too big, too forbidding and I can't imagine feeling that I'm part of them" (100). Ewa is "suddenly cast out of [her] familiar surroundings" (Sebald, 2001: 228) and this rupture leaves her feeling depressed ("I sleep through the day and the night, and my parents can't shake me out of it." — 100), dislodged and overcome by fear. This fear is symbolised in a disturbing dream that further underscores the dream-like quality of Hoffman's new life in which she is disconnected from her Polish reality:

> I have a nightmare […] I know, in this dream, what it is to be cast adrift in incomprehensible space; I know what it is to lose one's mooring. I wake up in the middle of a prolonged scream. The fear is stronger than anything I've ever known. […] The primal scream of my birth into the New World is a mutative insight of a negative kind — and I know that I can never lose the knowledge it brings me. (104)

The first incident that jolts the author into a new reality in which she is in danger of losing her self, is the abrupt change of her name. On Ewa and her sister's first day of school, the

teacher immediately alters their names to be easily pronounceable in English — Ewa mercilessly becomes Eva and Alina becomes Elaine. Keeping in mind the importance of a name as a crucial point of reference for identity (see 3.1.1 and 4.3), this renaming is the first significant step in Eva's alienation from her (former Polish) self, or, as Pavlenko (1997) classifies it, the first step in self-translation:

> My sister and I hang our heads wordlessly under this careless baptism. The teacher then introduces us to the class, mispronouncing our last name — "Wydra" — in a way we've never heard before. We make our way to a bench at the back of the room; nothing much has happened, except a small, seismic mental shift. The twists in our names takes them a tiny distance from us — but it's a gap into which the infinite hobgoblin of abstraction enters. Our Polish names didn't refer to us; they were as surely us as our eyes or hands. These new appellations, we ourselves can't yet pronounce, are not us. They are identification tags, disembodied signs pointing to objects that happen to be my sister and myself. We walk to our seats, into a roomful of unknown faces, with names that make us strangers to ourselves. (105)

This metamorphosis, and "how it hurt to be suddenly called by a new name" (Sebald, 2001: 45), pronounces not only the "shattering loss of their linguistic identity" (Pavlenko, 1997: 81) but also the loss of her self since the corruption of Eva's first and last names is equally felt to be a corruption of her hitherto undisputed core identity[41]: "*Du monde familier, rassurant où*

[41] Agosín likewise experiences the distortion of her mispronounced name as a vanishing of her identity: "Perhaps I had also disappeared. No one could pronounce my last name without breaking into laughter, no one knew who I was. I myself unable to feel at home in that lost territory where I had been set ashore and abandoned." (2000: 103) Similarly, Gerda Lerner comes to realise how much the correct pronunciation of her name means to her and consequently how the mispronunciation pains her: "Recently, in trying to think about some of the long-range effects of my refugee status I became aware of something as a problem which I thought was not really a problem for me. I have a German name which is unpronounceable by English speakers and thus is inevitably mispronounced. I accepted that mispronunciation as the proper form of address for me, came to use it myself and have done so for fifty years. I became aware of the disjunction only when I spent some time in German-speaking countries and heard my name pronounced correctly. Each time that happened, it gave me pleasure. That made me realize that it pained me that my own children, my husband, my best friends could

la langue maternelle renforçait le sentiment de Heimlichkeit, les deux jeunes filles sont transposées, brusquement dans un monde où elles deviennent étrangères elles-mêmes. Avec leurs noms, leurs identités subissent un « déplacement » et ce qui semblait si solide, perd sa consistance." (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 189)

In *Heading South, Looking North* Dorfman also draws attention to the value of a name as an identity marker that "project[s] meaning" (McClennen, 2010: 2). However, in Dorfman's case a name change assumes a far more central function as a tool in the multiple process of identity (re)construction. That is, "[i]nventing and reinventing himself through language, Dorfman create[s] new identities with each move" (Eidse et al., 2004: 277), announcing each identity with a new name. The fundamental difference between his and Hoffman's name change is that it is Dorfman's own decision to baptise himself not once, but twice, and thus these experiences do not contain the same element of bewildering trauma as do Hoffman's.

As with the rest of his life, Dorfman's resolution to redefine his identity occurs in relation to a political background. In his desperate "insanity" (in Lesser, 2005: 215) to become an authentic all-American kid, he identifies his disliked name, Vladimir (his parents named him after Vladimir Lenin), as the main factor preventing this transition in "red-baiting America" (79) as this was at the height of Cold War fears and his name had obvious associations with Communism:

> I took this crusade against my past to its extreme. Because there had been, all these years, one vestige from my previous life that reminded me and everybody else how different I really was: my name. It stood between the United States and me, forced me to recollect every day, every moment of the day, how far I really was from being irreversibly American, how tainted I was by both Russia and Latin America. […] What did my name mean? It means that I can't conform, that I can't make believe I'm from here, that's what it means. (78– 79)

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never really pronounce my name. I had buried that pain and refused to acknowledge it. It was, so I thought, a trivial matter. I no longer think so" (1997:42)

During the unwelcome sea journey from his beloved New York to Chile, that becomes "a watershed moment in Dorfman's quest for acceptance in U.S. culture" (McClennen, 2010: 2), he thus takes a drastic step in trying to conform and chooses a name that would "preserve" (Eidse et al., 2004: 246) an English identity — he is reborn as Edward: with "determination" (80) he "carefully plan[s] the demise of Vlady and the crowning of Edward." (80) Inspired by Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, he is attracted to the name Edward because of the familiar "idea of the doppelgänger" (79) which the character in the story symbolises: "Twins, doubles, duality, duplicity, there at the start of my life" (80). Supported by the neutral location that the ship represents, Dorfman seizes his "chance to throw Vlady into the sea" (80) and transform himself into the "princely" (80) Edward:

> But it was on that French ship that I made the real transition and I could not have conceived of a more appropriate locale: a floating hotel in the middle of nowhere, a site of exile where you can craft your identity any way you want, where you can con everybody into believing anything because there is no way of confirming or denying your past. (81)

Thus "the young Dorfman begins the first of many self-transformations" (Eidse et al., 2004: 277). This action is of great importance in highlighting the pliable nature of identity and the possibility it holds for (re)creation.

When Dorfman's allegiance later shifts, he again turns to the symbolic power of names to reshape his identity. In order to fully inhibit his political fervour, and in an endeavour to distance himself from the United States and become more authentically Chilean, Dorfman adopts his official middle name and "a Northern Edward [becomes] a resolutely Southern Ariel" (209): "My very Edwardly name was a reminder that I was a mock-Chilean who did not belong in this country, let alone with the workers and their cause. And the change in my name became, in fact, the first step, the easiest symbolic step, toward a deeper and more difficult shift in my total identity as I set out to become somebody else.[42] (159)

[42] In a similar way that Dorfman later feels awkward in his identity as Edward, Edward Said painfully suffered the inappropriateness of his unfitting English name which failed to capture his identity: "it took me about fifty years to become accustomed to, or, more exactly, to feel less uncomfortable with,

He chooses to adopt Ariel because of the contrast, through association, that it represents with the materialistic figure of Caliban from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The rechristening of himself as Ariel is synonymous with Dorfman's rebirth as a Chilean and co-incides with José Rodó's essay entitled *Ariel*:

> I discovered that an inordinate number of young men my age [...] had also been called Ariel by their parents, a collective baptism that has its origin in an essay, the most influential in the history of the continent, written by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó. [...] Rodó identified Latin America with the figure of Prospero's idealistic helper, in contrast to the crass materialism of Caliban [thus signifying his] call to the youth of the continent to defend this spiritually superior America of the South from the soulless Northern Titan. (159).[43]

'Edward', a foolishly English name yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arabic family name Said. […] For years, and depending on the exact circumstances, I would rush past 'Edward' and emphasize 'Said'; at other times I would do the reverse, or connect these two to each other so quickly that neither would be clear." (Said, 1999: 3) The disconnectedness Said feels to his names is a reflection of his deeper identity dilemma: "The travails of bearing such a name were compounded by an equally unsettling quandary when it came to language. I have never known what language I spoke first, Arabic or English, or which one was really mine beyond any doubt. [...] I have retained this unsettled sense of many identities — mostly in conflict with each other — all my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling that I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European and American, or all-Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim, or all-Egyptian, and so on." (Said, 1999: 4–5) Said attributes his status as a "semi-outcast" (1999: 219) and "an outsider" (1999: 163) in his school to the marginalisation embodied in his name: "My foreignness and difference barred me from the privileged exclusivity of the English School." (1999: 143) Like Dorfman, Said, feeling out of place, yearns for a single identity and a name that would embody such a harmonious unity: "All around me were […] little English boys and girls with enviably authentic names, blue eyes, and bright, definitive accents." (Said, 1999: 39)

[43] McClennen points out how "just as Dorfman used 'Eddie' to merge with the 'American dream' as exemplified in Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, he later used 'Ariel' to merge with the Latin American dream of Rodó's Ariel [showing how in both cases] literary texts served as the basis for his

In so being "recognized by vast numbers of Latin Americans a symbol of opposition to the United States" (160), the name Ariel facilitates his immersion into a Latin American identity, however, it simultaneously allows him to affirm his underlying loyalty to the American side of himself: "For me, it became a way of defining my own growing disaffection with the land whose extreme materialism I had cherished and coveted, while at the same time subtly asserting my affiliation with the language that continued to be my constant companion and best friend, the English that had been elevated to its supreme pinnacle in the works of Shakespeare." (160) Using the verb "*cannibalize*" (160), not as a pun on Shakespeare's character but to describe his identity formation, Dorfman therefore attests to an identity process of "eating them up, chewing them through, digesting, transforming, transubstantiating them, creating a new compound" (160): "More than the name Ariel itself, it was the process of that naming, the process of situating myself on the border between the continent of my birth and the world outside, which signals how I became a Latin American." (161) Although Dorfman chooses the name to signify his allegiance to Latin America, it nevertheless encompasses all aspects of his identity: English through its association to Shakespeare, and his Jewishness in the fact that it is a Hebrew name. In this way, ironically, it marks Dorfman with the inherent hybridity he evades: "There I was, a young man born in Buenos Aires and brought up in New York and on his way to becoming Chilean, an amalgam of the Latino and the Anglo. I ate up that name and gave it the meaning that I so desired. I was Caliban the savage, cannibalizing Ariel, the Hebrew Lion of God, my own purposes." (160)

5.3.2 Suppression of the mother tongue

As discussed in section 4.3, given the intimate connection between the self and the mother tongue, the introduction of another language risks an unfastening the self. That is, "in a new

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identity; they gave his life structure and meaning, and they bound him, however tenuously, to a community." (2010: 10)

language, you are unbuttoned, opened up."[44] (Kaplan, 1993: 139) This vulnerability is strongly felt by Hoffman and the modification of her name is followed by the unfolding of a profound inner shift in which she loses the grasp on her self. She starts to feel her inner language slipping away:

> As I lie down in a strange bed in a strange house […] I wait for that spontaneous flow of inner language which used to be my nighttime talk with myself, my way of informing the ego where the id had been. Nothing comes. Polish, in a short time, has atrophied, shrivelled from sheer uselessness. Its words don't apply to my new experiences; they're not coeval with any of the objects, or faces, or the very air I breathe in the daytime. In English, words have not penetrated to those layers of my psyche from which a private conversation could proceed. This interval before sleep used to be the time when my mind became both receptive and alert, when images and words rose up to consciousness, reiterating what had happened during the day, adding the day's experiences to those already stored there, spinning out the thread of my personal story. (107)

English is still unknown to Eva and her loss of Polish, "if not entirely from actual usage, then, strangely and disturbingly, from [her] internal life" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 49), leaves her feeling devoid of all language: "I found myself in the startling condition of having, in effect,

[44] This key theme is beautifully expressed in Agosín's poem *The Alphabet* (2000: 2–4): "Mother tongue […] On the palate of that province where all / dreams reside / I was an ancient, happy / child. / Suddenly / I felt the laments / of flight. / One mute night / I was taken from you, / left alone without music / without bread, / an orphan […]. They tore me from you, mother tongue. I still feel that ferocious wound / unable to hear your / echo in my astonished ears / at dawn. / They took me far from you, mother tongue, and my voice became a dormant candle. […] It is brutal to be another in a different language, forced into translation and / invented trajectories to be unable to say, to be, to not recognize / and always be asked where are your parents from? […] / I lament vanished things, thimbles, butterflies, / but most of all my mother tongue, cut away in the midst of my life."

no language."[45] (in De Courtivron, 2003: 49) She feels so defined by language that she fears her intimate experiences might diminish with the loss of her inner language. The erosion of Ewa's language places Eva in crisis: "Now, this picture-and-word show is gone; the thread has been snapped. I have no interior language, and without it, interior images — those images through which we assimilate the external world, through which we take it in, love it, make it our own — become blurred too." (108) Traversing the "linguistic border [...] decenters [her] voice" (Fusco, 1995: 156), plunging Eva into an identity void in which she is deeply 'lost in translation':

> The verbal blur covers these people's faces, their gestures with a sort of fog. I can't translate them into my mind's eye. The small event, instead of being added to the mosaic of consciousness and memory, falls through some black hole, and I fall with it. What has happened to me in this new world? I don't know. I don't see what I've seen, don't comprehend what's in front of me. I'm not filled with language anymore, and I have only a memory of fullness to anguish me with the knowledge that, in this dark and empty state, I don't really exist. (108)

Eva falls "into an inarticulate darkness in which [she] become[s] alien to [herself]" (in Aciman, 1999: 48). She feels like an "outsider" (173) and "a marginal, off-centered person"[46] (110), transforming into "a strange kind of creature [she] never meant to turn into" (79). This estrangement from her self starts to manifest itself physically: "Alienation is beginning to be inscribed in my flesh and face."[47] (110) Torn apart from the anchoring reference of Polish, Ewa dissolves and becomes unrecognisable to Eva:

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[45] Immigrant Zdenka Becker also experiences this detachment from language when crossing linguistic borders: "*Ich lebe in einer fremden Welt ohne Land und ohne Volk, benütze Worte, die nicht meine sind.*" (Becker in Niederle, 1999: 47)

[46] Again it should be pointed out that feelings of marginalisation are significantly heightened in people who live between languages and cultures, but that they are in fact characteristic of greater existential feelings of alienation — see Edward Said in 3.1.3.

[47] Agosín describes a similar experience of the disappearance of her identity in the loss of language and home: "When we left our country during the military dictatorship, I lost my own face for years."

> My words often seem to baffle others […] the matt look in their eyes as they listen to me cancels my face, flattens my features. The mobility of my face comes from the mobility of the words coming to the surface and the feelings that drive them. Its vividness is sparked by the locking of an answering gaze, by the quickness of understanding. But now I can't feel how my face lights up from inside; I don't receive from others the reflected movement, of its expressions, its living speech. (151)

Eva's sense of self is further shattered by the fact that she no longer has a "map of experience" (159) and has to redirect her defining desires. For example, her former dream of becoming a pianist is no longer relevant[48] in a Canadian context where, unlike in Poland, "becoming a pianist would have been very impractical" (with Kreisler, 2000):

> The patterns of my life have been so disrupted that I cannot find straight lines amid the disarray. […] The unity, the seemingly organic growth of my desires is becoming fragmented, torn. That wholeness came from the simplicity — perhaps given to us only in childhood — of my wants. But now I don't know what to want, or how to want, any longer. Polish romanticism, in whatever naïve version it has infiltrated my imagination, doesn't superprint easily on the commonsensical pragmatism required of me here. (158–159)

The necessity of re-orientating herself in the world is underlined by an unsettling experience Eva has when looking at a map with her classmates. She suddenly realises that Poland, like herself, is on the periphery. It is now "unreachable, on the other side, and [she] feel[s] as if

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(2000: 157); "I do not recognize myself. Has this now become my landscape, or have I adjusted to it? In what lost dominion did I leave behind my shadow and the southern wind?" (2000: 131) Similarly to Nabokov's comparison between losing language and losing fingers — see 4.3 —, this physical manifestation of an interior loss is also described by Lvovich: "Not living and using the language acquired feels like losing a limb, a friend, a lover." (1997: 71)

[48] Agosín shares the necessity of rerouting dreams in a new world: "I felt as if my body had split in two and my dreams had been divided." (2000: 109)

[she] were being taken out of life itself." (in Aciman, 1999: 45) She feels "like a fish thrown from sweet into salty ocean waters."[49] (160) This "sense of geographical topsy-turviness" (with Kreisler, 2000) concretely reinforces her displacement:

> Until now, Poland has covered an area in my head coeval with the dimensions of reality, and all other places on the globe have been measured by their distance from it. Now, simultaneously, I see it as my classmates do — a distant spot, somewhere on the peripheries of the imagination, crowded together with other hard to remember places of equal insignificance. The reference points inside my head are beginning to do a flickering dance. I suppose this is the most palpable meaning of displacement. I have been dislocated from my own centre of the world, and that world has been shifted away from my centre. There is no longer a straight axis anchoring my imagination; it begins to oscillate, and I rotate around it unsteadily. (132)

Eva yearns to recapture the certainty of being the "absolute center" (213) of her world, but now, having navigated through exile, that centre has shifted: "How, with this bifocal vision, does one keep one's center? And what center should one try to keep? […] Sometimes I see what I need: an objective subjectivity, a laser beam that concentrates my energy, and uses the collected light to illuminate and reflect the world." (213)

Eva comes to believe that her unanchored state is in fact paralleled by the unstable and "splintered society" (197) in which she lives where "you have to reinvent yourself every day" (160) and are "paralyzed by choice" (156) in the face of all the available "identity options" (159). She "presents herself as a child of a postmodern entropic universe" (Kellman, 2000: 77) that is characterised by "uncertainty, displacement [and] the fragmented identity" (in Aciman, 1999: 44):

> I share with my American generation an acute sense of dislocation and the equally acute challenge of having to invent a place and an identity for myself

[49] Gerda Lerner experiences similar feelings of rupture and disorientation when arriving in America: "And I was then a broken prism — a refugee without language, between cultures, belonging to neither the old nor the new." (in Kellman, 2003: 278)

> without the traditional supports. It could be said that the generation I belong to has been characterized by its prolonged refusal to assimilate — and it is in my very uprootedness that I'm its member. It could indeed be said that exile is the archetypal condition of contemporary lives. (197)[50]

Similarly, she sees her identity dilemma as a reflection of a society whose culture "splinters, fragments, and re-forms itself as if it were a jigsaw puzzle dancing in a quantum space" (164): "Perhaps a successful immigrant is an exaggerated version of the native. From now on, I'll be made, like a mosaic, of fragments — and my consciousness of them. It is only in that observing consciousness that I remain, after all, an immigrant." (164) This conviction supports the hypothesis that switching languages further complicates the already fractured nature of identity and a sense of alienation (see 3.1.3) and absence. That is, declaring herself "a creature of [her] time" (162), Eva views her exile as a distinctly marked rendering of the modern condition and this "is the sense of her 'loss in translation.'[51] It begins as an extrapolation of the simplistic trope of translation as transfer of universal meaning and loss of cultural specificity. As she grows into her new culture, translation becomes a metaphor for a different kind of loss. We are all lost in translation, she would argue, exiled even within our mother tongues." (Cowley in Besemeres et al., 2003: 23) Modern dislocation parallels her own displacement: "I do not experience the pain of earlier immigrants, who were kept out of exclusive clubs or decent neighbourhoods. Within the limits of my abilities and ambitions, I can go anywhere at all, and be accepted there. The only joke is that there's no there there." (196)

[50] Stavans likewise notes that "[o]urs is an age of miscegenation and dislocation." (2001: 22–23)

[51] Andrew Riemer also recognises that the challenges faced by switching countries, languages and cultures are a pronounced form of identity dilemmas that are typical of the human condition: "Perhaps I am merely describing the human condition. I have come to learn that this sense of displacement, of not belonging, even of having been uprooted, is shared by many people whose lives have not been so obviously displaced or uprooted as mine. And yet, as every migrant knows, being obliged to start again, to find that you must remake your life, brings that predicament into sharper focus than might be the case otherwise." (1992: 2)

"In a splintered society, [Eva therefore asks] what does one assimilate to? Perhaps the very splintering itself." (197) She realises that the unity she seeks is multi-faceted, but it is thus more difficult to interpret: "I discover that the social landscape which seems so homogeneous at first is divided into complex configurations that everyone recognises through subtle signals which are quite lost on me." (172) She "suffers a crisis of readability" (Cowley in Besemeres, 2003: 3) and is "distraught over how imperfectly the local language fits her universe" (Kellman, 2000: 80): "I fell out of the net of meaning into the weightlessness of chaos." (151) The problem is that "the signifier has become severed from the signified" (106) because "her new words are simple referents without any conceptual systems or experiences to back them up." (Pavlenko, 1997: 81):

> The words I learn now don't stand for things in the same unquestioned way they did in my native tongue. 'River' in Polish was a vital sound, energized with the essence of riverhood, of my rivers, of my being immersed in rivers. 'River' in English is cold — a word without an aura. It has no accumulated associations for me, and it does not give off the radiating haze of connotation. It does not evoke.[52] (106)

Despite her momentary reflection that "[p]erhaps we never know where we come from; in a way, we are all created ex nihilo" (23), Eva is convinced that "languages are never exactly

[52] In his memoir Luc Sante points to the embedded associations of childhood experience in a language and the split of meaning that this creates. That is, "[t]here are states of mind, even people and events, that seem inaccessible in English, since they are defined by the character of the language through which I perceived them." (1998: 123): "Preserved, too, in French, is a world of lost pleasures and familial comforts. If someone says, in English, 'Let's go visit Mr. and Mrs. X', the concept is neutral, my reaction determined by what I think of Mr. and Mrs. X. On the other hand, if the suggestion is broached in French, '*Allons dire bonjour*', the phrasing affects me more powerfully than the specifics. 'Dire bonjour' calls up a train of associations: for some reason I see my great-uncle Jules Stelmes, dead more than thirty years, with his fedora and his enormous white mustache and his soft dark eyes. I smell coffee and the raisin bread called *cramique,* hear the muffled bong of a parlor clock and the repetitive commonplaces of chitchat in the drawling accent of the Ardennes […]. I am sated, sleepy, bored out of my mind." (1998: 265)

commensurate, that each always processes experience in its own unique way" (Kellman, 2000: 82).

