Stony Brook University

Literary Bilingualism as Cosmopolitan Practice: Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, and Nancy Huston

A Dissertation Presented

by

Lyudmila L. Razumova

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

Stony Brook University

May 2010

Stony Brook University

The Graduate School

Lyudmila Razumova

We, the dissertation committee for the above candidate for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree,

hereby recommend acceptance of this dissertation.

Sandy Petrey, Professor, Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies and European Languages, Dissertation Advisor

Robert Harvey, Professor, Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies and European Languages, Chairperson of Defense

Patrice Nganang, Associate Professor, Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies

Nicholas Rzhevsky, Professor, Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies and European Languages

Timothy Westphalen, Associate Professor, European Languages, Outside Member

This dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School

Lawrence Martin
Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Dissertation

Literary Bilingualism as Cosmopolitan Practice: Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, and Nancy Huston

by

Lyudmila L. Razumova

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

Stony Brook University

2010

This dissertation addresses the phenomenon of literary bilingualism in the late 20th – early 21st centuries. It investigates why and to what effect language is appropriated by individual authors in different historical situations, and how a body of work produced by the same author in two languages articulates the relationship between the nation and the world. I posit that sustained practice of bilingual writing charts a special space on the maps of national and world literature and presents an important dimension of emergent cosmopolitanism. Existing literary and social practices inform and develop the notion theoretically and practically and illuminate new dimensions of cosmopolitanism as a constant and deep engagement with the other. I argue that the unease with the status of bilingual writing derives largely from the Romantic model of mapping language to a nation.

I treat cosmopolitanism as a deliberately chosen state and a laborious search for a new sense of home and identity in the multiplicity of texts. My study focuses on narrative, thematic and linguistic strategies that the writers of my investigation employ to create a new linguistic persona in a world that is rethinking the very notion of linguistic