Eva struggles with interpretation not only verbally but also visually — that is, the "Canadian city is at first illegible to her — it needs to be deciphered in terms which we might take for granted, but which in fact depend on a highly specific set of cultural presuppositions about what constitutes cityhood." (Cowley in Besemeres, 2003: 3): "I walk through those streets not seeing anything clearly [...]. I miss the signals that say 'city' to me [...]. [Its] unfocused sprawl, its inchoate spread of one-family houses, doesn't fall into any grid of mental imagery, and therefore it is a strain to see what is before me. [...] Vancouver is a dim world to my eyes, and I walk around it in the static of visual confusion." (135)

Hoffman is consumed with "doubt of the capacity of Polish words to render reality absolutely" (Besemeres, 2002: 48). Feeling disconnected from language she struggles not only to define, but also to unambiguously perceive situations and people. For example, after meeting a Canadian family she struggles to place them and describe them:

> Now my mind gropes for some description of them, but nothing fits. They're a different species from anyone I've met in Poland, and Polish words slip off of them without sticking. English words don't hook on to anything. I try, deliberately, to come up with a few. Are these people pleasant or dull? Kindly or silly? The words float in an uncertain space. They come up from a part of my brain in which labels may be manufactured but which has no connection to my instincts, quick reactions, knowledge. Even the simplest adjectives sow confusion in my mind; English kindliness has a whole system of morality behind it, a system that makes "kindness" an entirely positive virtue. Polish kindness has the tiniest element of irony. (108)

Similarly, she has difficulty in interpreting her Canadian friend Lizzy and battles to compare her to her childhood friend from Cracow, Basia, since "the [descriptive] terms don't travel across continents. The human mean is located in a different place here, and qualities like adventurousness, or cleverness, or shyness are measured along a different scale and mapped within a different diagram. You can't transport human meanings whole from one culture to another any more than you can transliterate a text." (175) Searching "not just for the right

ways to express herself linguistically, but for the right landmarks and metaphors on her way to adulthood and womanhood" (Pavlenko, 1997: 84), Eva likewise later encounters difficulty in superimposing her Polish notion of femininity onto her American self:

> The question of femininity is becoming vexing to me as well. How am I to become a woman in an American vein, how am I to fit the contours of my Texan's soul? The allegory of gender is different here, and it unfolds around different typologies and different themes. I can't become a 'Pani' [Polish equivalent of 'Mrs'] of any sort: not like the authoritative Pani Orlovska, or the vampy, practical Pani Dombarska, or the flirty, romantic woman writer I once met. None of these modes of femininity makes sense here, none of them would find corresponding counterparts in the men I know." (189)

This incompatibility of notions manifests in the narrator's relationship with her first American boyfriend and the "enormous lacunae" (190) of cultural differences between them. Falling in love with "[her] Texan" (197) simultaneously signifies falling in love "with otherness, with the far spaces between us and the distances we have to travel to meet at the source of our attraction" (186–187): "We explain ourselves like texts. We learn to read each other as one learns to decipher hieroglyphs. But we never meet in that quick flash of recognition, the intuitive click which comes from knowing the play and surfaces of each other's personalities. […] He becomes familiar, only increasing the wonderment that the familiar should be so unfamiliar, the close so far away." (190) In the same way, she is later unable to fully bridge the gap with her husband and penetrate his psyche, she feels that something is lost in a lack of shared understanding: "And who is this husband of mine, carrying on in this foreign language? I'm touched by his niceness, which exhibits itself in this energy of sociability, but I know that though I'm captivated by his eloquence, I still can't read the language of his feelings." (227)

Eva becomes convinced that a language is synonymous with a cultural world and that this awareness is revealed through collision with another language and culture (see 3.1.2), since you "notice things about the culture or the world that you come into that people who grow up in it, who are very embedded in it, simply don't notice" (with Kreisler, 2000). Only when the other has been experienced can you know that it is different:

> If you've never eaten a real tomato, you'll think that the plastic tomato is the real thing, and moreover, you'll be perfectly satisfied with it,' I tell my friends. 'It's only when you've tasted them both that you know there's a difference, even though it's almost impossible to describe.' [...] There's a world out there; there are worlds. There are shapes of sensibility incommensurate with each other, topographies of experience one cannot guess from within one's own limited experience." (204)

These problems of untranslatability (see 4.1.2) lead Eva to question the relationship of language and the self when it clashes with another cultural world. Hoffman later confirms when reflecting on *Lost in Translation*, that not only had words lost their point of reference, but her sense of self was likewise dispersed: "I now think that it was I in fact who lost it, displaced it, abandoned it." (in De Courtivron, 2003: 50) That is, "*[s]a métamorphose symbolise une perte identitaire, même si elle est temporaire. En effet, la présence d'une nouvelle langue et de nouveaux référents, 'froids' et 'sans aura', étouffe et égare l'autre langue, celle de l'intime, celle du Moi. Il va sans dire que le Moi change aussi*." (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 189) This impression is based on the previously discussed way in which the first language deeply correlates with the self (see 4.2.4) and with reality. The introduction of another language thus "interrupts the 'living connection' that existed between consciousness and the external world through the first language." (Besemeres, 2002: 18) Eva thus becomes acutely aware of how the language and culture in which one is socialised is in fact "the stuff of which we are made" (in Aciman, 1999: 48) and what separation from that culture implies. That is, she realises:

> [H]ow much we are creatures of culture, how much we are constructed and shaped by it — and how much incoherence we risk if we fall out of its matrix. [...] each culture has subliminal values, predispositions, and beliefs that inform our most intimate assumptions and perceptions, our sense of beauty, for example, or of acceptable distances between people or notions of pleasure and pain. On that fundamental level, a culture does not exist independently of us but within us. It is inscribed in the psyche, and it gives form and focus to our mental and emotional lives. We could hardly acquire a human identity outside it, just as we could hardly think or perceive outside language. In a

> way, we are nothing more — or less — than an encoded memory of our heritage. (in Aciman, 1999: 49)

Hoffman therefore arrives at the rudimentary conclusion that "because these things go so deep, because they are not only passed on to us but are us" (in Aciman, 1999: 50), successfully existing in a new language will necessitate translating not only the language, but also the childhood experiences she lived in Polish and even "the deep material of the self" (in Aciman, 1999: 50). She realises the need to attempt to overcome her nostalgia / *tęsknota* ("the largest presence within me is the welling up of absence, of what I have lost" — 115) that separates her from integration, and to shed her "private heaviness" (115). It is the moment when Eva "*risque de sombrer dans la folie, ou peut s'adapter à la nouvelle situation*" (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 190). However, Eva is still "pregnant with the images of Poland" (115) and submerged in her past:[53] "I haven't escaped my past or my circumstances; they constrain me like a corset, making me stiffer, smaller." (198) She is stuck in a time warp and cannot envisage transporting her Polish self into her present English reality:

> Betwixt and between, I am stuck and time is stuck within me. […] I arrest the past, and I hold myself stiffly against the future; I want to stop the flow. As a punishment, I exist in the stasis of a perpetual present, that other of 'living in

[53] Paul Ricoeur explains how man is irresistibly drawn to the memory of the past, in particular childhood: "*L'homme est le seul être qui soit la proie de son enfance: l'homme est cet être que son enfance ne cesse de tirer en arrière*" (in Philibert, 1971: 166). Remaining devoted to the past is a typical reaction that in exile comes to represent an attempt to arrest time, recapture the former sense of home and retain hope of return. In her memoir Agosín similarly recognises the way in which the "exile does not cling to her new country, she concentrates on remembering the old one" (2000: 127): "we lived as if trapped [...] We felt we were passing through. Rather than living life at that moment, or configuring the meaning of becoming a citizen, I was seasick between shame and love. I could see only the faces of my friends, of beggars, of the man who sharpened our knives, the maids in our neighborhood, their enormous bags of freshly baked, aromatic wheat bread." (2000: 127, 109) Hoffman herself points out that the adherence to the past is likewise a resistance to the present: "In the later phases, the potential rigidity of the exilic posture may inhere not so much in a fixation on the past as in habitual detachment from the present." (in Aciman, 1999: 54) Ariel Dorfman also initially resists the transition when he is in exile: "I will cling to my Spanish during my first years of wandering, as other refugees cling to the photos of parents" (270).

> the present', which is not eternity but a prison. I can't throw a bridge between the present and the past, and therefore I can't make time move. (117)

She cannot grasp the feasibility of this transition: "Can I really extract what I've been from myself so easily? Can I jump continents as if skipping rope?" (115) (This in-between feeling is later highlighted by Hoffman's return visit to Cracow where she "realizes that she does not belong entirely to either world"[54] — Kellman, 2000: 75.)

It is nevertheless Eva's realisation of the importance of language and her desperation to recapture its vibrancy ("I understood that to be without language is to live in a very dim world, a very dim external world and a very dim interior world." — with Kreisler, 2000) that propels her to relinquish and open her soul to English: "indeed from then on, my struggle was for English to inhabit me and to acquire enough command of it so that it would articulate the world and so that it would express the world — both exterior and interior" (with Kreisler, 2000). Eva therefore infers that she needs to suppress one language in order to make way for the other, thus beginning the process of self-translation and (re)construction:

> I didn't do anything as violent as killing Polish; but I remember the almost palpable act of pushing it down into some cellar, or coffer, or dark place [...] I

[54] This static space of in-between is distinctive of the state of the third space (see 3.1.2) and, as language migrant Abdelhadi identifies, it is characterised by a feeling of being "nomads in the sense that we did not belong anywhere" (in Anzaldùa, 2002: 166): that is, "we can no longer belong to whatever we conceive of as 'back home'. Yet we never fully belong here either — whatever 'here' may mean […] is anyone who leaves one place to live in another for many years really comfortable in this new place or the previous one?" (in Anzaldùa, 2002: 166) Agosín similarly attests to having entered a no man's land in which one is "from nowhere" (2000:108) and from where there is "no way back" (2000: 110). When she returns to Chile she feels like "an attired guest [or] a frightened foreigner" (2000:186) and yet belonging in the new world is also elusive: "that old world peered into our lives like an obsession, a constant presence in a new world that did not belong to us either. Nothing was ours any longer." (2000: 127); "I knew that this country, the shape of its trees and the way its citizens behaved, would never be ours, but that Chile would not be mine either because memory became tangled, and was sometimes as cloudy as the autumn sky. I got used to not having a country." (2000: 120)

> wanted Polish silenced, so that I could make room within myself for English. [...] perhaps by displacing Polish, I was trying to free some neural trajectories to which English signals and syntax could attach themselves. For I badly wanted English to stick. But the manoeuvre, as I now understand more fully, was mainly psychologically determined, driven by emotion and laden with personal meanings. I had to push Polish out of the way because my attachment to it — in the other, affective sense of 'attachment' — was too powerful; because, if I didn't reject it, I could not form an equally strong bond to the new language in which I was fated to live. It was psychic space I was freeing, emptying — as well as the physiological kind. And I might also conjecture that my determined decision to stifle Polish [...] was a partly compensatory, partly self-preserving tactic. I — something in me — must have known that otherwise, I could not leave what I must leave, could not live where I must live. [...] And so I expressed my anger, my disappointment, my sense of loss, by re-enacting it within myself; by squashing my first language — my first self — down. (in De Courtivron, 2003: 50–52)

Ariel Dorfman also engages in the attempt to stifle one language in order to accommodate another, however, his process of the loss of language is different from Hoffman's. Firstly, his efforts to silence and resurrect both Spanish and English in turn are far more violent and determined. In the same way as he forcefully and adamantly re-baptises himself twice, so too does he venture to deny each one of his languages in turn. Whereas Hoffman deeply fears losing her Polish identity through the suppression of Polish, Dorfman actively seeks to vanquish the entirety of his Latin American and American identities that his languages encompass. Secondly, due to the ardent desire behind his decisions, he does not experience the same sense of acute pain and disorientation that Hoffman does. Nevertheless, the switches in linguistic environments that he experiences are not without loss. They too are "a way of surviving" (42) and Dorfman undergoes a demanding struggle to conquer his language dilemma. This wrestling is highlighted through a device that the author employs in *Heading South, Looking North*, in which he introduces Spanish words and phrases directly into the English text, frequently without providing an explanation or translation or sometimes without even putting them in italics. Dorfman aims not to help the reader in any way, thereby communicating that "you're on your own, as I was, shipwrecked in a sea of words we don't

understand" (in Lesser, 2005: 211) and giving the reader "a tiny taste of what it means to be adrift in someone else's language" (in Lesser, 2005: 211). As demonstrated by his change of names, Dorfman is very aware of the possibility of determining identity through language and thus language becomes the "barometer of his life" (Brink in Roelofse-Campbell, 1999: 74), measuring his altering affiliations. Zealously resisting the dualities of being bilingual and bicultural, Dorfman uses first English then Spanish to "hijack a different identity" (in Lesser, 2005: 210) and so these languages "become characters in [his] story, each with a distinct personality, competitors for the throat of the young Dorfman." (Weiner, 1998)

When Dorfman moves with his family to New York the first major shift in his language takes place shortly after their arrival. Dorfman falls ill with pneumonia and is quarantined in a hospital where he is submerged in an environment in which English suddenly comes to represent the "vocabulary of food and affection, warmth and punishment, the doorway into the hearts of the people who held me hostage" (41). On the other hand, he feels abandoned by his parents and their language, as they soundlessly mouth Spanish words from the other side of a glass wall that separates them from him. Spanish, his mother tongue that had been the language "to remind [him] who [he] was, the tongue [his] mother had bequeathed [him] with the promise never to desert [him] and speak [him] out of any pain" (44) now "proved useless, as absent as [his] mother herself and [his] father" (44). This trauma causes an abrupt split in his identity and Dorfman unexpectedly "cross[es] a line of apparently no return and decide[s] to suffocate the person he had been, to kill the language in which he had built the house of his identity" (42). Despite his young age (Dorfman had not yet turned three at the time of his illness) and admitting that he was "in all probability slightly insane in mind" (29), the author maintains that "at [his] beginning" (42) he intuitively rejected the risk of "the multiple, complex, in-between person [he] would someday become" (42) and "instinctively chose, the first time [he] was truly alone with [him]self and took control of the one thing that was entirely [his] own in the world, [his] language" (42). When his parents come to collect him after three weeks in hospital, he "disconcert[s] them by refusing to answer their Spanish questions, by speaking only English" (29): "'I don't understand,' my mother says that I said — and from that moment onward I stubbornly, steadfastly, adamantly refused to speak a word in the tongue I had been born into. I did not speak another word of Spanish for ten years." (29) Dorfman separates himself from Spanish "by closing the door, by throwing away the key" (60): "I built a space of my own where Spanish cannot enter, where I can keep myself separate from its threat; forever apart, unyielding." (61)

Shortly after he is released from hospital, the young Dorfman is again isolated from his parents (and their language), enduring "another separation that cause[s] him further anguish and confusion." (McClennen, 2010: 4) His mother is institutionalised for severe depression and Dorfman and his sister Eleonora spend several months in a foster home "where English was, again, essential for survival" (McClennen, 2010: 5). Abandoned in a linguistic void in which the junior Dorfman "ha[s] nowhere else to go and no one else to turn to" (50), and "desperately crav[ing] stability and security" (McClennen, 2010: 5), he clings onto the lifeline offered by English: "my repetition and learning of English quickly turned into a ritual of belonging, another way of combating loneliness, perfecting accent and grammar and vocabulary as evidence that I was not an immigrant recently stranded on these shores." (82) Thus Dorfman uses his trauma "to jettison [his] native tongue for English" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 32), and "what had begun in that hospital as a childish linguistic tantrum had, in the foster home, hardened into something more culturally permanent and drastic: the question of language had become ensnared in the question of nationality, and therefore of identity." (47) This switch marks the moment when Dorfman grasps the power of language in identity formation and realises that "[y]ou can become someone else, you can give birth to your self all over again. You can reinvent yourself in an entirely new language in an entirely new land." (49) His "Latino soul" (47) surrenders to "the charisma of America" (47): "I became an American." (50); "I wanted to melt and dissolve, bewitched, dazzled, and bewildered, into the gigantic melting pot of America." (78) Suppressing Spanish and nurturing English becomes a pivotal act of identity and the loss of language is therefore simultaneously a (re)construction of the self: "This is how I create, day by day, my identity. This is how I deny, day by day, the brother who is in my mind and understands Spanish, how I deny him the chance to resurrect." (61) The uncontrollable circumstances that provoke this reinvention, however, also simultaneously point to Dorfman's persistent tension in the text between identity as individually determined or as influenced by historical and social factors.

Just as adamantly as Dorfman decides to become American after these traumatic events that separate him from Spanish, years later he again makes the conscious decision to be monolingual, but this time dismissing English and returning to Spanish. Having affirmed his English identity with the commandeering of 'Edward', the author strives to defy integration into "a country [he] detested, a Latin America [he] did not like, and a Spanish [he] did not speak" (with Postel, 1998). Even though he had already begun "to fear America" (72)

because of the political threat it presented to his parents who were "targeted" (70) as foreigners ("The country I had proclaimed my champion in my search for an independent identity, the country that had nursed and guarded me, was out to get my family, would hurt them, send them running, perhaps even kill them." — 72), Dorfman is initially still determined to maintain his American identity. He promises to prevent Spanish from penetrating his most private world, his internal language: "All I could do was promise that I wouldn't admit it to my heart, that I'd leave this foreign dump as soon as I was old enough to return to my own beloved United States." (101); "I would at least not be tempted to stay there and forget my fatherland" (78). However, in Chile "Spanish was everywhere" (101) with its "suffocating sea of sound" (101) and Dorfman could no longer deny its existence or avert its intrusion. He is "forced to speak and write the detested Spanish language" (in Lesser, 2005: 212) until one day he automatically uses the impersonal passive form as an excuse for having broken something and this makes him realise that Spanish has become a part of him:

> A day comes back to me — I must have been sixteen — the first time I realized that Spanish was beginning to speak to me, had infiltrated my habits. It was in a carpentry class and I had given a final clumsy bang with a hammer to a monstrous misshapen contraption I had built and it broke, fell apart right there, so I turned to the carpentry teacher and '*Se rompió*', I said, shrugging my shoulders. […] And all of a sudden I was a Spanish speaker, I was being berated for having used that form of the language to hide behind, I had automatically used the ubiquitous, impersonal *se*, I had escaped into the language, *escapé lenguaje adentro*, merged with it. (114–115)

Not only does Dorfman begin to absorb Spanish inadvertently, but, despite his former rejection of it, he is soon drawn in by its charm: "I was — in a word — seducido, totalmente, enloquecidamente, seduced" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 33), until eventually he comes to "fall in love with the language, with the landscape of Chile, and with the movement that would become the Chilean revolution" (with Postel, 1998). Chile becomes, in a way he had "not anticipated" (130), his emotional "home" (130) and he chooses to attend college there rather than return to the United States. However, he goes to Berkley for one year of study (1968–1969) and this return to the country of his childhood after fourteen years of absence serves as an important opportunity to evaluate his identity, measuring the American against the Chilean: "Perhaps that was the ultimate attraction of the United States for me, the one place

in the world where the boy I still had inside me whispering in English could meet on equal terms the adult breathing in Spanish, the one place where I would be able to test one against the other, measure how much, how irrevocably, if at all, I had changed." (196) The confrontation exposes the depth of his Spanish self and provides him with "the proof [he] had been searching for" (209) that he had been turned into a Latin American: "I was, I discovered, not really American anymore." (226)

Having been "precariously balanced between Spanish and English" (220), the realisation that the lure of Chile manifested itself as "far stronger than the remnants of Yankee identity still within" (210) leads Dorfman to the extreme decision "to renounce the English language — forever" (with Postel, 1998): "My stay in Berkley was to lash me even more tightly to the Chile I had chosen as my own, was to force me eventually to realize that in order to really go back I needed to rid myself of that last link, the English language, which still tied me to the United States." (210) Although it had been the language in which Dorfman "had sought refuge from solitude all [his] life" (220), he turns in the "perversely opposite" (101) direction to his decision during his hospital stay all those years earlier, but "symmetrical to it and just as fierce" (101). He consciously commits to a Latin American identity:

> I proceeded, in that room not far from the Pacific Ocean, to renounce English along with the America of the North and its empire and its culture, renounce and denounce and try to suppress henceforth the man inside me who had spent his life identifying through that language, speaking and writing himself into personhood in that language. […] I swore never to write another word in the English language. Spanish was to be the love of my life. I willed myself to become monolingual again. (101)

Dorfman believes that his "divorce from North America" (284) allows him to affirm a Chilean identity and to thus fully participate in the Latin American struggle that positions the *gringo* language as the enemy: "until I severed my relationship with that primary language in which I continued to dream my future, I would never be completely Latin American." (171) Writing "doggedly" (159) in English had made him feel like a traitor to the revolution, since English represented "the 'thieving Yankee' responsible for the country's underdevelopment" (159). His solidarity with the people's cause had further been undermined by his family's status ("I wanted to serve the poor but lived in a big house with two maids and drove my

father's gargantuan diplomatic car, which, of course, I shamefully hid from my new comrades at the university." — 159), and above all, by his "Russian-sounding name" (167): "I had to reveal my dirty secret, that I wasn't really Chilean [...] I had to see the eyes of my collaborators slant in puzzlement, I had to walk away from them, once again a stranger, left out, rootless." (168) Changing his name and banishing English is therefore an attempt to eliminate his status as an outsider ("Wasn't I, in effect, a foreigner?" — 169) and commit to a Chilean identity: "I swore [that] six years from now, Allende would try again to become President of Chile and this time nobody in the world would be able to stop me from participating. Next time, I would be a Chilean citizen. I would have a country." (170) Dorfman's decision to expel English is thus "a political choice that was meant to cement and proclaim [his] identity as a Latinoamericano opposed in any way he could to the encroachments of the Yankee [he] had been on the land [he] had come to call [his] own, including the intricate inner domains of language."[55] (in De Courtivron, 2003: 33)

Dorfman gains a sense of belonging not only through his political beliefs but his Chilean identity is also further validated by his deep ties to his wife and son (see 4.2.2 for a discussion of intimacy and language):

> I now fully knew — or at least so I told myself […] where I was from. [...] I had just cast the first vote of my life and it had been for Salvador Allende. Where was I from? I was from Chile and this ocean of people stretching for blocks was my community and by my side, holding my hand, was my Chilean

[55] Another example of a language choice motivated by political affiliation is found in Natasha Lvovich's memoir *The Multilingual Self* (1997) in which she describes how she "assumed [a] French self" (9) as a reaction to political oppression because a "French personality, after all, was much less confusing and safer than being a Jew in Soviet Russia" (8). That is: "The story of my fluency in French is the story of building a language identity. It was [...] my personal way of dealing with the political regime and the sociocultural bias it created.[...] The tragic situation of the Jewish intelligentsia in the Soviet Union, many of whom were deprived of professional careers and formal education, stimulated their learning beyond the official norms and frames, creating various unique ways for the reconstruction of self-esteem. Some became political dissidents and took enormous risks; some went insane; some turned to their religion or converted to another one. I became French." (2)

> wife. [...] And a few miles away, at home, our three year-old Chilean son was sleeping (155).

Although Dorfman's love for his wife transcends her nationality ("it was ultimately not Chile that I desired in her" — 178), she represents a solid identity that he feeds on, nourishing his link to Latin America: "I could feel the country bringing me back to her for more, my need for the identity she gave me fastening me to her, Chile secretly melting us together. […] She had been accumulating every drop of [Chilean] experience inside herself like a reservoir. [...] I sensed that reservoir, sensed that I could drink from its waters, drink Chile in her waters." (180) Likewise, "[i]n the months and years to come, as she guided me into her life and her body, she also guided me into the mysteries of a continent that should have been mine by birthright but that I had cut myself off from, a country I had seen for years as nothing more than a stop on the road to someplace else." (181)

Anchoring himself in a Chilean identity satisfies Dorfman's overwhelming "desire to be whole and indivisible in one language" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 32): "The rival languages had been kept separate throughout my life, and now that I was switching again, that is where, more than ever, I wanted to remain, exiled from one another, supposedly belonging to unconnected and compartmentalized universes." (221) He is neither "willing to be a young man in between, not knowing his own name, adrift in a world torn by the two Americas inside and outside him" (221), nor yet ready to embrace both his selves: "I did not have the maturity — or the emotional or ideological space, probably not even the vocabulary — to answer that I was a hybrid […]. I was unable to look directly in the face the divergent mystery of who I was, the abyss of being bilingual and binational at a time when everything demanded that we be univocal and immaculate." (220) Pledging his allegiance to an almighty Spanish allows Dorfman to seemingly "escape the bifurcation of tongue and vocabulary" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 32) and to feel "whole, intact, seamless" (221). However, history has other plans in store for Dorfman and his desire to be whole is revealed to be only a "fantasy of feeling happier [that] may have briefly promised peace" (De Courtivron, 2003: 6).

5.4 Conclusions

The fact that Dorfman's yearning for unity is exposed as a fantasy points to my hypothesis that the shift in language highlights the nature of identity that resists definitive categorisation, cohesion and constancy. As will be shown in the next chapter, by reflecting on a deeper understanding of the self, Dorfman eventually recognises the impossibility of a "whole" (221) self in the sense he had conceived it and is forced to revise his perception of harmony.

Similarly, in spite of her undeniable sense of loss, it is however essential to question Hoffman's utopian view of her childhood in Poland and in turn, just how much is actually lost in translation and not simply in the passing of time and the transition to adulthood, since, as shall be shown in the next chapter, Hoffman ultimately acknowledges various gains by the end of her narrative. Firstly, the feelings of alienation that Hoffman experiences in her new environment, that are captured in the previously mentioned photograph in which she appears as a "clumsy looking creature" (110) may also be attributed to the general feelings of awkwardness and disorientation associated with adolescence (Hoffman is approximately fourteen at the time this photograph is taken). Recalling Erikson (see 3.1.3) who identified an identity crisis as "a period during which an individual's previous (childhood) identity is no longer experienced as suitable, but a new identity is not yet established" (Côté et al., 2002: 95), adolescents are particularly susceptible to dilemmas of identity and belonging. They experience a deep need to conform and be part of the 'herd' (see 3.1.3) and it is significant, as will be seen in Chapter 6, that Hoffmann finds a new comfort zone when she is appreciated for her otherness at university. Similarly, if, as Erikson claims, all adolescents experience some form of identity crisis during the stage of development from childhood to adulthood, then perhaps Hoffman's struggle to become a feminine women in an American context can also, in part, be ascribed to the general process of adjustment that adolescence encompasses.

Secondly, although immigrants feel an intensified form of loss due to the further chasm created by separation from the childhood language (see 2.3.2), the past and childhood are lost and become imaginary spaces of longing even to those who remain in the same country throughout their lives. Hoffman herself even acknowledges, in retrospect years after writing *Lost in Translation*, that "this sense of seamless concord was shot through with an element of illusion" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 52) and that childhood is lost not only because the language in which it was lived has been interrupted, but because it is frozen in time: "is there anyone

who does not — in some way, on some level — feel that they are in exile? We feel ejected from our first homes and landscapes, from childhood, from our first family romance, from our authentic self. We feel there is an ideal sense of belonging, of community, of attunement with others and at-homeness with ourselves, that keeps eluding us."[56] (in Aciman, 1999: 39) Eva's loss of the former perceived coherence of her Polish childhood is thus not solely due to translation. This suggests that the shift in language not so much creates, but rather highlights the multiple and mutable nature of the self, augmenting the 'general' identity crisis of adolescence as the clock of childhood stops ticking and we move to adulthood.

[56] The recognition of the lost land as an illusion fuelled by nostalgic desire can similarly be seen in Riemer's memoir *Inside Outside: Life between two worlds* (1992): "I yearn for Europe, but it is a Europe that no longer exists, and may never have existed. The closest I can get to a description of this condition, dilemma, perplexity, or whatever term may be put upon it, is to say that it is an existence between two worlds: one familiar, substantial, often humdrum and commonplace; the other a country of the mind, fashioned from powerful longings and fantasies."

Chapter 6
(Re)construction and resolution in *Lost in Translation* and *Heading South, Looking North*

6.1 Rebuilding language and life

> [I]f I'm not to risk a mild cultural schizophrenia, I have to make a shift in the innermost ways. I have to translate myself.
>
> (Hoffman, 1989: 211)

In relation to the theoretical premises outlined in the previous chapters, the analysis of these texts traces not only the painful, profound losses and disorientating alterations that occur in translation, as seen in Chapter 5, but also the valuable gains of personal reinvention that emerge. Hoffman and Dorfman re-write their dislodged selves into a new language until a degree of a comprehensive sense of self and a new way of being are achieved. The suppression of one language allows for the penetration of another and so begins a re-stitching of the self to language. Although some 'scar tissue' remains, the "major emotional and cultural surgery" (Riemer, 1992: 89) of a language transplant eventually heals and the skin of the self expands and regenerates.

In examining the gradual transformation that these authors undergo and, in particular, the eventual increase in gains through a state of loss, it is very useful to consider Aneta Pavlenko's model of self-translation that envisages it as a process involving a phase of loss followed by a second phase of (re)construction and gain (see 4.3). However, it should be pointed out that self-translation should not be seen as comprised of only two definitive and consecutive steps. That is, the unfolding of a translated self is rather a "back and forth [movement] between two possible selves, associated with two distinct cultural and linguistic life-models" (Besemeres, 2002: 38). Steps forward in (re)construction are often accompanied by a step back in loss, rendering the process not clearly linear but, rather, a type of "multiple metamorphosis, familiar to butterflies" (Nabokov, 1951: 10). This non-linear nature of recreation thus incorporates layers of the past and present self in a palimpsest-like way.

6.1.1 Appropriation of language and cultural values

As hinted at previously, Hoffman's (re)construction begins with her tentative readiness to open up to English and the world it incorporates, in order to counter "remain[ing] outside reality itself" (211): "I have to come to terms with it somehow. Now that I'm no longer a visitor, I can no longer ignore the terms of reality prevailing here, or sit on the margins observing the curious habits of the natives. I have to learn how to live with them, find a common ground." (205) Eva still feels like an outsider ("the reality that I feel so very out of it" — 131) and is haunted by "the idea, almost palpable, of [regaining] the normal" (211). She is exhausted by her desperate attempt for authentic access into the new world via achievement: "I have to make myself a steel breastplate of achievement and good grades, so that I'll be able to get out — and get in, so that I can gain entry into the social system from where I stand, on a precarious ledge."[57] (157) Driven by the fundamental "ingrained psychological need of each and every human to belong and blend in"[58] (Dorfman in De Courtivron, 2003: 31) and the similar "desire for the comfort of being a recognizable somebody placed on a recognizable social map" (140), Eva realises the importance of solidifying her English persona: "I know that language will be a crucial instrument, that I can overcome the stigma of my marginality." (131) She understands that translating herself offers itself as the only hope for reconciliation between Ewa and Eva: "It will be a complicated task, trying to break the carapace of fear and will, but by now, I know that if I don't set out to do it, I run the true peril of living an alien life." (245)

Eva longs to recapture a means of expression that is faithful to, and can simultaneously solidify, her core identity: "I want a language that will express what that face knows […] a language old enough to plow under the superficial differences between signs, to the deeper

[57] Agosín endures a similar painful exhaustion: "I had to reinvent myself and explain over and over who I was." (2000: 109)

[58] Lvovich also underlines how the desire and struggle to recapture language is synonymous with the desire for belonging: "The urge of creating an identity in the new language and culture is the same as finding a home, with loved ones. We want to feel comfortable at home, fully functional, loving, and loved. In order to do that, we have to open our minds and hearts, be giving and receiving, and work hard. Home is not easy to find." (1997: 82)

strata of significance." (212) She believes that the gaps of meaning 'lost in translation' convert into gaps in her self and is convinced that gaining the fullness of language will lead to the fullness of existence:

> The thought that there are parts of the language that I'm missing can induce a small panic in me, as if such gaps were missing parts of the world or my mind — as if the totality of the world and mind were coeval with the totality of language. Or rather, as if language were an enormous, fine net in which reality is contained — as if there are holes in it, then a bit of reality can escape, cease to exist. (217)

To wholly translate her self, she needs to inhabit English completely, to the point where the language ceases to become words and becomes a natural extension of her self, as it was with Polish. Eva therefore identifies language as a way not only to reconstruct the world, but also of survival, and she focuses on devouring it: "I've become obsessed with words. I gather them, put them away like a squirrel saving nuts for winter, swallow them and hunger for more. If I take in enough, then maybe I can incorporate the language, make it part of my psyche and my body." (216) She believes that when she is finally able to replicate all the images of her former self, as well as incorporate those of her new self, into English, then she will be able to regain her centre: "I search for the right shade of a pearly pinkish shell I found on the beach as if my life depended on it, and to some extent it does. I can't live forever in a windy, unfurnished imagination; I have to make a comfortable habitation there [...]. I have to add a bottom to the language I learned from the top." (217) Eva yearns to be able to take for granted the world around her as she did in childhood and feels propelled to make the transition:

> I want to figure out, more urgently than before, where I belong in this America that's made up of so many sub-Americas. I want, somehow, to give up the condition of being a foreigner. […] I no longer want to be propelled by immigrant chutzpah or desperado energy or usurper's ambition. I no longer want to have the prickly, unrelenting consciousness that I'm living in the medium of a specific culture. It's time to roll down the scrim and see the world directly, as the world. I want to reenter, through whatever Looking Glass will take me there, a state of ordinary reality. (202)

This desire, however, is accompanied by a fear of losing all traces of her former self, of having to "yield too much of [her] own ground" (205). She is terrified that her metamorphosis will be an irreversible and imprisoning act. That is, Eva "*[est]partagée entre le passé et le présent, elle ne peut regarder ni derrière elle, ni devant, car elle craint qu'une Méduse ne la transformse en pierre*" (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 190): "I can't afford to look back, and I can't figure out how to look forward. In both directions, I may see a Medusa, and I already feel the danger of being turned into stone." (116). The challenge is to find a means of consolidating both dimensions of her self and of finding a balance between remaining true to herself whilst abandoning her status as a marginalised foreigner. That is, "*Hoffman veut se traduire sans se laisser absorber par le nouveau monde, traduisant avec attention tout en gardant la spontanéité des tournures de son esprit.*" (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 191). Eva struggles between loss and gain:

> The soul can shrivel from an excess of critical distance, and if I don't want to remain in arid internal exile for the rest of my life, I have to find a way to lose my alienation without losing my self. But how does one bend toward another culture without falling over, how does one strike an elastic balance between rigidity and self-effacement? How does one stop renting the exterior signs of a foreign tribe and step into the inwardness, the viscera of their meanings? (209)

Nevertheless, her metamorphosis, that began with separation from Polish, is followed by a phase of "*identification*" (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 188) or, according to Pavlenko, by "the appropriation of others' voices" (1997: 83). Internalising the speech of others, "by slow increments, sentence by sentence, phrase by phrase" (211), Eva embarks on "remaking [her]self within the parameters of an alien language" (Besemeres, 2002: 65). As she gradually absorbs language, she feels her identity swelling with meaning:

> All around me [is] the Babel of American voices [...] Since I lack a voice of my own, the voices of others invade me as if I were a silent ventriloquist. They ricochet within me, carrying on conversations, lending me their modulations, intonations, rhythms. I do not yet possess them; they possess me. But some of them satisfy a need; some of them stick to my ribs. I could take on that stylish, ironic elongation which is X's mark of perpetual

> amusement, it fits something in my temperament, I could learn to speak a part of myself through it. And that curtailed, deliberate dryness that Y uses as an antidote to sentiment opens a door into a certain New England sensibility whose richness I would never otherwise understand. Eventually, the voices enter me; by assuming them, I gradually make them mine. (219–220)

Through this "deepening investigation [and] familiarization" (in Aciman, 1999: 62) Eva starts to translate herself in a "careful" (211) process "in which the force of our first legacy can be transposed or brought into dialogue with our later experiences, in which we can build new meanings as valid as the first ones" (in Aciman, 1999: 62). In this process she discovers not only ways to replace previous forms of expression but also discovers new ones.

For Eva mastering English is "a matter of entering a whole world constructed according to certain shared understandings" (Besemeres, 2002: 26) and of gaining access (see 3.2) to the shared assumptions of her American friends "about what's a pretty face or a handsome body, about what we're allowed to poke fun at[59] and what we have to revere, about how much we need to hide in order to reveal ourselves" (211). Even though it is anguishing and "a surprisingly long process" (with Kreisler, 2000), "[s]tep by step Ewa / Eva discovers and inhabits the new territory, learning to preserve cultural distances and to read subtle signals, becoming socialized into cultural rituals, behaviors, traditions." (Pavlenko, 1997: 84) Slowly she starts penetrating these understandings and the "cultural unconscious begin[s] to exercise its subliminal influence" (108): "Maybe, behind my back and while I wasn't looking, I've acquired a second unconscious, an American one, made up of diverse cultural matter. [...] I only know that the hybrid creature I've become is made up of two parts Americana, that the pastiche has lots of local color. Despite my resistance, or perhaps through its very act, I've become a partial American, a sort of resident alien." (221)

Assuming local gestures and behaviour, she initiates a change that results in her mother accusing her of "becoming English" (146), by which an upset Eva infers she means "cold"[60]

[59] See section 4.2.3 for a discussion of the cultural particularities of humour.

[60] Julien Green attest to a similar perception of culturally characteristic English restraint: "This brings me to a very delicate problem, I mean the influence exerted by a language on the person who uses it. To speak a language is to lend oneself to the influence of that language, and indeed to the influence of

(146). Eva claims that she is in fact "no colder than [she's] ever been" (146), but, attempting to be accepted socially, she has learnt to abandon typical Polish behaviour in favour of typical Anglo ways (see 4.2.3) :

> I'm learning to be less demonstrative [and] I learn my new reserve from people who take a step back when we talk, because I'm standing too close, crowding them. [...] I learn restraint from Penny, who looks offended when I shake her by the arm in excitement, as if my gesture had been one of aggression instead of friendliness. I learn it from a girl who pulls away when I hook my arm through hers as we walk down the street — this movement of friendly intimacy is an embarrassment to her. [61] (146)

Eva realises that she is adapting her spontaneous behaviour "because the Anglo affective style appropriate for a person of her age, gender, and socioeducational background is less effusive and temperamental than the one she had developed in her Polish surroundings" (Pavlenko, 2005: 231):

> Perhaps my mother is right, after all; perhaps I'm becoming colder.[62] After a while, emotion follows action, response grows warmer or cooler according to

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a whole race. The Anglo-Saxon race is characterized by an extreme reticence in expressing its feelings. This reticence, often mistaken for coldness, is the cause of many erroneous impressions [...]. A Frenchman, as a rule, has far fewer inhibitions and hesitates very little to express what he feels." (1985: 256)

[61] Agosín experiences similar painful adjustments in trying to fit in: "So I tried to imitate them. I chewed gum quickly, sighed as loudly as a locomotive, but I was not myself. [...] I wanted to belong, to feel that some of the girls loved me, but they only said: 'In America we don't drop by people's houses without calling ahead.' Distressed, I looked at them intently, but could not understand the rituals or codes, and had no place to hide." (2000:114)

[62] A similar appropriation of Anglo reserve that contradicts the orignal cultural self is noted by bilingual Reem Abdelhadi: "Do you remember Peterborough, when I came to spend a weekend with you? […] I greeted you with icy English coldness, as if I had never been an Arab." (in Anzaldùa, 2002: 168)

> gesture. I'm more careful about what I say, how loud I laugh, whether I give vent to grief. The storminess of emotion prevailing in our family is in excess of the normal here, and the unwritten rules for the normal have their osmotic effect. (146–147)

It is important to note therefore that because Hoffman (like Dorfman) translates herself into English, the cultural and psychological particularities of English are significant. That is, "certain changes in the perception of the translated self are seemingly characteristic of English, such as 'emotional detachment', an imposition of (British) 'restraint' or (American) 'control' on expression of intense feelings" (Besemeres, 2002: 278). The move away from more expressive and emotionally open cultures, such as Polish (or in Dorfman's case Spanish) into a more restrained culture can encourage a more "subdued"[63] (Pavlenko, 2005: 232) attitude (see 3.1.1). Acceptable behaviour and "the hierarchy of values governing interpersonal relations" (Wierzbicka, 1999: 254) are thus different from Polish norms. This "incommensurability between emotion concepts" (Besemeres in Pavlenko, 2006: 41) further becomes clear to Hoffman when she reflects on the contrasting styles of farewell inscriptions written by her classmates. Before leaving Poland her classmates write "appropriate words of good-bye" (78) in an embroidered journal: "Most of them choose melancholy verses in which life is figured as a vale of tears or a river of suffering, or a journey of pain on which we are embarking. This tone of sadness is something we all enjoy. It makes us feel the gravity of life" (78). However, only two year later when leaving on a school trip, her Canadian peers inscribe cheerful exclamations, such as "It was great fun knowing you!" (78), "Don't ever lose your friendly personality!" (78) and "Keep cheerful, and nothing can harm you!" (78)

This belief in the power of staying positive as an antidote to pain coincides with the value of 'control' that Eva later learns from her adult peers (which could constitute a gain): "I've become a more self-controlled person over the years [...]. I don't allow myself to be blown about this way and that helplessly. I've learnt how to use the mechanisms of my will, how to

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[63] Agosín also comments on this necessary cultural transformation: "We were from South America, and we loved the Spanish language with a passion. In North America we learned to moderate our passionate, spontaneous expressions of love. We learned to be other than ourselves." (2000: 113)

look for symptom and root cause before sadness or happiness overwhelm me." (269) Viewing feelings as "implicated in the narratives of the self" (Pavlenko, 2005: 232), Eva views socialisation in English as providing a distinct identity story, a story in which the English word 'anxious' elicits different emotions to the Polish word 'afraid':

> I've become caught between stories, between the kinds of story we tell ourselves about ourselves. [...] Between the two stories and two vocabularies, there's a vast alteration in the diagram of the psyche and the relationship to inner life. When I say to myself, 'I'm anxious', I draw on different faculties than when I say, 'I'm afraid'. 'I'm anxious because I have problems with separation', I tell myself very rationally when a boyfriend leaves for a long trip, and in that quick movement of self-analysis and explanation the trajectory of feeling is rerouted. I no longer follow it from impulse to expression; now that I understand what the problem is, I won't cry at the airport. By this ploy, I mute the force of the original fear; I gain some control. (268–269)

This highlights the emphasis in modern Anglo culture on suppressing "involuntary expressive behaviour (such as crying)" (Wierzbicka, 1999: 260) and on rather employing rational self-analysis that "enables people to gain some distance from their emotions [and] is a prerequisite for emotional self-control" (Wierzbicka, 1999: 260). Conversely, "Polish culture does not have a tradition of elaborate verbalization of emotions or of highly developed analysis of one's own emotions. [...] Polish culture encourages spontaneity, not introspection." (Wierzbicka, 1999: 258) The fact that Eva is aided by the vocabulary of self-analysis in gaining control underlines "the enormous influence of psychotherapeutic language on everyday emotion talk" (Wierzbicka, 1999: 260) in English: "In the project of gaining control, I've been aided by the project of self-analysis, and by the prevailing assumption that it's good to be in charge. 'I've got to get some control,' my friends say when something troubles them or goes wrong. It is shameful [...] to confess that sometimes we have no control."[64] (270)

[64] Ogulnick similarly comments on the imposition of cultural norms: "If only they had known what a painfully shy person I was, I probably would not have been able to perform many of the acts they

Although Eva is absorbing English culture, her mother has "maintained the emotional self condoned by Polish narratives of emotionality and femininity" (Pavlenko, 2005: 232) and resists restraining her feelings, and tailoring them to English norms: "My mother cannot imagine tampering with her feelings, which are the most authentic part of her, which are her." (269) When Eva, "full of [her] newly acquired American wisdom" (269) recommends trying to control her feelings, her mother is therefore astounded: "'What do you mean?' she asked, as if this was an idea proffered by a member of a computer species. 'How can I do that? They are my feelings.'" (269)[65] Eva's mother chooses not to translate her self ("My mother stays close to herself, as she stays close to home." — 270); but although she avoids the pain of altering her identity she endures other pain: "She pays a price for her lack of self-alienation — the price of extremity, of being in extremis, of suffering." (270) Unlike her mother, Eva understands that she needs to give up something in order to survive and integrate into her new world: "control is something I need more than my mother did. I have more of a public life, in which it's important to appear strong." (270) She forsakes a certain spontaneity and emotional expressiveness, but, whereas her mother still "suffers her emotions as if they were forces of nature, winds and storms and volcanic eruptions" (269), Eva has positively earned "the advantage of the American vocabulary, a greater freedom from pain, a sense of empowerment"[66] (Besemeres in Pavlenko, 2006: 40).

In addition to the concept of control, Eva's mother never relents to using the English term 'friend' as opposed to 'acquaintance', choosing uncompromising authenticity above appropriateness. When considering her relationship with her classmate Penny, Eva is also troubled by the non-equivalence between the Polish and English words, however she adapts to its new meaning:

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expected of me. But I couldn't be shy. The Japanese, I was informed, are shy, whereas Americans are outgoing." (1998: 7)

[65] Like Eva's mother, Andrew Riemer struggles to modify his behaviour: "The culture of pre-war Central Europe could not be transplanted into Australia's much drier, more matter-of-fact soil. I could not therefore reconcile the contrary demands made on my social behaviour." (1992: 88)

[66] Ogulnick also alludes to the dual effect of language appropriation: "Language grabs hold of us: the grip can be comforting and secure; it can also be tight and choking." (1998: 137)

> We like each other quite well, though I'm not sure that what is between us is 'friendship' — a word which in Polish has connotations of strong loyalty and attachment bordering on love. At first, I try to preserve the distinction between 'friends' and 'acquaintances' scrupulously, because it feels like a small lie to say 'friend' when you don't really mean it, but after a while, I give it up. 'Friend', in English, is such a good-natured, easygoing sort of term, covering all kinds of territory, and 'acquaintance' is something an uptight, snobbish kind of person might say. My parents, however, never divest themselves of the habit, and with an admirable resistance to linguistic looseness, continue to call most people they know 'my acquaintance' […] As the word is used here, Penny is certainly a friend. (148)

In Polish the word *Przyjaciel* is defined as a close friend, but in fact "means much more" (Wierzbicka, 1997: 92), which accounts for how "the realm of social relationships is carved up according to quite different categories" (Besemeres, 2002: 27) in English and Polish and therefore explains the incongruency. Eva's parents' "lack of awareness of register and other encoded expectations in English" (Besemeres, 2002: 28) encourages them to "remain faithful to a social reality that has hitherto defined them" (Besemeres, 2002: 28); however, in choosing not to engage with their new reality they secure an element of isolation. Eva on the other hand, weakens her resistance and accepts the 'betrayal' in order, in time, to participate fully with sensitivity.

The contrasting reactions of Eva and her mother point to a phenomenon in immigrants of a certain "alienation from parents who do not share the same linguistic and cultural metamorphoses" (De Courtivron, 2003: 3). The struggle between integrating into the new culture and adhering to the former culture can create cultural differences within the same family:

> In this process, language plays a complex role, both binding and dividing family members.[67] For [...] their different relationships to these languages can

[67] This concept corresponds to the reduction of intimacy; see, for example, Richard Rodriguez's memoir — see 4.6.1

> have notable social consequences. [...] While the relationship of the parents to the language of the country that has become their new home is often, as it is tellingly put, broken, their children typically make the new language their own, learning to speak it fluently [...]. The children come to master the very cultural codes (language, modes of dress, forms of social interaction), ignorance of which functionally reduces the parents to children. (Bammer, 1994: 101)

This confusion manifests itself when Eva stops going to synagogue and her parents allow her to do so without insisting: "They don't try to exercise much influence over me anymore. 'In Poland, I would have known how to bring you up, I would have known what to do,' my mother says wistfully, but here, she has lost her sureness, her authority. [...] She has always been gentle with us, and she doesn't want, doesn't know how, to tighten the reins." (145)[68] However, despite Eva's entry into Canadian life and culture, she commiserates with her mother and shares her desire to cling onto part of their former lives and selves, even their legacy of suffering as Jews:

> But familial bonds seem so dangerously loose here! Truth to tell, I don't want the fabric of loyalty and affection, and even obligation, to unravel either. I don't want my parents to lose us. I don't want to betray our common life. [...] There is only the tiny cluster, the four of us, to know, to preserve whatever fund of human experience we may represent. [...] I don't want us to turn into perpetually cheerful suburbanites, with hygienic smiles and equally hygienic feelings. I want to keep even our sadness, the great sadness from which my parents have come. (145–146)

This identification with her parents again reveals Eva's fear of forsaking all of her former self. It further points to the multiple levels of Eva's translated self. Like a palimpsest,

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[68] Agosín's mother experiences similar disorientation and disempowerment in her new world: "My mother writes about us and says that we are strange in our new language, our gestures tedious, trapped in a coil of foreign words we cannot pronounce. At times she yells at us, then puts her arms around us, gently asking forgiveness." (2000: 124)

although she is now engraved with the most recent English text, the Polish text still shines through from beneath, exposing her "slightly anomalous condition" (249).[69] This layering becomes apparent when Eva visits her parents as an adult and high-profile editor from New York. Her parents home in Vancouver, where the local decor indicates how "some incongruity remains" (247), is a reflection of Eva's multi-dimensional self, it is her "shtetl-on-the-Pacific" (247). The explanation Eva provides them for her divorce presents "an ethos alien to her parents" (Besemeres, 2002: 61) and their incomprehension destabilises Eva's American convictions: "faced with my parents' puzzlement, I'm shaken in my belief as well."[70] (247) Despite her success and integration, she still feels vulnerable and threatened by the re-emergence of her Polish voice that is seen as a sign of "regression" (Besmeres, 2002: 61):

> Within hours of arrival here, I'm no longer a hybrid but an oxymoron. My professional, self-confident, American identity recedes like an insubstantial mirage. Why does anyone think they should pay me so much for articles, how have I pulled the wool over their eyes? Next time, I'll be more humble, I'll thank the editor more gratefully. It's wondrous enough that I'm allowed to write at all, and that actually existing American publications want to print my words….I'm afraid that somebody from my work life might call me while I'm here; if they did, my tone would be all wrong: supplicating, intimidated, pleading. (248)

[69] Stavans also comments on the palimpsest-like nature of his languages and their accompanying selves: "My English-language persona is the one that superimposes itself on all previous others. In it are the seeds of Yiddish and Hebrew, but mostly Spanish." (2001: 249)

[70] Luc Sante experiences a similar fear of regressing away from the confident English adult identity he has constructed in the company of his parents and his original home: "But I put them off, again and again. I was afraid of my parents and afraid of Belgium, and the combination of the two was more than I could bear to contemplate. I was an accredited adult by then, with a domestic relationship, and assets mostly in the form of old books, and even a profession, of sorts. Nevertheless, my separate identity, which of course I had built with my own two hands from twigs and straw over a couple of decades, still seemed so tenuous that I had to guard it against the slightest stirring of breeze." (1998: 55)

Her parents' discussions that are "thick with fundamentals" (248) undermine her commitment to American confidence and cheerfulness:

> My father's fatalism, I explain to myself carefully, was perfectly suited to his conditions. But in my less threatening world, I need to develop the art of optimism and of benign expectations. Think positive, an assertiveness-training voice in my head exhorts me. […] You have a place in the world now, friends who can help you. There's no need to be sucked back into the vortex of these atavistic anxieties; they're misplaced and will only harm you; this Pavlovian pessimism will prevent you from rational planning, and from showing a cheerful, confident face, which is what you need, what your world requires. (249)

Eva has succeeded in appropriating the English language and transcended her parents' serious Polish world tarnished by Jewish suffering, but she still "feel[s] the pull of the ground's gravity a bit more strongly" than her American friends. Similarly, at her doctoral ceremony, the *regard* (see 3.1.3) of her parents destabilises Eva, even at the height of her success, and makes her question her authenticity: "I feel my parents looking at me with pride: look how far she's come, their eyes seem to say, look how well she's learned to behave here — and I want to stop, pained at their approval. Who is this that's behaving this way, anyhow?" (227)

Nevertheless, her progress is undeniable and from the "bleak and meaningless void" (Pavlenko, 1997: 83) of being without language, a new voice has risen. It should be pointed out, however, that, although a new language can be appropriated, reaching the same deep emotionality and power of inner visceral expression as the mother tongue, there will always be a certain gap inhibiting complete assimilation into the new language and culture due to a lack of shared history and a past in that language.[71] In other words, the new language cannot

[71] Vladimir Vertlib mentions this barrier of a lack of shared history with the new culture that hinders complete conversion: "*Die Emigrationsversuche liegen schon über ein Jahrzehn zurück, die Zeit vergeht, und ich vergesse manchmal, dass ich zwar Österreicher, aber kein Eingeborener bin. Und nur wenn meine eingeborenen Freunde von den Erlebnissen ihrer Eltern und Großeltern erzählen [...] da merke ich wieder, dass ihre Vergangenheit nicht meine Vergangenheit ist, dass meine Vorfahren in*

entirely rewrite the past self and its reconstruction reveals the underlying text of the past in the original language.

6.1.2 The reinforcement of (re)construction via writing

Eva's new voice is reinforced by her pivotal decision to start writing in English. When she receives a diary from a Canadian friend she faces the dilemma of which language to write in. Polish is beginning to atrophy and is ill-fitted to her current experiences, but English, as the public language, seems unsuitable for such a private activity and creates a distancing effect (this is in fact a "double distance" [Pavlenko, 1997: 83], since the act of autobiographical writing already necessitates self-distancing — see 2.1). That is, "English is the language of school, of her public self, and is therefore distant from her in a different sense. Polish is at once her personal vernacular, and thus closer, and the language of a faraway land, a kind of vanished civilization of the self, a currency as valid in Vancouver as a Roman coin." (Besemeres, 2002: 51) Certain elements will therefore remain "untranslatable" (120):

> If I am indeed to write something entirely for myself, in what language do I write? Several times, I open the diary and close it again. I can't decide. Writing in Polish at this point would be a little like resorting to Latin or ancient Greek — an eccentric thing to do in a diary, in which you're supposed to set down your most immediate experiences and unpremeditated thoughts in the most unmediated language. Polish is becoming a dead language, the language of the untranslatable past. But writing for nobody's eyes in English? That's like doing a school exercise or performing in front of yourself, a slightly perverse act of self-voyeurism. (120–121)

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einer ganz anderen Welt gelebt [...] andere Sorgen, andere Probleme hatten, das mein Österreich erst 1972 beginnt, und dass alles vor dieser Zeit nur trockene Theorie ist und mühsamer Geschichtsunterricht..." (Niederle, 1999: 320)

Eva eventually chooses to write in English English because, although it is "still an alien form of expression" (with Kreisler, 2000) and lacks the mother tongue power of emotional expression, it corresponds to her present experiences:

> If I'm to write about the present, I have to write in the language of the present, even if it's not the language of the self. As a result, the diary becomes surely one of the more impersonal exercises of that sort produced by an adolescent girl. These are no sentimental effusions of rejected love, eruptions of familial anger, or consoling broodings about death. English is not the language of such emotions. (121)

Her decision is thus motivated predominantly by her desire to fully inhabit English, affirming her new voice[72] and representing Eva's "earliest of attempts to be able to initially speak in English from within, and then write in English from within" (with Kreisler, 2000). Eva decides to write in English because she realises that it is the language in which her life will now take place: "Polish was still the language of interiority, but [...] I wanted to make English the language of interiority.[73] I was not quite 14, so I was young enough to make this transition. And it was a fairly deliberate decision to make the transition. To make English totally mine." (with Kreisler, 2000)

Despite her initiation into conceiving a self in English, due to the fact that English "*n'est pas la langue du Moi*" (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 190), Eva still cannot take the conclusive step of identification; her identity is still somewhat "disembodied and distant" (Besemeres, 2002:

[72] In her memoir Agosín also testifies how she wrote in order "to recall a lost voice [and] invent another truth" (146); how writing "saved [her] from the depth of solitude" (148): "it gave me back my face and voice" (148).

[73] Polish-Austrian Karina Szczurek also identifies writing in English as the critical step in translating the self: "English has inadvertently become the language in which you work, as a critic and finally — yes, finally — as a writer. You know that this last shift is the crux (even if at this very moment you have to look up the exact meaning of 'crux' in a monolingual dictionary to make sure that it is actually the word you mean). English has become the language of your creativity; your intimacy" (Szczurek in Greenberg, 2010: 170).

52): “It seems that when I write (or, for that matter, think) in English, I am unable to use the word ‘I.’ I do not go as far as the schizophrenic ‘she’ — but I am driven, as by a compulsion, to the double, the Siamese-twin ‘you’.” (121) Nevertheless, writing in English signifies a turning point in her journey of self-translation: “*À partir de ce choix, noun assistons à une sorte de renforcement de la personnalité, voire à une réelle ‘renaissance’ dans la nouvelle langue. Petit à petit, la perte de repère est compensée par la découverte d’un autre monde, de l’Autre [...] et aussi par l’acceptation de soi par rapport au nouveau monde. L'anglais devient la langue de l’écriture et du quotidien, remplaçant ainsi l'idiome maternel.*” (Montini in Rinner, 2006: 190) The choice therefore affirms the nature of autobiographical writing as an identity supporting structure (see 2.2) and the diary becomes a tool for defining the self:[74] “I started constructing myself, as we say. Shaping myself, creating myself through these exercises in writing in English.” (with Kreisler, 2000) That is:

> The diary [...] allows me to make the first jump. I learn English through writing, and, in turn, writing gives me a written self. Refracted through the double distance of English and writing, this self — my English self — becomes oddly objective; more than anything, it perceives. It exists more easily in the abstract sphere of thoughts and observations than in the world. For a while, this impersonal self, this cultural negative capability, becomes the truest thing about me. When I write, I have a real existence that is proper to the activity of writing — an existence that takes place midway between me and the sphere of artifice, art, pure language. This language is beginning to invent another me. (121)

The value of autobiographical writing as an act of self-knowing is also centrally assumed in *Heading South, Looking North*. Aboard the ship *De Grasse* (where Thomas Mann was a fellow passenger), on a cruise Dorfman takes with his family to Europe shortly before

[74] Karen Ogulnick similarly recognises the role of writing in the reconstruction of identity: “My diary gave me a tool to look within myself, to try to understand more deeply how I had been socialized to be a woman in my white, American, Jewish, working-class subculture and how I was learning to speak ‘like a woman’ in Japan.” (1998: 136)

emigrating to Chile, Dorfman not only appropriates an English name, but he also makes a discovery that leads to a more lasting decision to write in English:

> And it was also on that ship that I was to begin a different sort of transition, one which was to prove far more crucial in the decades to come in defending the self I had come to identify with English. A transition to what might well be called the biggest con game ever invented by humanity: literature. The game I am still engaged in right now, the reader believing in the truth of my perishable, sliding words, lending faith to them without a shred of proof that I am not making everything up, inventing a self in this book as I invented (or so I say) a name for my future on that vessel. (81)

Dorfman realises that the self is to an extent a fictive and malleable construction (see 2.1) and that "literature's power" (85) can mould and consolidate that self. His breakthrough emanates from a gift of a notebook from his parents with the suggestion to "record there, and therefore keep forever (I remember that word, forever), my recollections of the trip" (84). In this way Dorfman learns that by writing he can "preserve what otherwise would have become ephemeral" (84) — "I fixed time, stopped it, calmed it"[75] (84) — which in turn implies that he could "be absent" (84) in body and yet "still be there [...] though [his] words" (84). Having exposed this possibility of preserving a self through language and having learned that Thomas Mann continues to write in his native German even though he is in exile, Dorfman realises that he can construct a literary self that transcends the physical constraints of geography:

> [B]y expressing my English entirely independent of the oral or, more crucially, of performance, I took a pivotal step toward answering the question of how to keep alive the language I had adopted as my own if I was to leave the United States. In that diary, for the first time, I created an imaginary space

[75] This realisation that "the written word has a way of recording time and of keeping our lives from melting into oblivion" (McClennen, 2010: 7) emphasises the function that autobiography holds of encapsulating the desire to preserve the past and partially conquer the passing of time: "*l'autobiographie est à la fois quête de soi et effort pour costruire son tombeau personnel*" (Aron, 2002: 33).

> and self outside the body and, perhaps as fundamentally, beyond geography, a dialogue with language which could be deepened regardless of where that body happened to be, what contingent geography surrounded me. (84)

This is the birth of Dorfman's fundamental recognition of the role of writing in moulding identity, and after starting his journal he admits: "I think I began, from that moment, to live in order to record life" (84). This is also how Dorfman grasps that writing in English could "shield" (83) and "protect" (84) his English identity: "During those six months in Europe, a rehearsal for the more permanent departure I was envisioning, literature was revealed to me as the best way to surmount the question of how to hold on to the language that defined my identity if I did not inhabit the country where it was spoken." (81) When he is thrust into a Spanish-speaking world he therefore finds himself "ready to confront the terrors of Spanish and Latin America, armed with literature as his ultimate defense" (86). Even as his attachment to his cherished America later decreases ("the distance that the politics of the Cold War had created inside me" — 86), he still believes that English will nevertheless remain the language of his most profound expression: "By the time I disembarked in Chile, English had become the efficient instrument of my intimacy, the inner kingdom I could control, and also the foundation for what I already called my profession, convinced as I was that my place in the world and in history would be determined by the way in which I affected and shaped that language permanently." (86) His insistence on continuing to write in English further becomes a constant and thus a type of anchor: "Maybe I needed one unchanging island of identity[76] that, as I transmogrified myself into a Latin American, linked me to the

[76] The view of writing as a stable island of identity reinforces "the ways that exiles use literature to recreate their ties to their home" (McClennen, 2008) and to the idea of a textual home in which writing becomes a place to live, or rather, as Lvovich puts it: "I am trying to connect the split worlds of my personality and my successful multilingualism. The price is my salvation and spiritual survival. The book is my home." (1997: xv) Similarly, Stavans importantly writes: "[Y]es, literature was the answer — my Promised Land, an authentic home, and a portable one at that, which I was able to carry around with me. Henry Thoreau once wrote, 'The art of life... is, not having anything to do, to do something.' Herein, I concluded, lay the true utopia: finding raison d'être, inventing your own private homeland." (2001: 221)

gringo I had once been."[77] (191) He harbours the illusion that writing in English could "bring together [his] confused dual life" (195): "Could my writing in English make sense of this journey of identity into Latin America that was, of course, being carried out, primarily, in Spanish?" (195)

In addition to the identity forming role of writing, Dorfman also taps into the therapeutic value of autobiographical reflection (see 2.2 for the properties of scriptotherapy): " I knew that literature could be a prayer and a pickax, a way out of the frozen world in which we find ourselves trapped, our only protest against death and loneliness." (132) Dorfman writes "in order to make sense of his own life"[78] (McClennen, 2008), but also in order to honour the dead: "There has to have been inside me the whisper of a promise. It was a promise of the dead. A promise that I would live and tell their story." (Dorfman, 2010) The day of Pinochet's coup in Santiago, Chile on September 11, 1973 was the day that Ariel Dorfman "should have died and did not" (3). Although many of his friends and comrades were tortured and killed and he himself was meant to be at La Moneda Palace, his life was spared by "a series of interconnected miracles [and] total coincidence" (with Postel, 1998). He should have been at the palace but he randomly switched places with one of his close friends, Claudio Gimeno, who died in his stead. Later Dorfman learns that although his name was on a list of people who should have been called in an emergency, the man responsible for the list, Fernando Flores, never called him because he judged that "someone had to live to tell the story" (with Postel, 1998). Dorfman views this decision as part of his destiny and as the moment that turned his life into "something necessary and inevitable" (with Postel, 1998). Above all, Dorfman feels that this event turned him into a storyteller — that he was compelled by history to write and "make amends to the dead" (with Postel, 1998):

[77] Agosín also continues to write in Spanish, believing it to be an umbilical cord to her Spanish self: "I never stopped writing in Spanish because I could not abandon my essence, the fragile, divine core of my being. It would have meant becoming someone else, frequenting sadness, losing a soul and all the butterflies." (2000: 144)

[78] Like Dorfman, Stavans sees writing as a way to meaning and a channel for transcending his fragmentation, even if only fictively: "Only through literature, I feel, can I transcend myself. To write is to overcome the imperfections of nature." (in Kellman, 2003: 126)

> In that embassy, as in exile, I realised that being free, to say what I wanted, was not just the gift given to me, it was a great responsibility heaved upon me because I was carrying the dead with me, and on that journey on which I had those dead people with me, or the living who were in Chile in danger of dying, I was carrying all those people with me, and that was a great responsibility. I had to keep my promise to them, and a great part of my literature since then (and my struggle for human rights, my activism) has been to keep that promise. (Dorfman, 2010)

Due to the fact that he "should not be here to tell this story" (opening line of the memoir — 3) but is, Dorfman spends "long and hard years wandering the globe [...] telling the story of Chile, trying to save lives" (Dorfman, 2010). This endeavour is embodied in the structure of *Heading South, Looking North*, with the epilogue *A Final Chapter in Which We Deal with Life and Language and Death One More Time*, indicating that after the coup, life and language are revealed as integrally connected to death and that "with every breath of life he takes he remembers those who no longer share the air with him." (McClennen, 2008) Furthermore, the "opposition of life and language versus death is constantly revealed as false since language is also essential to death, for it is only through language that Dorfman can narrate the dead, and such narration influences life and reveals the interpenetrations of life and death." (McClennen, 2008)

Despite Dorfman's commitment to providing a voice to the dead, he is initially unable to verbalise the extraordinary violence of the experience, which further complicates his ability to narrate his life. This lack of language is characteristic of a trauma narrative which witnesses "an inability on the part of the traumatized to name their experience" (McClennen, 2008): "Much of my work is about being haunted by the fact that you're living like a ghost. [...] There are people who died so that you could be alive. How do you do that? How do you speak to the dead, for the dead, in spite of the dead?" (with Postel, 1998) Eventually Dorfman overcomes this "prolonged and intense creative block" (McClennen, 2010: 109) and faces the excruciating pain of the coup. He does so by starting to write poems that "represent [his] first effort to bear witness to the agony of torture and the horror of the coup" (McClennen, 2010: 110), thereby responding to the trauma by narrating it:

> I left Chile, so I could talk about Chile, and write about Chile. But something terrible happened to me when I left. I couldn't write or say anything. It was impossible because I felt a paralysis in my throat. I was able to start writing in exile because I started to listen to the voices of the disappeared. I began to listen to the voices of the women, mothers, daughters, wives of the disappeared. And I began to feel like I was the place where the living and the dead could meet. And I started writing poems about the disappeared.[79] (Dorfman, 2010)

The way in which Dorfman absorbs the voices of the disappeared and their tormented loved ones reveals how his voice meets those of other people and his memoir thus "structures a wide range of conflicting voices through the prism of his personal identity" (McClennen, 2008) and, similarly, how he "joins a cultural chorus and his identity is shaped through the

[79] Firmat also testifies to the ability of writing to work through trauma: "I found out […] that literature gives expression to *vivencias* [experiences] that would otherwise remain namelessly painful." (2005: 68) Sandra Cisneros likewise uses writing to exorcise her ghosts: "I put it down on paper and then the ghost does not ache so much. I write it down and Mango [Street] says goodbye sometimes. She does not hold me with both arms. She sets me free." (Cisneros, 1991: 110) Similarly, Agosín, also uses writing as "a way to save others and [her]self" (2000: 45). Having fled Chile after the coup, and although she is in safety, she feels that the "nightmares of disappeared women coincided with [her] personal terror." (145) She too feels that she must uphold a "promise to the dead": "Then, when I left my language behind, and felt that loss like a mutilated body, I wrote about what was missing. I wanted to capture the pain of those who had been evicted from their lives. I wanted to tell about those who close their eyes. I wanted to speak of those places of honor where nothing blooms, yet suddenly the word, the disquieting voice of human life, surprised me and became audible. My work sprung from places occupied by outsiders, strangers, and absences. I revisited the past with obsession. My alphabet was made up of poems in search of a country. My passion was not nostalgia, nor the prudence of days gone by. My passion was writing because it allowed me to commemorate the faces of the disappeared. I did not want to disappear. Blindfolded, I could always find my way to the place of words, to the music of being or not being, to the zones of love within the circle of knowledge where time, seasons, and alliances coincide. Words gave me back my imagination. Words were fireflies, threads of transgression, of faith. Writing was not a hopeless return to the realm of enchantment or the silence of magic and mist that uncovers the light, but above all else the most intense pleasure, the brightest of all lights. Writing saved my life." (146)

voices of others" (McClennen, 200b8). This reverberation of others' voices in Dorfman's text corresponds to Bakhtin's concept of polyphony.[80] That is, "Bakhtin's emphasis on the writer as the medium for heteroglossia resonates well with the multiple, dialogic ways that Dorfman describes identity and with the complex layering of competing subjectivities in the text. Much in the same way that Bakhtin argues that literature reflects and refracts reality through myriad voices in tension that come together in the space of a novel, Dorfman's text captures a polyphony of voices that resound contrapuntally and emerge through his identity." (McClennen, 2010: 200) The inclusion of the voices of the disappeared in the memoir further points to Paul de Man's deconstructionist notion of autobiography as prosopopeia, that is "the act of linguistically constructing a life that is imaginary or absent within the concrete context of a writer who is attempting to bear witness to the lives lost during Pinochet's dictatorship" (McClennen, 2010: 195). In other words, Dorfman's presence is balanced against the voices of the disappeared who have been made silent by death.

Giving these victims a voice is a way for Dorfman to deal with his guilt over the death of his friend with whom he switched places and he acknowledges that "it's possible that writing this book has exorcised"[81] (with Postel, 1998) the haunting reminder. In other words, "Dorfman's identity as a writer is what saves him from despair and structures his life. Freighted with guilt over his survival, Dorfman makes it his mission, his calling, to act as a medium for those who died in his place" (McClennen, 2010: 196). In this way, he generates meaning and hope amid death and suffering through writing, since by "constructing art that encourages memory and imagination [he] triumph[s] over amnesia and apathy." (McClennen, 2010: 284)

[80] It is further useful to recall Bakhtin's notion of the *carnivalesque* which suggests that each voice, for instance, Dorfman's voice, in turn plays a number of roles or wears various masks in the performance of life. This highlights the multi-layered complexity of identity and the text.

[81] Firmat describes the healing effect of writing and its ability to facilitate reclaiming a place in the world: "Not someone who gets over things quickly, for several weeks after the surgery I was unable to do little more than keep myself going from meal to meal. But as fall crept in (the operation took place in September), I began to feel like myself again, began to re-establish connection with the person I had been before the surgery. […] The surgeons' term for this is 'anastomosis' — the joining of blood vessels or organs that have been separated by surgery. The notebook I started during those months, a journal of recovery and reconnection, is also a work of anastomosis. Writing it, I found my way to a place I had never been and had never left." (2005: xiii)

Dorfman comes to believe that the alleviation of trauma that writing *Heading South, Looking North* provides is only possible because he chooses to write in English. The distancing effect that English provides because it is not the language in which the event occurred, allows him to deal with the pain (see 4.2.3):

> The central events that determine the two sequences are both traumatic, moments when death circled me, whether in the New York hospital as a child, or on the streets of Santiago as a young adult. And both these shattering events were lived by me in Spanish. So, why English? I think it may have been because it was the best way of dealing with the ordeal, using the measured framework of the English words to contain the pain, to look at those circumstances in a sort of roundabout, indirect fashion. English as a sort of oblique mirror that allowed me to see the events in a different (or at least tolerable) light, work through this confession, show myself, perhaps reveal myself, use the distance, treat myself as an almost fictional object. So much so that very often, when, later on, I was reworking the text in Spanish, I would find myself sick and trembling, faint with anxiety […]. [T]o unveil one's origins, to journey to where it all started, we may need to use a different tongue, create an alter ego and trust him with the furtive truth we have told no one. You can't journey to your origin without a translator of some sort by your side. And a consolation: the ultimate reconciliation of my languages in this memoir, perhaps in this commentary as I write it. The very fact that I can write it may be proof that they are finally beginning to trust one another. (in Lesser, 2005: 212)

6.2 The perception of the double self and the question of authenticity

> In my rejection of imposing a profound change on myself by going over to writing in a different language, I perceive a fear of losing my identity, because it is certain that when we switch languages we become someone else.
>
> (Czeslaw Milosz in Kellman, 2003: xiv)

Eva internalises English and moves away from Polish, but as she does so she encounters problems of authenticity. As previously seen with her visit to her parents, her American identity is still somewhat fragile and she occupies it rather insecurely, still disturbed by being an outsider: "My confidence is still a wavering thing; sometimes I'm convinced that no one will ever give me a job because of my lack of 'typological fitness' — a term which disguises my fear that no one will ever recognise me as one of their own."[82] (244) This fear makes Eva self-conscious of her validity and she is disturbed by the appropriation of colloquial expressions that she feels do not really belong to her because of the cultural gap between herself and the culture that created them. That is, "[q]uestions rush through your mind. Is it an authentic thing to say? Will you look and sound authentic? You are not sure you can pull it off, you want to try it on for size, and there's a moment of uncertainty." (Ulman in Besemeres et al., 2007: 51): "I sound natural enough, I sound like anybody else. But I can hear the artifice, and for a moment, I clutch. My throat tightens. Paralysis threatens. Speechlessness used to be one of the common symptoms of classic hysteria. I feel as though in me, hysteria is brought on by tongue-tied speechlessness." (219) Eva's uneasiness is further magnified by a "slight trace of an accent [that] gives [her] away as somebody not born here" (170): "There is, of course, the constraint and the self-consciousness of an accent that I hear but cannot control." (122)

[82] Eva's fear of not fully belonging reverberates with Riemer's "anxiety of living in a vacancy between two worlds." (1992: 5), of "the ambiguous position of being neither inside nor outside; dwelling in a no-man's-land between the alien and the accepted" (1992: 109): "I have now spent more than three-quarters of my life in this country. [...] Whenever I am away from Australia, my thoughts turn towards home. Yet I cannot claim to belong here fully." (1992: 1) Agosín also identifies with the lack of belonging that is contrasted with the comfort and rootedness of the original home: "I knew that I would never go home. I would forever be lost in every city." (2000: 103)

Similar feelings displaying a lack of complete conviction were present in Eva's somewhat reluctant use of 'friend' in the American sense of the word (see 6.1), since by assuming American perceptions she feels that "she is being disloyal to her still extant, if embattled, pre-English self — a self which has been deeply characterized by life with a concept specific to the Polish language" (Besemeres, 2002: 29). This sensation of falsity is exacerbated by an outing to the drive-in with her Canadian peers where she feels out of place and separated by a different appreciation ("I've lost my sense of humour"[83] — 119). Consequently she feels resentful about not being able to express herself truly:

> I'm a pretend teenager among the real stuff. [...] I hate having to pretend. [...] I am enraged at the false persona I'm being stuffed into, as into some clumsy and overblown astronaut suit. I'm enraged at my adolescent friends because they can't see through the guise, can't recognize the light-footed dancer I really am. They only see the elephantine creature who too often sounds as if she's making pronouncements. (119)

Hoffman's use of the words 'persona' and 'guise' point to the phenomenon of a sense of performance and of partaking in a theatrical imitation in a second language.[84]

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[83] As mentioned in 4.2.3, grasping humour is a deep indication of cultural integration and the lack of understanding and conveying humour, as felt similarly by Lvovich, can lead to frustration and embarrassment: "I remember how silly I felt in their house facing the dilemma of finding Russian words for certain nonexistent cultural realities and concepts. [...] And how about the spontaneous stories, jokes, rhymes which create (or are created by) the whole different culture in school or at work or in the street? Not only did I feel silly and awkward, tormenting my mind to translate the untranslatable, but I also felt humiliated by the situation of someone's having control over my language, over me." (1997: 102)

[84] This phenomenon abounds in language memoirs. For example, Luc Sante refers to his "status as a counterfeit Belgian, an American pretender" (1998: 268) and feels like he is assuming "an alias, a mask" (1998: 261) when he is called by the anglicised version of his name. Stavans similarly find himself "becoming pure kitsch — a caricature of myself […] like the musical in Ciudad de Mexico" (2001: 251). Marie Arana is also distressed by "being called a faker, an impostor" (2005: 271): "I, too, had doubted my own trustworthiness. I had been fooling people for years. Slip into my American skin, and the playground would never know I was really Peruvian. Slip into the Latina, and Peruvians

As discussed previously (see 4.2.4), this sense of inauthenticity and "hyper-conscious[ness] of estrangement" (Besemeres, 2002: 31) in a second language stems from the impression of the mother tongue as containing "the seeds of the [authors'] most intimate identity"[85] (Dorfman in De Courtivron, 2003: 30) and of irrefutably encompassing the entirety of reality because "[o]ur native language impressed itself upon us first, in our tenderest years, as by means of words we gathered the world of concepts and images into our soul." (Herder in Besemeres, 2002: 41) In other words, speech in a second language can be perceived as inauthentic because "[i]t contrasts with the situation in the speaker's native language where the question of the authenticity of what is said does not arise. The language migrant's experience of inauthenticity implies that there was an unmarked sense of self in the first language." (Besemeres, 2002: 32) In this way, when Eva returns to Cracow for the first time in 1977 she comprehends that all the local scenes "will be forever more natural, more uncannily natural to me" (233) than those in New York. This sensation is motivated "by her construction of Poland (or is it childhood?) unequivocally as paradise, home of the first things, the incomparable things, the only things"[86] (Hirsch in Bammer, 1994: 76), and again attests to the salience of language to the development and structure of the self.

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wouldn't suspect I was a Yank. […] I was flitting from one identity to another so deftly that it was just as easy to affect a third. I could lie, I could fake, I could act. It was a way for a newcomer to cope in America. You can't quite sound like your schoolmates? Never mind! Make it up, fashion a whole new person. *Act the part,* says the quote under my school photo, *and you can become whatever you wish to become.* Invention. It was a new kind of independence." (2005: 271–272)

[85] The feeling of the mother tongue as the language of the 'true' self is confirmed by Stavans who defines it as "*der mame-loshen*, the language of stomach and soul" (2001: 49), and by Sante who declares that his first language French "corresponded to the soul, while English was the world" (1998: 127): "My second language has turned out to be my principal tool, my means for making a living, and it lies close to the core of my self-definition. My first language, however, is coiled underneath, governing a more primal realm." (1998: 123)

[86] Luc Sante likewise feels the incongruency of selves across languages: "In order to speak of my childhood I have to translate. It is as if I were writing about someone else. The words don't fit, because they are in English, and languages are not equivalent one to another. If I say, 'I am a boy; I am lying in my bed; I am sitting in my room; I am lonely and afraid', attributing these thoughts to my eight-year-old self, I am being literally correct but emotionally untrue. Even if I submit the thoughts to indirect

For this reason, when Eva personifies her two voices and documents a seemingly schizophrenic dialogue between them in which the Polish persona claims a deeper reality over the English one: "And you prefer her, the Cracow Ewa. / Yes, I prefer her. But I can't be her. I'm losing track of her. / In a few years, I'll have no idea what her hairdo would have been like. / But she's more real, anyway. / Yes, she's the real one." (120) In a later dialogue Eva again affirms Polish as her deepest interior language but "the English voice sulkily resists the primacy of the mother tongue" (Besemeres, 2002: 41): "You don't necessarily know the truth about me just because you speak in that language. Just because you seem to come from deeper within." (199). Hoffman's metaphorical use of voices to convey the sense of conflicting culturally embedded selves, emphasises how self-translation "is more of a tearing of oneself between incommensurate ways of being" (Besemeres, 2002: 33) and thus results in the impression of double selves[87] and changing personas.

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citation and the past tense I am engaging in a sort of falsehood. I am playing ventriloquist, and that eight-year-old, now made of wood and with a hinged jaw, is sitting on my knee, mouthing the phrases I am fashioning for him. It's not that the boy couldn't understand those phrases. It is that in order to do so, he would have to translate, and that would mean engaging an electrical circuit in his brain, bypassing his heart. If the boy thought the phrase 'I am a boy', he would picture Dick or Zeke from the schoolbooks, or maybe his friends Mike or Joe. The word 'boy' could not refer to him; he is *un garcon*. You may think this is trivial, that *garcon* simply means 'boy', but that is missing the point. Similarly, *maman* and *papa* are people; 'mother' and 'father' are notions. *La nuit* is dark and filled with fear, while 'the night' is a pretty picture of a starry field. The boy lives in *une maison,* with 'a house' on either side. *His coeur* is where his feelings dwell, and his 'heart' is a blood-pumping muscle." (1998: 261) Similarly, Stavans emphasises the loss and distortion in the re-interpretation of childhood when reading his grandmother's *diario*: "As I read and reread Bela's diario, time and again, the word 'inauthentic' comes back to me. I try to imagine how Bela would have written to me in her true tongue: Yiddish. I conjure the warm, gentle sounds articulated in its sentences, the magic of re-creating Nowe Brodno as it felt to her. By translating it for me, has she injected it with a dose of nostalgia? In seeking words absent from her childhood (simple forms: *se me declarò, un malparido, Puerco Judiò*), has she amended her own past?" (2001: 88)

[87] The impression of having two selves is felt by Vladimir Vertlib who concretely feels a switch from one self to another, even in his way of thinking, when changing languages: "*Sobald ich aber mit russischen Immigranten beisammen war, änderte sich meine Einstellung schlagartig. Augenblicklich wechselte ich meiner Assoziationshintergrund einfach aus. Ich passte mich nicht nur an, ich dachte tatsächlich anders und legte mein anderes Ich temporär ab. Die Österreicher wurden wieder zu*

Bombarded by the conflicting worlds of Spanish and English, Ariel Dorfman also struggles with the "incessant and often perverse doubleness" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 31) of his two selves: "I have spent my life trying to build bridges between Latin America and the United States, between the two Americas that are at the bottom and the top of my soul." (Dorfman, 2010) The battle between the two sides of himself plunges him into a no-man's-land of disorientation in which he is "suspended between a country to the North that was drifting away from [him] and this country here in the South [that he] was not yet ready to commit to permanently" (153). Until he was eighteen, when asked where he was from, Dorfman always replied "spontaneously, invariably" (150), that he was from America, but when he starts his student life at the *Universidad de Chile*, he is already submerged in Spanish and the current political tension between the two Americas heightens the self-consciousness of this identification: "I can remember becoming aware of how foreign I must look to my new classmates, my hair, my height, my eyes, my skin, my gestures, revealing that I was from somewhere else, I can remember how all those other students from *la otra América* turned to me with interest."[88] (152) When he is asked about his origins, he now hesitates, trying to figure out the answer for himself first:

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fremden Eingeborenen, materialistisch, pedantisch und allesamt ein klein wenig beschränkt." (Niederle, 1999: 319) For Zdenka Becker the different selves encompassed by her languages are interpreted rather as different skins: "*meiner fremden Sprache, die für mich zur zweiten Haut geworden ist [...]. Wie viele Sprachen du sprichst, so viele Male bist du ein Mensch, sagt ein altes Sprichwort. Ich spreche vier Sprachen und bin nur ein Mensch. Keine vier. Ich bin ein Mensch mit vier Häuten, die meinen Körper wie die Jahresringe umkreisen, die ein Teil von ihm sind.*" (Becker in Niederle, 1999: 48) Agosín similarly compasres the feeling of switching language to a physical sensation: "[I] switched alphabets as if changing the rhythm of my skin." (2000: 114) It is pertinent, however, to reaffirm that the impression of having double selves is in fact a highly intensified form of the multiplicity of the self within the same language (see 3.1.2); that is, one can "legitimately ask whether the perception of a linguistic and psychological split is unique to translingual writers for whom the relationship with their multiple languages is by definition a challenge or whether individuals from other walks of life also feel that they have multiple selves?" (Pavlenko, 2006: 6)

[88] Stavans underlines similar multiple contradictions in his identity: "What makes me Mexican? White-skinned, blond, brown-eyed, with a name like Ilan, which in Hebrew means 'paten tree,' and a surname like Stavans. What makes me a Mexican? And what, after all these years, attaches me to the land where I was born and raised? I have no easy answers, of course." (2001: 22)

> I should have answered: I don't know. I should have answered: All my life I thought I was a Yankee but now I'm not so sure, I wanted to be one so badly that I went to the extreme of changing my name to Edward. So your name's Edward? *¿Te llamas Edward?* Where are you from? I should have answered: You want to know the truth? I'm still attracted to the United States and who knows if I won't end up there, I may hate its politics but I love its jazz and its movies and its people and the language they gave me, which is still the language I use to make sense of the world. You want to know the truth? [...] I should have answered: I don't have a country [...] I should have answered: I'm alone on this planet and I don't know where I belong. (152–153)

Not being able to answer the question for himself, Dorfman avoids it by replying that he is from Argentina, "that accidental birthplace" (153): "It was a convenient way of not having to examine my own confusion [...] It was a way of giving myself time to figure out who I really was." (153) Dorfman's suspension between his two selves is symbolised in his accent, the "slight smidgen of a gringo accent that still cre[eps] into [his] voice like slime out of a swamp" (152). Although he realises that he "was not, and never could be, an all-American kid" (74), he cannot delete all traces of his American self; his "accent is the tell-tale scar left by the unfinished struggle"[89] (Aciman, 1999: 11). Like his American-accented Spanish, he continues to lead a "schizophrenic, adulterous existence, writing in English and speaking in Spanish, singing American songs at sunrise and being lullabied into sleep by the Chilean

[89] Aciman's notion of an accent as a branding scar coincides with Firmat's image of "*Scar Tissue*" (2005) as a mark of transformation left by a language. It is similarly conceived by Becker as a conspicuous tattoo: "*Meine Aussprache ist die Erinnerung an meine verlorene Heimat, ein Brandmal, eine Tätowierung, der ich davonzurennen versuche.*" (Becker in Niederle, 1999: 47) Agosín, however, sees her accent in a more positive light. Instead of viewing it as a disfiguring blemish left by a painful wound, she cherishes it as a way of keeping alive her connection with her beloved Spanish: "I loved my accent. As far as I was concerned, it embellished the sound of English, softened words, warmed my lips with each emitted sigh, preserved the things I loved: angels, everyday words, sleepy mornings when I greeted my people in my language." (2000: 145)

mountains in the evening, crazy about Conrad and crazy about Cervantes, suspended vulnerably between two nations and two languages." (132)

Despite having surgically removed his English and declaring that he "would never again write another word" (220) in it, English persists like an unfading scar[90]: "the subterranean, contaminated influence of English persisting, flooding my consciousness" (221). In the same way that English lies dormant within him, so too had Dorfman's Spanish resisted when he attempted to extinguish it: "It was not true, of course, that my Spanish had died in New York. My Spanish had resisted. When I had tried to smother it, my Spanish had hidden and then endured inside me, waiting for its chance to come out and find a way back into my life." (60) Like a Phoenix, his Spanish and then English in turn regenerate from the ashes of their former self: "there is an ember under the ashes"[91] (62). Neither language has been

[90] Riemer also associates the process of self-translation with an injury that leaves a trace: "The consequences of such major emotional and cultural surgery are, naturally enough, extremely grave. The attempt to remake myself resulted in the many years I spent in an emotional vacuum, or, to find another image, inside a cocoon I had spun around myself until I felt ready to emerge with my new being. But in the way that victims of amputation continue to feel the presence of ghost-like limbs long after they have been removed, so the complex influences which go into the formation of a personality during the early years of life insisted on making their presence felt." (1992: 89). Similarly, Riemer discusses the re-emergence of a (semi-) suppressed language from within: "there remains, moreover, an ineradicable substratum of your 'native' language ready to pop up like a malicious imp at the least provocation." (1992: 85), implying that the mother tongue can never be entirely erased and that even if it is surpassed by another language its impact nevertheless leaves its mark on the formation of the self.

[91] Agosín also makes reference to embers; like the Phoenix she manages to resuscitate herself from the ashes of her burnt identity: "I am the woman who manages to find herself among the embers." (2000: 179) The Phoenix could in fact serve as a valuable metaphor for this study and is particularly pertinent to Dorfman in that it embodies the duality of life and death. As the Phoenix rises from the ashes of its former self, so one has the possibility to resurrect oneself in a new language, out of the cinders of the past self. It is necessary to reflect on one's life, sifting through the ashes of the past and of loss and suffering in order to understand not only what to discard but also what to retain. The Phoenix is thus a striking symbol of resurrection and triumph over adversity. According to the myth only one Phoenix exists at a time and when, after approximately five hundred years, the bird nears its death, it builds a nest of aromatic wood, places itself on the pyre, sets the pyre on fire and is

successfully banished: “my despised English self, will never be far away, always waiting for me with the same tenacity as Spanish did during its years of exclusion.” (270)

As the embers of his former self rekindle and in spite of “the temptation to be one” (De Courtivron, 2003: 6), Dorfman is unable to resist starting to become bilingual: “I was not aware of what was happening to my mind: it was a subtle, cunning, camouflaged process, the vocabulary and the grammatical code seeping into my consciousness slowly turning me into a person who, without acknowledging it, began to function in either language.” (115) He finds the reality of living with two languages overwhelming and fights to at least keep the two languages separate in order to avoid facing the fundamental questions of a bilingual identity and the conflicting selves that manifest in each language:

> [F]rom the very beginning I did not allow my new language to enter into a dialogue with the older one. I stubbornly avoided comparing their relative merits, what one could offer me that the other could not. It was as if they inhabited two strictly different, segregated zones in my mind, or perhaps as if there were two Edwards, one for each language, each incommunicado like a split personality, each trying to ignore the other, afraid of contamination. I did not attempt or even contemplate the possibility of cross-fertilization: to weigh the caliber and performance of one against the other would have meant creating a territory from which to think the phenomenon, a common space they both shared within me. It would have meant admitting that I was irrevocably bilingual, opening the door to questions of identity that I was much too vulnerable and immature to face: Who is it that speaks Spanish? Is it the same youngster that speaks English?[92] Is there a core that is unchanged no

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consumed by the flames. Then, from the ashes of the fire a new Phoenix is born and the process of life and death repeats itself.

[92] Stavans is faced with similar confusion about his languages and his loyalty to them, also questioning whether he is the same person across languages: “A polyglot, of course, has as many loyalties as homes. Spanish is my right eye, English my left; Yiddish my background and Hebrew my conscience. Or better, each of the four represents a different set of spectacles (near-sight, bifocal, night-reading, etc.) through which the universe is seen.” (in Kellman, 2003: 114) In accordance with previous discussion on language as a mask or role, Stavans provides vital insight in attempting to

> matter what dictionary you reach for? And which is better equipped to tell a particular story? And how is it that your body language changes when you switch from one to another? Is it a different body?" (115–116)

Reluctant reflections on "how the two languages differed, how each of them might complement or oppose each other, the subtle way in which English made me one kind of writer, one kind of person, and Spanish somebody else" (221) force Dorfman to face that he is "indeed irremediably dual,[93] that there was a tainted middle ground that they both shared and from whence each language would examine and touch the other, demand to know what changed when I said *se me fue la micro* instead of 'I missed the bus.'" (221) He must acclimatise to being simultaneously shared by two languages, to having two selves.

This consciousness is fortified by the process of writing *Heading South, Looking North*. As mentioned previously Dorfman decides to write in English, but when he rewrites the memoir into Spanish he sees "how changed [it was] filled with Spanish. It was not the same book" (in

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further explain his switches through the adoption of various personas: "What does the switch from one language to another really entail? [...] A language is a set of spectacles through which the universe is seen afresh: Yiddish is warm, delectable, onomatopoeic; Spanish is romantic, perhaps a bit loose; Hebrew is rough, guttural; English is precise, almost mathematical [...]. No, perhaps spectacles are the wrong metaphor. [...] I should try to explain what it's like to switch languages by invoking the many personalities of an actor, each nurtured by different obsessions. The person remains the same, but the persons — in Greek, 'mask carrier' — varies. Changing languages is like imposing another role on oneself, like being someone else temporarily. [...] But is the person really the same? Is it accurate to compare myself to an actor, whose personality remains the same from play to play? You know, sometimes I have the feeling I'm not one but two, three, four people. Is there an original person? An essence? I'm not altogether sure, for without language I am nobody. Language makes us able to fit into a context. And what is there to be found in the interstices between contexts?" (2001: 249–250) Similarly perplexed by her identity, Agosín reflects: "I ask myself, who am I? In which language do I recognize myself?" (2000: 139)

[93] Arana also feels this unavoidable duality in that she "juggle[s] two brains in [her] head" (2005: 74): "I had two heads, two hearts. I was as unwieldy as Siamese twins on a high wire: too awkward for equipoise, too curious about the other side." (2005: 193); "[We] were becoming others all the time, shuttling back and forth. We were fifty-fifties. We were the cobbled ones." (2005: 265)

Lesser, 2005: 208). (As Dorfman rewrites the memoir, so too does he rewrite himself, which in turn implies that as the book changes in Spanish, so too does his persona.) Dorfman realises that he "could not merely transfer and smooth the English words into Spanish" (in Lesser, 2005: 208) because the translation did not correlate exactly. For example, the second sentence in the memoir, "It's that simple: there is a day in my past, a day many years ago in Santiago de Chile, when I should have died and did not" (3), is translated in the Spanish text to "*Si estoy contando esta historia, si la puedo contar, es porque alguien, muchos anos atrás en Santiago de Chile, murió en mi lugar*." Meaning: 'If I am writing this story, if I can tell it, it is because someone, many years ago in Santiago de Chile, died instead of me." (in Lesser, 2005: 208) Dorfman attributes the inability to translate word for word and the fact that "the emphasis was altered" (in Lesser, 2005: 208) to Spanish's insistence that he keep "at least part of [his] promise and allow a slightly different version of [his] existence to circulate in the world." (in Lesser, 2005: 208) Furthermore, he feels compelled by what sounded and felt better, as well as what he wanted to express in that part of the memoir:

> But this other version is also determined by what sounds better. 'When I should have died and did not,' well, that resonates in me dramatically, perhaps even elegantly, the way in which the succession of *d*s re-enforce one another, the way in which that *not* at the end closes any door to doubt. The Spanish translation *cuando debí haber muerto y no lo hice* is weak, awkwardly constructed, repeating the ugly *b*s (*debí haber*). Worse still, the use of the verb *hacer (hice)* misconstrues the original meaning in English, by positing the survival as more active than it really was. To give an approximate equivalent of the first sentence in the English language memoir I would have had to write something like *cuando la muerte vino por mí y no me encontró* ('when death came for me and did not find me'), but that is a thought and a structure of feeling I wanted to reserve for later in the text. (in Lesser, 2005: 209)

These incongruencies compounded the difficulty of Dorfman's complicated decision. In the same way as Hoffman personifies her languages to emphasise their power over her, so too does Dorfman metaphorically position his possessive languages against each other in a fierce debate of who should win first position for his throat for his memoir:

> [N]o sooner did I start to write the first sentences of that autobiography in one of

> the languages, say English, than the Spanish misbehaved abominably, blocked those words as if they were alien, an in flagrante case of linguistic adultery. And the same menace of divorce — 'you do this, boy, and I am outta here' — if I tried to spin the tale in Spanish, my English telling me it would not tolerate such treachery. […] I felt that their double boycott of my writing functioned in the most concrete of ways. *Muy simple.* So how did this boycott work? Whenever I wrote anything about my life, in either language, it simply sounded ... false, *falso,* fraudulent, *fradulento.* […] they paralyzed me by making me feel that anything I stated on paper in one language about the other would not pass the test. (in Lesser, 2005: 207)

Although Dorfman convinces himself and promises Spanish that he is only writing "temporarily" (in Lesser, 2005: 208) in English, his decision denotes his taking control of his languages and his identity: "I decided that enough was enough, *basta,* it was time to let my languages know who was in charge. If you do not let me decide, I said to them, I will end up in a mental institution and my words will be neither in English or Spanish but a combination of the two of you closer to sheer jarring gibberish." (in Lesser, 2005: 208)

Alluding to the multiplicity and expandability of identity, Dorfman's management of his languages allows them to co-exist and to develop in synchronisation with his self:

> [The Spanish] is still growing. As is the English. Even when I do not use one of the two languages, when one of them is relegated to the attic of my life, that language, be it English or Spanish, continues to grow[94] — and reign. At this very moment, as I compose this, my Spanish is whispering instructions, suggestions, blowing rhythms my way, shaping the rival's choices. Creating between the two of them, something that is not quite one hundred percent English or Spanish, but something quite other, *creciendo ambos*. (in Lesser, 2005: 17)

[94] Lvovich also emphasises the expandability of the self through a new language: "There is too much of myself, and there will be more and more. With each language and each identity, there will be more life, more love, and more growing. Multiplicity is the adjustment." (1997: 73)

6.3 Reconciliation of identity and conclusions

I am, seeing, hearing,
with half my soul at sea and half my soul on land,
and with these two halves of soul I see the world.

Estoy, mirando, oyendo,
con la mitad del alma en el mar y la mitad del alma en la tierra,
y con las dos mitades del alma miro el mundo.

(Pablo Neruda in Arana, 2005, *Preface*)

Ariel Dorfman's decision to take control of his languages is indicative of his greater acceptance of his multidimensional identity. He eventually understands that they need to stop wrestling each other, and that harmony is essential both for his own well-being and in order to fulfil his duty to history and the dead:

> They [Spanish and English] had been *disputándome* for most of my existence, each of them dominating my life monolingually, for long stretches of years freezing the other out of power and articulation. Until I got tired of being a child pulled this and pushed that way by two distraught parents insulting each other in a language the other pretended not to know but that the disputed offspring understood all too well. Tired of being a husband with two squabbling wives or a mistress with two lovers[95] […] by the time I had decided to write the

[95] Similar meaningful imagery — although with a distinct meaning — is used by Henry James to try and explain the relationship of the self to its various languages. Ilan Stavans reflects that he "was struck by Henry James's comments on languages and women. If the first, the native tongue, James once claimed, is the maternal one, what is the second? And the third and fourth? Is it proper to talk of paternal tongues? Or should we talk of a stepmother's tongue? James opted for the mistress tongue, suggesting that one's liaison to a mother is essentially different from the one we keep with a lover." (2001: 228) Stavans concludes that the "father tongue [is] the adopted, alternative and illegitimate language [Henry James preferred the term 'wife tongue'], whereas the mother tongue is genuine and authentic — a uterus: the original source." (in Kellman, 2003: 114)The most useful analogy is, however, probably that of a 'foster tongue' as used by Eva Sallis: "I like the phrase 'foster mother tongue.' A foster mother might love you as much as a real mother and then again might not. A foster

> memoir, these two sides of my brain, these two tongues lodged in the cavity called my *cabeza* — also known as a head — had declared a truce, had decided to stop waging war because I needed them both to survive exile, to make a living […]. I needed them because of the dictatorship in Chile: how to deny the possibility of transmitting twice over to an increasingly deaf and indifferent world the story of my ravaged land — which would, presumably, lead to my being able to convince twice as many people. (in Lesser, 2005: 206)

Dorfman's exile and his critical connection to the coup are integral to his identity and the reconciliation of his "journey toward duality" (116) is largely achieved through politics. In joining the greater political fight Dorfman was able to alleviate the focus on his own conflict and find a place in the world: "I loved to march because it was the easiest way of abjuring for a couple of hours the curse of individuality, making believe you are not different from everybody else." (168) He identifies with Chile, feeling more patriotic than ever, eager to put an end to his inherited legacy of exile: "And now, after a lifetime of vacillation, I was finally ready to reconnect to that dream of my immigrant ancestors, make this place my home, fight for it." (235) Through passion for the cause, he attains a sense of meaning and belonging that profoundly invigorate him: "For all my life I felt a ghost. There's only one time in my life when that disappeared and that was during the three years of Allende. [...] There is nothing like the moment when you stand in the giddy centre of history and you feel like anything is possible. [...] I lived that experience and I'll never forget it. It keeps me alive." (Dorfman, 2010) By immersing himself in solidarity as a *compañero,* Dorfman grounds himself in an identity that transcends language and the loneliness of a life in between worlds[96]:

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mother brings an uncertain fate, and might reject you. Yet a foster mother, whether she loves or doesn't, rescues you. None of the loading ascribed to the word 'step-mother' weighs down 'foster mother'. Looking back over my life, I find I accept my ambivalent existence in my foster mother tongue. I accept its love and its resistance. And I know it rescued me: from my inheritance of Western prejudice and from an inheritance of fear. From many of my weaknesses. Arabic adopted me and I am nurtured uneasily between cultures by it." (Sallis in Besemeres et al., 2007: 158–159)

[96] See 3.2 on the value of group identity and a sense of belonging in identity formation.

> [I]f I took up their challenge to redefine the world with the same tenacity and fearlessness with which they were ready to redefine themselves, if I could join my homeless body to their homeless lives, I could help to change not only an unjust world but my own self as well. I could imagine my life, not in terms of individual self-fulfilment, where I would disappear when I died, but in terms of service to humanity, where death does not really exist. In them, I finally found the brotherhood I had first conjectured as a child, that brotherhood I had needed back in the forties to quell the lonely darkness and which now in the sixties challenged my tenuous, confused bilingual persona to anchor itself to their cause.[97] (157–158)

In his endeavour to forge a new identity through his rebirth as Ariel, Dorfman finds his own internal conflict mirrored in the revolution. That is, the political confusion of South America parallels his identity confusion: "If I managed to accommodate these blatant contradictions, my private English language self and my gesticulating public Spanish-American persona […] it was because I had discovered a strange justification for my schizoid conduct in — well, in the history of Latin America, as it searched for a language with which to express its hybridity." (191) The public and personal struggles collide, again stressing the interconnectedness of history and Dorfman's story:

> I was fortunate that my pursuit of a resolution to my paradoxes […] coincided with a unique moment in the history of the continent where I had been born, when […] Latin America was breaking from its past and struggling to rid itself of the foreign influences that had dominated its destiny for so long. There was a place for someone like me in that quest, an intoxicating invitation for a youngster on the verge of becoming an adult who could not conceive his own future with any degree of stability, who had, like the continent itself,

[97] Dorfman's resistance of alienation via fraternity and his desire to "connect with humanity" (McClennen, 2010: iv) reverberate with Albert Camus' belief that the suffering of exile or estrangement can be surmounted via the solidarity of fraternity. This stance is explored in *La Peste* and in the parables of *L'exil et le royaume* (1957), in which the characters, submerged in exile, manage to enter the kingdom via nature or fraternity, thus affirming their humanity. This access is mostly brief and vague; however, its value is not undermined by its fragility.

> come to a dead end in his development and could not continue telling himself that the remedy for his problems lay abroad. Instead of answering my questions, this continent sent me back more questions, all of them contradictory. Like me, Latin America was an enigma, a vibrant, sprawling, messy reality which did not itself know what it was or where it was going, entangled in the process of discovering where it had been, a continent that was more a project than an object, a series of half-formed nations trapped in a history not of their own making, trying to invent an alternative. [...] Latin America, contestatory, insurgent and rebellious, would appeal to an entirely different way of imagining myself, encouraging me to merge my personal crisis of identity with its parallel crisis, my own search with its search, my journey with its journey. […] I was entranced by a Latin America that called out to my own deeply divided, hybrid condition. I located in that culture my secret image, the mirror of who I really was. (161–162)

Dorfman's participation in the revolution becomes a healing process that allows him to come face to face with the hybridity he has hidden from: "Those years were like a balm: day by day the revolution cleansed the slow cesspool of my shame and taught me to forgive myself. [...] Just as it taught us to tolerate those with whom we disagreed, it would teach me to tolerate my own dissonant voices inside." (246) He puts his hopes on the revolution to resolve his fragmentation and unite him to a Latin American self: "it would allow me painlessly to change into someone new, liberate me from all the quandaries that had plagued me." (246)

History, however, intervenes[98] in Dorfman's quest to become a 'true' Chilean and, becoming a political exile, he is forced to re-unite with his English; in other words, exile triggers the embrace of his duality. The day of the coup acts as a crucial turning point in Dorfman's life. It is the day when life again inseparably confronts death: his life is saved but he is exiled

[98] Agosín's memoir is set against the same historical background with parallels between history and her personal story: "Then that afternoon it was announced that, by a slim margin, the presidency had been won by Salvador Allende, the doctor who was my father's friend, who brought candy to our house." (2000: 37) As in the case of Dorfman, the coup provides a turning point that marks her exile: "Later I understood that those who disappeared from the face of the earth were my age or a bit older. While my generation disappeared, we exiles disappeared as a family." (2000: 10)

(again the duality of Dorfman's Spanish and English selves parallels the duality of life and death):

> It was the moment in my life when everything changed, the moment of conception of the person I now am, how I became this person who's bilingual, who's multicultural, who's hybrid. I now have the perspective of twenty-five years of looking back on that. Why am I in exile? Why am I far away? Why do I speak English when I swore I wouldn't? It all has to do with the fact of the coup, and the fact that I was spared. Life pardoned me. History pardoned me. Violence passed me by. Death decided not to take me. I should have been at La Moneda Palace with Allende [...]. My life has consisted of a series of encounters with death and is fundamentally about how I've escaped death. But in escaping death, I also had to escape my country. So I went into exile and became the person I now am. (with Postel, 1998)

Dorfman was saved not only by not being at La Moneda with Allende when he should have been, but again a second time by a crucial decision he takes when trying to reach La Moneda when he finds out about the coup. In an intensely dramatic and life-altering moment, he reaches the police barrier and must instantaneously choose whether to risk his life and head for La Moneda which is about to be bombed, or return to his beloved wife who is waiting for him at the other end of the street. It is the moment in which he consciously decides his own fate: "I should have gone down this street and I should have died, and I would have been one of the martyrs of the Chilean Revolution. This is the place where I think I went into exile forever, in some sense I lost Chile forever. The Chile that I had dreamt of died on September 11th and a part of me died as well." (Dorfman, 2010) The Resistance orders Dorfman to leave Chile and he seeks refuge in the Argentine embassy. After two months of living in the embassy he is allowed to escape to Buenos Aires, and very reluctantly (for the sake of the safety of his family), he enters exile. These circumstances direct him, through the re-admission of English, to finally conceiving of a reconciliation between his two split selves:

> It is there, in the embassy, even before exile creates a distance from my country, even before I've left it, that I start a new stage in my journey, that I begin to concede that history may be forcing me, against my will, to become bilingual, it is in that embassy that I first explore the possibility of living in

> two languages, using each one for a different community. It is there that I set out on the road to this hybrid mongrel of language who writes this so many years later. (270)

Although Dorfman experiences exile as a death, the fact that it provokes the reconciliation of his identity draws attention to the gains that can be found in loss, or to use a metaphor in keeping with his memoir, to the way in which life exists within and in spite of death: "But mine is not only a narrative of death; it's a narrative of life and of celebration, as well." (with Postel, 1998) In this way, the story of his life is "marked not only by a deep sense of loss but also by a persistent hope" (McClennen, 2010: 19). Affirming the way in which exposure to other languages and cultures expands one's mental and emotional horizons,[99] Dorfman's friend, writer Antonio Skarmeta, comments that even though "exile is a tragedy [in that] you have to go away from your language, from your family [and] you experience loneliness [and] poverty, [there is nevertheless] also something positive about it [because] exile opened the eyes and the hearts of Chileans to other cultures." (in Dorfman, 2010)[100] Indeed, Dorfman asserts the positive side of hybridity, acknowledging "the many intermediate wonderful full-fledged patois that prosper in the spaces in between established linguistic systems, the myriad creole zones of confluence and mixture where languages can mingle and experiment and express the fluctuating frontiers of a hybrid humanity"[101] (in De Courtivron, 2003: 34). He

[99] Kaplan endorses this experience: "Moments like this one make me think that speaking a foreign language is, for me and my students, a chance for growth, for freedom, a liberation from the ugliness of our received ideas and mentalities." (1993: 211)

[100] Dorfman further points to the use of a language switch as a coping strategy to escape anxiety (see 4.2.3): "Later as an adult — in fact, now — I discovered a more ingenious way of draining the slime that thoughts of my mortality secrete into my mind. Now if I can't fall asleep at night, I'll banish the saw-buzz of language, say, English, that's keeping me awake, and switch to my other language, Spanish, and lazily watch it erase the residues of dread from me as if I were a blackboard." (6)

[101] Lvovich suggests a new type of whole that emerges from multiplicity: "The transformation that had occurred in me and made sense of my different selves, nourished and expressed by different languages, led me to the understanding of the multilingual personality as an enriched and harmonic social identity, the whole." (1997: 105)

even comes to believe that "to tolerate differences and indeed embody them personally and collectively might be our only salvation as a species" (42).[102] Ultimately Dorfman accepts being "an adulterer of language" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 33) and concedes that the risk of "anxiety [and] madness" (42) is somewhat offset by the compelling "richness [...] of being double" (42):

> This is where I write from now, having embraced the need to live in two dimensions, pledge loyalty to two cultures, use one language to speak to the mailman and the other to read the mail from home that he brings to our door. It is as a resident of this dual existence, married to two tongues, inhabited by both English and Spanish in equal measures, in love with them both now that they have called off the war for my throat. (in De Courtivron, 2003: 33)

Due to this unsteady balance of loss and gain / life and death, Dorfman hesitates to examine his "hybrid condition" (42) too thoroughly or question why and how he is "shared by two equal languages" (42). True to the nature of identity and life, the two sides of his self exist like the concept of the *ying* and the *yang*, seemingly conflicting yet interdependent, the survival of one essential to the existence of the other. Afraid to disturb the fragile balance and re-induce an identity crisis, he does not probe to the very heart of how each language affects his identity: "even now, in fact, even now that I swim, merrily in them both, the mere attempt to establish where one ends and the other begins and how they overlap causes me acute discomfort, as if I were transgressing a taboo; getting too close to the mysterious center that unifies me in spite of language." (221) Dorfman cautiously confesses that he is even afraid of

[102] In Arana's memoir she underlines not only the benefits of the hybrid condition, but also highlights that it is characteristic of even seemingly homogenous nationalities and thus of identity in general: "We're not just Peruvians,' George said then [...]. 'We're Americans like you.' / 'Yes, you are, but better,' Birdseye shot back. / 'Better?' / 'Well, sure, son. You two are hybrids. You know what that means? Half-breeds, half and half. In scientific terms, you're better specimens for that.' […] 'And then, of course, Peruvians are half half. Half Spanish, half Indian. A little Chinese. A little Arab. Americans are half this, half that, too. Down, down, down, five million years through the generations. It's the cross-fertilization that improves things." (2005: 155) Dorfman himself comments on the lack of a purely homogenous culture and (in a similar way to Hoffman) on how his own hybridity is part of a greater condition of his time: "I still don't feel entirely American, but I don't know who does, most of my friends don't feel entirely American either." (2010)

vocalising too much ("for reasons that I prefer to keep under strict lock and key here inside" — in Lesser, 2005: 208), afraid of angering his jealous 'lovers':

> Even now I do not dare to venture any deeper into that territory. As if the reader had not already realized that this collaboration between my two languages, my two loves,[103] is a precarious and fragile one, that can be all too easily upset. Dangerous, certain questions. Like a sweetheart asking if she makes love better than the other one, the wife, the legitimate spouse. I am wary of opening up anything that could disturb the balance I have somehow struck between my two recently reconciled but still potentially antagonistic vocabularies. [...] There is someone inside me that makes the decision about when to speak Spanish and when to speak English. [...] there are many solitary moments [...] when I am left alone with *mis dos idiomas*, and I have to decide which of them will receive my full attention. And I do not intend, for the moment, to ask myself how I reach that conclusion, why one at a certain moment sprints out of my fingers onto the keyboard or simmers to the surface when I am looking at a tree during a walk through the woods. I don't want to know, I don't want to legislate, I don't want it to be anything other than spontaneous, automatic, surfacing from some depth that I prefer not to gaze into. (in Lesser, 2005: 215–216)

When Dorfman reaches the (seeming) "end of this journey into life which has also been a parallel journey into death" (276), the "ultimate truth of [his] life" (276) therefore still eludes him — the "answer is not clear" (277) and yet it is not necessary: in the gaps between his "two languages and [his] two cultures" (276) he is able to find the way forward on his

[103] Again using the imagery of lovers to signify (as does Dorfman) his relationship to his languages, Stavans similarly resolves that he cannot live monogamously. His multiple relationships are, however, less guilt-ridden than Dorfman's: "My passion for Spanglish in no way diminished my devotion to Spanish and English. Indeed, I believe in multiple loves." (in De Courtivron, 2003: 145) This inability to choose one language over the other reverberates with the beautiful, profound words from Neruda's *Ode to the Southern Cross*: "Between the fir tree and the poppy / whom does the earth love more?" (1990: 188)

"bilingual journey."[104] The ultimate truth is always evasive, but the understanding and consciousness that the journey provides makes it possible to go on: "Though what I finally arrived at was not the victory of one tongue over the other one but rather a cohabitation, my two languages reaching a truce in order to help the body they were lodged in to survive."[105] (in De Courtivron, 2003: 33) In this way it could be said that his ultimate reconciliation and gain consist of learning to live with the questions as opposed to needing to search for answers, and of learning to find meaning in suffering through growth and connection with others.

Dorfman's reconciliation is embodied in the *Preface* to *Heading South, Looking North* that conveys his pivotal grappling with his two inseparable languages and his eventual internal ceasefire:

> Angelíca: this book is for you. It's my story, the story of my many exiles and my three countries and the two languages that raged for my throat during years and that now share me, the English and the Spanish that I have finally come to love almost as much as I love you. Thank you for being there, close by, while I lived this story, while I forced myself to write and rewrite it, first in one language and then in the other. *Sin ti, no hubiera sebrevivido*. Without you, I wouldn't have survived.

Forced "to accept that [he] belong[s] to two cultures, that [he] straddle[s] a space between two cultures"[106] (270), Dorfman discards his monogamous faithfulness to Spanish and finds

[104] Edward Said also paradoxically finds his sense of belonging in his displaced identity, concluding his memoir with this reconciled statement: "With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place." (1999: 295)

[105] Abdelhadi confirms that the acceptance of both sides of the self liberates identity and allows it to fully and harmoniously exist: "This is who I am. I was equally influenced by Omar Khayyam and by Shakespeare. I was at home in two very different parts of the world. As soon as I came to that realisation, I started wearing my skin with much more comfort." (in Anzaldùa, 2002: 169)

[106] Sante also finds reconciliation of his duality in between his two selves: "From trying to be two things at once, I had gone on to resolve the conflict somewhere in the middle of the scale." (1998: 22)

"his true home" (Brink in Roelofse-Campbell, 1999: 73) as "a bigamist of language" (270), married to both his loves. After "forty years of raging for [his] throat, [his] two languages decide to coexist." (270) Dorfman finally welcomes the wholeness of his hybridity. He is not only American in the hemispheric sense, of both the north and the south,[107] but is also Jewish,[108] exiled, and perhaps above all, a writer:

> I think I have multiple homes now. I'm comfortable with the idea that I have multiple identities in me, that I speak two languages, that I belong to at least three countries and maybe more. [...] because my life has become so divided, like my libraries, like my memories, like my loyalties and my allegiances, [...] let me be buried wherever my body falls.[109] (Dorfman, 2010)

[107] Arana, who has "a double soul" (2005: 292) also finds her true home in the third space between the two America's, accepting "*this bridge we call home*" (Anzaldùa, 2002): "What is it about a bridge that draws me? […] It could be, perhaps, because [...] I'm neither gringa nor Latina. Because I'm not any one thing. The reality is I am a mongrel. I live on bridges; I've earned my place on them, stand comfortably when I'm on one, content with betwixt and between. [...] I'm happy to be who I am, strung between identities, shuttling from one to another, switching from brain to brain. [...] 'I, a Latina, who — to this day — burns incense, prays on her knees to the Virgin, feels auras, listens for spirits of the dead. / I, an Anglo, who snaps her out of it, snuffs candles, faces reality, sweeps ash into the ash can, works at a newspaper every day. / I, a north–south collision, a New World fusion. An American *chica*. A bridge." (2005: 301–305)

[108] Agosín also arrives at a a similar sense of belonging and understanding by accepting all aspects of her identity: "Who was I [...]? Then I understood, and the revelation became my dwelling place on the golden thread that liberates me from all labyrinths: I am a Jewish writer who writes in Spanish and lives in America." (2000: 146) Similarly, the French German poet Ivan Goll died "*avec un coeur français, un esprit allemand, du sang juif et un passeport américain*" (Schmeling in Rinner, 2006: 12), acknowledging each facet of himself. Vladimir Vertlib, realising that he is both Russian *and* Jewish, likewise underlines how one facet of identity does not exclude the other: "*Als ich sieben Jahre alt war, versuchte meine Mutter begreiflich zu machen, dass ich Jude bin. Aber ich sei doch Leningrader, protestierte ich heftig, geboren in Leningrad. [...] Ich sei Leningrader und Jude, erklärte mir meine Mutter, man könne beides zugleich sein*." (Niederle, 1999: 318)

[109] This powerful statement is testimony to the progress Dorfman has made in reconciling his identity, since he was previously committed to allowing his Spanish self to dominate him: "I feel it now and I felt it then, breathing in the gift from the Andes and desiring somehow to be buried here someday, to

Eva Hoffman's reconciliation also entails the harmonisation of her duality. Like Dorfman, she expresses the split in her identity, as well as the restoration of a new type of unity, in her dedication of *Lost in Translation*: "To my family, which has given me my first world, / and to my friends, who have taught me how to appreciate / the New World after all." In the final part of her memoir, Eva announces that she has managed to navigate her way through *Exile* and has found a place in the *New World*. She has relocated herself on the map[110] and is finally able to position her identity within its confines and not on the margins; she again fits in and feels at home:

> This goddamn place is my home now, and sometimes I'm taken aback by how comfortable I feel in its tart, overheated, insecure, well-meaning, expansive atmosphere. I know all the issues and all the codes here. […] When I think of myself in cultural categories — which I do perhaps too often — I know that I'm a recognizable example of a species: a professional New York woman, and a member of a postwar international new class; somebody who feels at

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have my ashes scattered in this place someday." (130) Where a person desires to be buried is a very concrete, perhaps even the greatest indication of their allegiance. Similarly considering this test of identification, Stavans battles to decide where he truly belongs: "These matters, as most others that pertain to identity, might be inconsequential but for one thing — I often wonder, like the immigrant that I am, where shall I be buried? The issue creates much angst in me. I am married and have two children, all American. Though I remain loyal to Spanish and to a lesser extent to Yiddish, I have switched to English. Which of these languages is truly my own? I no longer know. Nor do I feel that Mexico is where I belong. Should I be buried in New York, then? But New York, in spite of its appeal, is too impersonal. What kind of lasting place does a Jew have in it? By leaving home, I not only left behind my friends and immediate family, and the theatre of my early memories; I also abandoned the earth under me, the ground on which my forefathers thrived and where they are buried. Is that where I will always belong?" (2001: 32)

[110] The ability to conceive the self in the present is the confirmation of the self-translated self. Having lost her self in exile, Agosín speaks of this triumphant moment of recognition: "Suddenly the immigrant sees an unfamiliar face pass by in the middle of the night or on a sunny beach. She sees herself, and in that victorious moment of recognition, she finds herself, and her new country is the old one where everyone says hello and the wise earth awaits her." (2000: 116)

> ease in the world, and is getting on with her career relatively well, and who is as fey and brave and capable and unsettled as many of the women here — one of a new breed, born of the jet age and the counterculture, and middle-class ambitions and American grit. I fit, and my surroundings fit me. (169–170)

Part of this repositioning, however, is Eva's acceptance of the fractured nature of her identity and her otherness. She comes to realise that she does not have to entirely renounce her previous Polish existence in order to embrace a new culture and that she need not be alienated by her lack of a single coherent culture. In this way Hoffman understands that "being an immigrant' is 'a location in itself'" (Cowley in Besemeres, 2003: 8). and that their is value being different: "While her new life is at first experienced as a loss of the old, she comes to value and understand the power of her difference, the capacity she derives from it to see and understand things differently, and indeed the value of being the outsider, inside." (Cowley in Besemeres, 2003: 8) This realisation is made evident at university where Eva is upgraded from being "an uncomfortable glitch in the smooth texture of adolescent existence" (179) and starts to value the thrill that comes from being different: "I've now gained the status of an exotic stranger, and this brings high color to my cheeks and sharpens my opinions. I'm excited by my own otherness, which surrounds me like a bright somewhat inflated bubble." (179) At university she further re-orientates herself via the very positive feedback she receives from a piano performance, which not only validates her identity, but above all, unites it with her childhood ambition of becoming a pianist and thereby harmonises the link between past and present: "In the exhilaration of the moment, I feel that life is once again as it should be." (179) Although Eva still experiences a certain nostalgia for her past, it is now short-lived and much softer than pain. Above all, it is now offset by her participation in her present reality: "The humidity is layered with so many smells that I detect a whiff of a Cracow summer among them, and it shoots me through with a sudden nostalgia, as for a love one has almost forgotten to mourn. But not for long, because what's going on right around me is so diverting." (171)

Eva's awareness of the relativity involved in living with two languages, as well as her insight into the value that can emanate from loss, underlines the positive gains that can result from the difficulty of dislocation and loss. Hoffman maintains that the way in which immigration forced her to become self-conscious ("it was an experience which in a sense shook me to my

foundations" — with Kreisler, 2000) was, as it is for many other writers, the impetus for thought, creativity and in turn her career as a writer:

> The distancing from the past, combined with the sense of loss and yearning, can be a wonderful stimulus to writing. Joyce Carol Oates, in a striking formulation, has written that 'for most novelists, the art of writing might be defined as the use to which we put our homesickness. So powerful is the instinct to memorialize in prose — one's region, one's family, one's past — that many writers, shorn of such subjects, would be rendered paralyzed and mute.' In exile, the impulse to memorialize is magnified, and much glorious literature has emerged from it. (in Aciman, 1999: 51)

Hoffman therefore concludes that it was not 'all pain and no gain' because the contrast with another culture affords the enlightened perspective of acknowledging the particularities of one's own culture and how it shapes identity. The vantage point that being exiled offers present itself as not only a compensation for the losses endured, but also as a notabe advantage for a writer: "Being deframed [...] speak, from everything familiar, makes for a certain fertile detachment and gives one new ways of observing and seeing. It brings you up against certain questions that otherwise could easily remain unasked and quiescent, and brings to the fore fundamental problems that might otherwise simmer inaudibly in the background." (in Aciman, 1999: 50)

Empowered by her heightened self-consciousness, Eva eventually achieves her goal of commanding authentic emotional expression in English, despite her awareness of its relativity. A vital step in her transition is when she finally regains language to the point that it transcends its communicative value and becomes a carrier of beauty and emotion. She opens the door that leads from loss and silence into the fullness of emotional expression, crossing "the dividing line between herself and her new language" (Pavlenko, 1997: 84):

> But it's not until many years later, not until I've finished graduate school successfully, and have begun to teach literature to others, that I crack the last barrier between myself and the language... It happens as I read 'The Love

> Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'[111] [...]. My eye moves over these lines in its accustomed dry silence; and then — as if an aural door had opened of its own accord — I hear their modulations and their quiet undertones. Over the years, I've read so many explications of these stanzas that I can analyze them in a half a dozen ingenious ways. But now, suddenly I'm attuned, through some mysterious faculty of the mental ear, to their inner sense... Bingo, I think, this is it, the extra, the attribute of language over and above function and criticism. I'm back within the music of the language, and Eliot's words descend on me with a sort of grace. Words become, as they were in childhood, beautiful things — except this is better, because they're now crosshatched with a complexity of meaning, with the sonorities of felt, sensuous thought. (186)

As English reaches the deep emotionality of her first language, Eva can again start living "from the place from which music flows" (245) and resuscitate the voice that conveys "the springs of [her] desire" (245), thereby "showing that L2 [second language] words learned in the context of intimate relationships may become embodied, and elicit physical sensations and autobiographic memories" (Pavlenko, 2005: 236):

> For a long time, it was difficult to speak these most intimate phrases, hard to make English — that language of will and abstraction — shape itself into the tonalities of love. […] How could I say 'darling,' or 'sweetheart,' when the words had no fleshy fullness, when they were as dry as sticks? But now the language has entered my body, has incorporated itself in the softest tissue of my being. 'Darling,' I say to my lover, 'my dear,' and the words are filled and brimming with the motions of my desire; they curve themselves within my mouth to the complex music of tenderness. (245)[112]

[111] The fact that Eva eventually makes the final transition into fully embracing English when she reads Eliot's *Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is significant in that *Prufrock* can be interpreted as a hybrid 'translation' of the German word *Prüfstein* or *touchstone*, meaning *that by which you measure things*. Furthermore, the poem contains the question of a lack of authenticity and the risk of disturbing the universe of the representative character Prufrock in order to regain meaning.

[112] Luc Sante suggests that the point when the second language is able to express the same deep-seated emotionality as the mother tongue is the moment of reconciliation when the impersonating act of

English assumes the naturalness of Eva's first language and through it she authentically reconnects to her self:

> Perhaps I've read, written, eaten enough words so that English now flows in my bloodstream. But once this mutation takes place, once the language starts speaking itself to me from my cells, I stop being so stuck on it. Words are no longer spiky bits of hard matter, which refer only to themselves. They become, more and more, a transparent medium in which I live and which lives in me — a medium through which I can once again get to myself and to the world. (243)

This elevating of English to the status of a mother tongue is proved by a dream Eva has in New York, after her enlightening return trip to Cracow, in which she hears a voice speaking in English: "English spoke to me in a language that comes from below consciousness, a language as simple and mysterious as a medieval ballad, a gnostic speech that precedes and supersedes our analytic complexities." (243) This testifies that Eva has assumed a new way of meaning in English, which has become "the inner language of the self, the unconscious and dreams" (Pavlenko, 1997: 85).

The transition of English to an inner language is the ultimate step in reconciling Eva's two selves and with it comes the crucial realisation that although "different languages mediate different worlds [that are] particular, unrepeatable" (Besemeres, 2002: 46, 50), it is nevertheless possible for "the forms of the world [to] be made accessible again in another, very different here and now" (Besemeres, 2002: 46). This uniting of the past and present is essential to mending the tear in her identity. Returning to Cracow allows her to put the losses of immigration into perspective, taking into account the heightening element of nostalgia ("Poland is only a long plane ride away from the East Coast. That distended, uncrossable, otherworldly distance I had created had been the immeasurable length of loss and longing: a

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Bakhtin's *carnivalesque* fades and authenticity takes over: "Gradually, I successfully passed myself off as another being. […] My mask merged with my skin. My internal monologue ever so gradually shifted from French into English; I even began to talk to cats and dogs (who understand all languages) in English. My most intimate conversations came to be conducted in English." (1998: 238)

distance of the imagination." — 241), and to liberate herself from the time warp of the past by viewing it with adult eyes in relation to the present:

> It is strange, in spite of all we know about such transactions, that the Looking Glass through which I step into the past releases me to go on into the present. Perhaps now I can get the different blocks of my story into the right proportions. As every writer knows, it's only when you come to a certain point in your manuscript that it becomes clear how the beginning should go, and what importance it has within the whole. And it's usually after revising backward from the middle that one can begin to go on with the rest. To some extent, one has to rewrite the past in order to understand it. I have to see Cracow in the dimension it has to my adult eye in order to perceive that my story has been only a story, that none of its events has been so big or so scary. It is the price of emigration, as of any radical discontinuity, that it makes such reviews and re-readings difficult; being cut off from one part of one's own story is apt to veil it in the haze of nostalgia, which is an ineffectual relationship to the past, and the haze of alienation, which is an ineffectual relationship to the present. (241–242)

Re-writing and re-reading her Polish childhood and her self brings the story full circle in an "integrative and synthesizing" (with Kreisler, 2000) way. The process is consolidated by Eva's visits to a therapist, which is in itself an act that confirms her integration into American society that encourages reflection through external psychological support:

> For me, therapy is partly translation therapy, the talking cure, a second-language cure. My going to a shrink is, among other things, a rite of initiation: initiation into the language of the subculture within which I happen to live, into a way of explaining myself to myself. But gradually, it becomes a project of translating backward. The way to jump over my Great Divide is to crawl backward over it in English. It's only when I retell my whole story, back to the beginning, and from the beginning onward, in one language, that I can reconcile the voices within me with each other; it is only then that the person who judges the voices and tells the stories begins to emerge. (271–272)

In a similar way that Eva needs to re-process her past in English, so too is the re-integration into Polish a fundamental part of her rehabilitation. Having realised that stifling Polish was necessary to give life to English and in turn to her new existence, Eva was afraid to take too much notice of Polish for fear of jeopardising her progress (here we have a similar impression to that given by Dorfman of the fragility of the co-existence of both languages): "After that initial fall into internal darkness, I paid little attention to the vicissitudes of Polish in my mental life. All my energies were absorbed in trying to make myself at home in English [...] it really wasn't safe to look at what was happening down there, out of memory and consciousness, where my first language was living its choked, underground life." (in De Courtivron, 2003: 52) Only when Eva feels that she has absorbed English into her psyche and made it her own, until it "came to occupy all the strata of thought and self" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 52), does she dare to venture into Polish again: "When is it safe to return to something you have loved and lost? Sometimes not for a long time; perhaps not until the thing you've left has been replaced with something just as valuable, just as cherished. So it has been for me with language, with losing and returning to my first, native tongue." (in De Courtivron, 2003: 49)

Much in the same way that Eva's (re)construction in English began through the appropriation of others' speech, her (re)construction of a comprehensive self, that includes both her languages, happens through interaction with Polish friends.[113] Due not only to attrition, but also to the hesitation to confront a threat, Eva's Polish, ironically, has lost the fluency and naturalness of a mother tongue speaker's: "there was something in the extent of my forgetting that was more than just cerebral. It was as if the initial act of repression, of linguistic self-mutilation, was now expressing itself in these verbal tics and symptoms. The return of the repressed is never smooth. And maybe I still felt the danger of letting Polish out of its box; I had to test its effects on English, and make sure it wasn't going to invade my hard-won linguistic territory and break it up." (in De Courtivron, 2003: 53)

Eva's Polish only starts "re-emerging into full light and living a more natural life" (in De Courtivron, 2003: 53) when she acknowledges the stability of English. As English gradually

[113] This further points to the integral role of society and the other in the formation of the self (see 3.1.2)

reached the profound emotionality of Eva's childhood Polish, so too does Polish now reach the adeptness and spontaneity of Eva's adult English. Once she feels confident that her English was solid enough to resist any threat, she "realized, also, that [she] wasn't going to be lured back to [her] pre-English self by the siren call of nostalgia and, possibly, regression. Once that understanding sunk in, it was as if some strong, abrupt signal had been sent down: Polish could come out of its hiding again." (in De Courtivron, 2003: 53)

The need for the rebirth of Eva's Polish confirms the back and forth motion involved in the (non-linear) process of self-translation and simultaneously alludes to the possibility of continual growth and a positive way forward:

> [P]erhaps 'return' is no longer quite the right analogy. At one stage of my self-translation, it was important to me to go over my childhood experiences in English; now I could pick up the other part of the interrupted story and grow up in Polish. This, I think, is the source of the pleasure: that it is possible now to go back and forth with the knowledge that both languages that have constructed me exist within one structure; and to know that the structure is sturdy enough to allow for pliancy and openness — and, who knows, perhaps for new discoveries yet. (in De Courtivron, 2003: 54)

This "two-way translation" (Besemeres, 2002: 41) further pertains to Hoffman's relationship with her "audience" (273). Hoffman insists that to translate a language without losing something in the process would entail "transport[ing] its audience as well"[114] (273). In effect this is what she achieves through translation, "firstly of herself from Polish into English, and then of the reality of her English-speaking peers into the Polish reality she first internalized." (Besemeres, 2002: 41) The Polish audience in herself both interacts and merges with the external and internal English audience. Furthermore, this concept of double translation is

[114] Tzvetan Todorov similarly notes problems of transforming not only the language but also the audience: "The problems arose when I began translating my talk, originally written in my acquired language, French, into Bulgarian, my native tongue. It wasn't so much a question of vocabulary or syntax, but in changing languages I noticed that I had changed my imagined audience. [...] "To a lesser degree, this problem is a familiar one to all speakers and writers: one's discourse must be modified as a function of the intended audience or readership." (Todorov in Arteaga, 1996: 210)

embedded in the very act of writing *Lost in Translation.* Hoffman first had to envisage herself in the past before re-writing her life in the present (see 2.1).

This interweaving across languages and the past and present is not, however, a solid superimposition but more of a palimpsest-like layering, and the friction between these moving layers uncovers fissures. Although Eva has "become an adult" (272) in English and now thinks in it ("When I talk to myself now, I talk in English." — 272), Polish still hovers at the core: "Still, underneath the relatively distinct monologue, there's an even more interior buzz, as of countless words compressed into an electric blur moving along a telephone-wire. Occasionally, Polish words emerge unbidden from the buzz." (272) These words are "from the primary palette of feeling [and] have roundness and a surprising certainty, as if they were announcing the simple truth" (272), but their wholesomeness has nevertheless been contaminated and above all altered:

> No, there's no returning to the point of origin, no regaining of childhood unity. […] Polish insights cannot be regained in their purity; there's something I know in English too. The wholeness of childhood truths is intermingled with the divisiveness of adult doubt. When I speak Polish now, it is infiltrated, permeated, and inflected by the English in my head. Each language modifies the other, crossbreeds with it, fertilizes it. Each language makes the other relative. (273)

Hoffman can never return to being Ewa, yet she will never be only and entirely Eva either; she can only exist in the third space between the two: "The tiny gap that opened when my sister and I were given new names can never be fully closed up; I can't have one name again." (272)

The gap remains but does not prevent the bridge-like coexistence of Hoffman's two selves: "The gap cannot be fully closed, but I begin to trust English to speak my childhood self as well, to say what has so long been hidden, to touch the tenderest spots." (274) Moreover, it is precisely in this in between space where Eva finds her true home.[115] As with Dorfman, her

[115] Sante similarly finds is true home in between languages and despite the gaps, his multidimensional sense of belonging is ultimately beneficial: "different aspects of myself are contained in different

existence is based on the "intricate interdependency" (Besemeres, 2002: 62) between her two languages and these fissures are the *ying* and *yang* that remind her of her humanity: "The fissures sometimes cause me pain, but in a way, they're how I know I'm alive. Suffering and conflict are the best proof that there's something like a psyche, a soul; or else, what is it that suffers? Why would we need to suffer when fed and warm and out of rain, were it not for that other entity within us making its odd, unreasonable, never fulfillable demands?" (273) It is in this scission that language, and the residues of translation, are transcended:

> I'm writing a story in my journal, and I'm searching for a true voice. I make my way through layers of acquired voices, silly voices, sententious voices, voices that are too cool and too overheated. Then they all quiet down, and I reach what I'm searching for: silence. I hold still to steady myself in it. This is the white blank center, the level ground that was there before Babel was built, that is always there before the Babel of our multiple selves is constructed. […] As the story progresses, the voice grows and diverges into different tonalities and timbres […]. But the voice always returns to its point of departure, to ground zero. (275–276)

It is here, in the gap which holds that which cannot be verbalised, that Eva locates her core self and a full sense of belonging:[116] "It's only after I've taken in disparate bits of cultural

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rooms of language [...]. They are all operative, potentially. Given desire and purpose, I could make my home in any of them. I don't have a house, only this succession of rented rooms. That sometimes makes me feel as though I have no language at all, but it also gives me the advantage of mobility. I can leave, anytime, and not be found." (1998: 284–285)

[116] Stavans explains how the initial loss is transformed into a new and richer way of being: "Transplanting oneself in the soil of another tongue, finding some degree of comfort in a foreign language, I told myself, leads at first to a sense of deterioration rather than improvement, of loss rather than gain. One gets the impression of ceasing to be in Spanish, the feeling of *no estar del todo.* The immigrant feels trapped in the space in between words and in the intricacies of the journey. *Taka! Taka!* But sooner or later, loss is transformed into gain: the immigrant is born again — rejuvenated, enriched by the voyage. Robert Frost might have been right when he said that poetry is what gets lost in translation, but in my own view, the successful immigrant feels the fusion of tongues as an addition rather than a subtraction. His life is what gives poetry its meaning — the voyage in search of rebirth." (2001: 184)

matter, after I've accepted its seductions and its snares, that I can make my way through the medium of language to distil my own meanings; and it's only coming from the ground up that I can hit the tenor of my own sensibility, hit home." (276)

In the end, the relationship between Hoffman's Polish- and English-speaking selves rises above conflict and instead proves "mutually supportive, each providing a medium and a structure in which the other might speak for the whole person" (Besemeres, 2002: 40). In other words, "English has transpired to be a medium supple enough to translate both her Polish and Anglo selves, to speak out the whole of her self." (Besemeres, 2002: 64) This whole, however, is not static, but rather, in keeping with the continual construction of identity, denotes an ongoing dialogue between the two.[117] Ewa and Eva come together ("I am as real as you now." — 231) and in their union constitute Hoffman's new way of being: "I feel the reassuring blur of a reconciliation. Everything comes together, everything I love, as in the fantasies of my childhood; I am the sum of my parts. It's all turned out all right; a wave of gratitude sweeps over me." (226) *Lost in Translation* ends with a declaration of positivity and contentment ("*c'est le côté positif qui prévaut à la fin*" — Montini in Rinner, 2006: 194):

> [N]ow, a succession of tomorrows begins to exfoliate like a faith. It seems a tremendous, Pascalian gamble, this leap of faith into the future, into the moving stream. […] If images, as some philosophers theorise, congeal out of the matrix of language, then perhaps I've had to wait to have enough linguistic concentrate for hope to arise. Or perhaps I've had to gather enough knowledge of my new world to trust it, and enough affection for it to breathe life into it, to image it forth. But once time uncoils and regains its forward dimension, the present moment becomes a fulcrum on which I can stand more lightly, balanced between the past and the future, balanced in time. […] Time pulses through my blood like a river. The language of this is sufficient. I am here now. (279–280)

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[117] Riemer affirms the perpetual exchange of identity that takes place in between languages: "We have to be given the liberty to realise that we must, for better or worse, dwell between two worlds; and we must be allowed to work out our cultural salvation in terms of our individual, often confused, personalities, predicaments, fears and aspirations. Above all, we must realise that such a process may well take a long time, perhaps the whole of a life, to achieve." (1992: 210)

In conclusion, having been lost in translation and governed by the desire for a sense of unity and belonging, Eva Hoffman and Ariel Dorfman arrive at the conclusion that their true homes consist of a co-habitation of both their languages. Liberated by their realisation and no longer fearing the death or dominance of either language, they can move forward and recognise the gains of their multiplicity and the new facets of their selves that their arduous journey has revealed. Like a palimpsest, their languages exist in an ongoing dialogue of fluid interdependency, a single parchment embodying the multiple, mutable layers of their selves and their languages; a (re)construction of their original selves, whole in its fragmentation.

Conclusion

> The final stage or moment in the process of translation is that which I have called 'compensation' or 'restitution'. The translation restores the equilibrium between itself and the original [...] which had been disrupted [...]. The paradigm of translation stays incomplete until reciprocity has been achieved, until the original has regained as much as it had lost.
>
> (George Steiner, 1998: 415)

In this thesis I set out to interrogate the trope of 'lost in translation' with its aura of irretrievable absence and lack and rather aimed to assess the degree of (re)construction required in translating the self from one language to another, as explored in the language memoirs *Lost in Translation* and *Heading South, Looking North*. My research shows that, despite confirmation of sustained loss and a sense of estrangement (from society and from the self), the self proved able to adjust to a new way of being that not only involves a greater richness and personal development, but is also a more conscious assertion of the 'true' nature of identity as a perpetual process of fluctuating formation. These conclusions confirmed that the notion of 'lost in translation', in particular with regard to immersion in a different language, has indeed become a trope and that it is far more valuable contribution to consider the idea of *modification in translation* as opposed to loss. That is, the unfolding of self-translation emerged above all as an inescapable transformation resulting in a translation that did not erase one text with another but rather created a palimpsest-like interlayering of a multifaceted self. In this way, the disorientating crisis of an unrecognisable self in another language manifested itself as a heightened version of standard identity dilemmas.

After having reviewed the relevant literature on self-translation and language memoirs in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 established how the features of autobiographical writing contribute to supporting the process of identity creation, and further how they introduce another layer of transfer and translation. Given that autobiography is a retrospective telling of one's life experiences, it inevitably entails a reconciliation across time and identity, between the selves of the past and present. This negotiation of the gap between these selves therefore necessitates a certain transformation, which is profoundly deepened when these selves are further split by different languages. Likewise the projection of the self into a narratable self

requires a self-distancing and doubling, recreating the self in order to represent it in writing. This externalisation of the self by making it a fictive other, or a mirror-like reflection of the self which can never correlate exactly with the original, is in turn similarly compounded by the estrangement and doubling of the self brought about by a new language. Furthermore this process points to how much is lost, or more importantly, altered in the reconstruction of the self, since autobiographical truth always involves (re)interpretation of the past in that it is accessed through memory, which is in itself a mental reconstruction. The self is thus filtered through memory selection as well as through culturally available models that mediate the experience of the self, adding yet another layer of interpretation, which is again heightened in a different language.

Chapter 2 additionally substantiates how autobiographical writing both parallels and supports self-translation across languages, in that in spite of the fictive quality of the self and the elusiveness of absolutes, it is a valuable meaning-making process that generates insights and reveals previously unnoticed aspects of the self. Providing a tool of self-analysis, autobiographical writing aids self-discovery by consolidating the past, and thus induces redefinition and salvation through the re-ordering of experience. In this way, the process of transformation and reconciliation in language memoirs becomes double: it constitutes not only an act of (re)composition of the self by providing a platform for reinvention, but also offers a therapeutic means of healing the unsettled self ruptured by the discontinuity of language. Similarly, the fact that the memoirs are written in the 'new' language constitutes a certain rite of passage, marking the author's progress into a translated self. These attributes of autobiography in interaction with other layers of interpretation therefore attest to the multiplicity and expandability of the self. These qualities of the self are what allow for self-translation and likewise position self-translation in language memoirs as part of the wider lifelong process of *Bildung* and construction, translating the estranged self from the past to the present, from memory to writing, and from one language and cultural context to another.

The multiplicity of the self was centrally explored in Chapter 3, which looked at the social construction of the self, the phenomenon of changing personas and the emergence of a multidimensional identity embracing more than one culture. The formation of the self was shown to be significantly linked to socialisation within a culture, and a sense of a core stable self as an essential point of reference for existing in the world was contrasted with these socio-culturally sculpted aspects of the self. This suggests that a shift in language and culture

impacts on numerous facets of the self, but does not entirely alter its core. Internal idiosyncratic features of identity thus manifested as playing out differently according to the distinct socio-cultural platform. An array of varying personas is therefore assumed, firstly in relation to social roles for relating to different people and contexts, and secondly in relation to different languages and cultures, again affirming the complex layering of a translated identity.

Similarly, the self draws not only on its relationship with other people, but also on the modes of culture for self-construction. These culturally embedded elements of the self necessitate reinvention in a different language and culture. The fact that culture provides interpretative resources for the self as opposed to templates of meaning, demonstrates how switching languages is an extension of the continual transformation of the self that is not entirely determined at birth but that engages in an evolution in interaction with people and culture. However, given the explored link between the self and culture, switching languages and cultures displaces the point of reference, provoking a lack of vital feelings of belonging. Marginalisation not only from society but also from the unrecognisable self, in turn prompts an identity crisis in which the individual finds himself in a no-man's-land between a self that no longer coincides with the present context and the lack of a substitute or translated identity. This necessitates the negotiation and repositioning of the self.

The relationship between the self and identity, and the consequent effects of a new language, were fully examined in Chapter 4. The interdependence of language and identity was exposed in the simultaneous learning of the cultural codes necessary for language learning, as well as in the principles of linguistic relativity that showed the influence of language on an individual's ways of thinking, behaving and perceiving the world. Investigating how the self is to some degree moulded by language, therefore exposed the challenges that self-translation poses and the amount of modification that is required to fully penetrate the new language and its surrounding reality, not only on a linguistic level but also with regards to the reassessment of cultural values and the classification of the world.

It was also shown that the coexistence of these distinct ways of seeing the world in bilinguals can lead to the perception of having two selves. Rather than an actual schizophrenic change in the self, this perception is derived from the different ways in which languages encode experience and how a shift in language therefore induces a profoundly felt shift in the ways

bilinguals consciously experience themselves in each language. Furthermore a symbolic relationship exists in which language comes to represent the self through the association of experiences, and in this way, due to the intimate experience of primordial learning that childhood signifies, deep emotionality is generally felt to be more saliently accessible in the mother tongue. Thus although bilinguals can express concepts and emotions in both languages they are not always able to channel them equivalently in each; or rather they do not perceive the same satisfaction or authenticity in each when doing so. Although we have all been exiled from the past and childhood, the fact that the mother tongue is felt to correspond to reality, despite it not always being the language of greater dominance or proficiency, widens the gap and creates a further sense of loss.

It therefore emerged that a certain language has the somewhat non-transferable power to encapsulate certain concepts or feelings. This inequivalence between languages in turn attested to the challenges of translation that were shown to occur not only across languages but also within a single language. Although translation is obviously possible, it was emphasised how the ability to generally translate across languages does not take into account the difficulties of transferring the subtle complexity of various nuances that bilinguals (especially writers who tend to possess great sensitivity, in particular to language) feel to be part of their very selves. Self-translation thus involves a struggle against the incompatibility of retaining a certain faithfulness to the original self, whilst making sense of the present self in a new language and context in a way that surmounts self-alienation and inauthenticity. Similarly, it was highlighted how the process of translation inherently entails, to some degree and on some level, interpretation and the alteration of meaning, thereby further augmenting the layers of transformation involved in self-translation. The transformation, however, is not solely composed of loss and the emotional resonance of a new language can eventually become equivalent to or even exceed that of the mother tongue. This repositioning of the self in a new language again exposes the fluid intermingling of identity in which reconciliation consists not of rigid compartmentalisation or of an elusive coherence, but is rather a layering in flux, an existence on a bridge as opposed to in one or the other definitive space.

Turning to the analysis of my two core selected texts, Chapters 5 and 6 looked at how the theoretical premises from Chapters 2, 3 and 4 played out in relation to the key themes of Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989) and Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South, Looking North* (1998). Chapter 5 focused on investigating the actual losses incurred in translation. It was

further shown how, given the intimate connection between language and self-realisation, separation from a homeland and the mother tongue can severely destabilise identity. The question of Dorfman and Hoffman's displacement and loss is linked to and reinforced by their Jewishness and the legacy of the wandering Jew, which compounds their identity confusion and underlines themes of estrangement, uprootedness and the need for reinvention in these texts. However, although I fully acknowledge that the Jewish question and its exploration in literature is an extensive and important issue (as discussed in 5.2.2), it is not the main focus of my analysis and I am instead looking for commonalities beyond the Jewish problem.

In *Lost in Translation* Hoffman laments the loss of an unquestioned, harmonious self, which she equates to her childhood in Poland and to the Polish language that effortlessly initiated her into the world. The perceived absoluteness of that existence is not, however, lost exclusively to translation (as Chapter 6 shows, she eventually emerges affirming positive gains), but also to the irrecuperable state of her childhood cocoon, about which she is acutely sensitive and therefore feels an overwhelming nostalgia. The loss of familiarity in her new environment strips Hoffman of her point of reference and she no longer recognises her self, and is unable to position herself in the world. She becomes fixated on the incongruency of her former Polish self (her values, attitudes and dreams) that does not fit her new English reality. Substantiating linguistic relativity, Eva relates her self and inner experiences to language, feeling that their meaning is lost in translation because "[y]ou can't transport human meanings whole from one culture" (1989: 175).

Dorfman's longing in *Heading South, Looking North* is not directed at a nostalgic childhood realm like Hoffman's, but rather towards a state of unity and unquestioned belonging, driven by the fanatical desire to "have a country" (1998: 170), "to belong to a community and to understand the self as whole and complete" (McClennen, 2010: 6). Immigrating back to the continent of his birth and being forced to leave his (at the time) beloved America leaves him feeling disorientated by the effects of an existence in an unwelcome other language. First pledging allegiance to an English self and later to a Spanish self determined to be an authentic Chilean, Dorfman consciously uses language to manipulate his identity, symbolically crowning his transitions with appropriate new names. Viewing language as a tool over which he feels he has control, Dorfman grasps the possibility of reinvention through language and engages in "a ritual of belonging" (1998: 82), and of resisting exile (history and

politics, however, intervene and Dorfman is later forced to confront exile and his complexity). Language presents itself as a means to salvation, rescuing him firstly from the exile of birth, then from his childhood trauma in the hospital, and later from marginalisation in Chile.

Language integration and socialisation therefore manifest for both Dorfman and Hoffman as an antidote to loss and alienation, offering a way of survival and a means of repositioning themselves on the personal and social map. Hoffman is nevertheless reluctant to entirely renounce her otherness for fear of losing her (original / 'true') self in the process. However, translating the self in another language necessitates moderation, not only of language but also of behaviour and perceptions, according to what is appropriate in the new culture. Hoffman realises that one language needs to be temporarily suppressed in order to make way for (re)construction in the other. Twice Dorfman mercilessly stifles one language to allow the other to dominate. With the introduction of another language the natural, unconscious way of being can no longer be taken for granted and must be recognised for the construction that it is. The self and language no longer feel inherent, but generate awareness of identity as a vital construction. This awareness underlines that the cohesiveness and absoluteness of an uninterrupted identity are not so much lost in translation as elusive in themselves.

In Chapter 6 the banality of the trope 'lost in translation' is revealed and instead a new way of being is pointed to that acknowledges the gains of personal reinvention and situates the transformations Hoffman and Dorfman undergo as part of the larger identity dilemmas. Realising that embracing her present reality includes embracing English, Eva takes the first step of conceiving her new self by writing (in her diary) and thereby consequently facilitating the reformation in her life. Dorfman not only perceives the opportunity for preserving identity and creating a portable homeland in writing, but further centrally attests to the therapeutic value of writing (in particular with the necessary distance that writing in the language other than that of the experience provides), not only to overcome his own anguish, but also to fulfil his responsibility of honouring the dead.

The distinct cultural context and experiences rooted in each language cause the authors to experience themselves differently in each. Eva fears the rise of an insecure, unrestrained and fatalistic self in Polish, as opposed to the attributes that she has assumed in English of being controlled and confident. Dorfman cautiously contemplates the varying merits of each of his

languages, afraid of betraying one of his linguistic 'lovers'. However, ultimately they learn to reconcile the different aspects of themselves. Dorfman is forced to embrace the identity confusion that he struggles to eliminate because in spite of his quest to counter estrangement and fragmentation by giving exclusivity to Spanish and partaking in the fraternity of the political struggle, history intervenes. For Hoffman new meanings and intense, authentic emotionality that are as valid as those in Polish are finally built in English and she is again recognisable to her self and the world. The consciousness of her cherished mother tongue has not been replaced by the consciousness she develops in English but rather expanded. Including all aspects of her self, the final reintegration of Polish is an essential step in her (re)construction.

Hoffman and Dorfman's identity confusion is therefore surmounted by embracing it and not by attempting to replace what has been lost. It is a process of building a multidirectional bridge between the past and the present, between one language and another, to create an existence on the bridge itself — an existence that unites Dorfman's north and south, and Hoffman's Polish and English, as well as both their Jewishness. In spite of its gaps and bewildering unrootedness, this dynamic existence makes the authors feel alive and becomes their true home, oozing with authenticity and enlightenment in the very consciousness of its fluidity and palimpsest-like layering that embraces all aspects of the self in a deeper way.

The various sides of their selves therefore coexist, seemingly conflicting yet integrally interdependent, like the strains of life and death that so closely criss-cross each other in *Heading South, Looking North*. Their two languages exist not in a static translation, but in an ongoing dialogue of transformation. The process is a back-and-forth motion, a metamorphosis, not butterfly-like but rather Phoenix-like, with the self transforming in a rebirth from the ashes of what it was and not altering form entirely. Like the palimpsest, the ashes from the former Phoenix shine through in the new one, not tarnishing it but rather augmenting its brilliance. Dorfman has become a "hybrid mongrel of language" (1998: 270) and Hoffman a "hybrid creature" (1989: 221). A single, absolute whole is thus evasive, but the arduous journey has provided a valuable consciousness, reflecting the true nature of identity and narrative which are always susceptible to revision.

These authors are therefore not only 'lost in translation' but also found, as they discover through the pain, the rewards of self-translation and "another way of being in the world"

(Besemeres, 2002: 278). The predominant gain that manifests is that of raised consciousness. Despite the distress of disorientation, exposure to other ways of viewing the world that another language provides can generate enrichment and liberation from the perceived absoluteness of reality. As Steiner affirms, "[t]o move between languages, to translate, even within restrictions of totality, is to experience the almost bewildering bias of the human spirit towards freedom." (1998: 497) Faced with a different language, Dorfman and Hoffman become conscious of how they have been affected by language and culture, provoking valuable self-reflection and giving them wider access to attitudes, means of expression and identity choice. They are thus able to appropriate preferred aspects from their available cultures. In this way their duality offers the possibility for growth and development as they discover new potential elements of themselves. Increased self-consciousness and a more complex perspective in turn fuel creativity, and in this way a life in a new language serves as impetus for writing, which is likewise enriched through access to a greater range of linguistic resources. Both Hoffman and Dorfman attest that their experiences of being between languages fuelled their careers as writers (in Dorfman's case politics was also a main trigger).

Despite the sadness and lack of an unquestioned, definitive sense of belonging, Dorfman and Hoffman are richer people for their endeavour to translate themselves. The real losses are then perhaps not those in translation but in living an existence that does not experience this richness, even though it comes at the cost of exile from an unquestioned comfort zone. Knowledge of their multiplicity and the need for continual revision and reconstruction of the self brings an awareness that the coherent self is a misplaced illusion, leading to a more enlightened understanding of the self. The transformation that has occurred in translation therefore opens them up to a bright and profound way of being: Dorfman declares that "the distress of being double and somewhat homeless is overshadowed by the glory of being hybrid and open" (in Pavlenko, 2006: 28), and Hoffman observes that she is "being remade, fragment by fragment, like a patchwork quilt, there are more colors in the world than [she] ever knew." (1989: 220)

The above findings in this thesis might also be of interest to those engaged in research on the impact of migration and globalisation on the wellbeing of individuals acquiring a new language. Issues of crossing languages and cultures, and the translation that this entails on

various levels, are hugely relevant today in an increasingly global world in which not only are more people than ever before living in countries where the first language is not their mother tongue, but also in which communication has dramatically heightened cross-cultural interaction, both virtually and physically. This research could therefore contribute to studies on the increasing phenomenon of *Third Culture Kids* (Pollock et al., 2001) and on how alternative identity options could be forged in order to counter the rootlessness and instability that is characteristic of their multiplicity.

These findings could also prompt further discussion on how language choice can signify the assertion of a particular identity and how language can be used not only to overcome marginalisation in society and empower oneself, but simultaneously to maintain subcultures. It would therefore be particularly pertinent to look at how one linguistic identity need not necessarily be suppressed in order to accommodate another (traditional assimilation), but rather how both can successfully coexist. Similarly, having considered the deep attachment to the mother tongue, this research can hopefully create a deeper understanding of political defence of linguistic identities. This could be linked to existing research on the emotive manipulation of language to provoke political division, thus creating a driving force for fanning the flames of fanatic nationalism and xenophobia.

Furthermore, I hope that this research points to the awareness of the difficulties and painful sense of alienation felt by foreigners, and thereby generates greater sensitivity in understanding the plight of those struggling in a new language. In other words, further research should be conducted on the difficulties faced by immigrants trying to (re)construct a new identity and how they are alienated by not being able to partake linguistically and culturally. Hopefully this will lead to an understanding of why they often appear odd, awkward and find themselves handicapped in terms of expression and practical daily interaction, and so aid research into interventions promoting the integration of immigrants.

Similarly, taking into account the way the self is shaped by culture and language, it is essential in today's world to investigate cultural differences and how these play out in cross-cultural interaction. For example, with growing exchange between the West and China, a greater sensitivity to the Chinese culture's diverse manner of expressing politeness and certain specific business etiquette is crucial for harmonious interchange and mutual respect.

Lastly, it would be valuable to investigate how bilinguals and language migrants can better deal with their identity dilemmas through the knowledge generated by further research. This positions their confusion as part of a shared common experience of identity confusion and further highlights the greater universal question of belonging and recognition that constitutes a fundamental human need.

In conclusion, I hope that this research has shown that, in spite of the 'scar tissue' caused by switching languages and the disorientation and estrangement from the self, the past and the new reality that this provokes, there is more to immersion in a new language than only loss. Above all, rewriting of the self in another language entails transformation (re)constructing a self that comprises of a porous, palimpsest-like layering and affirming that the nature of identity always potentially allows for continual alteration and growth.

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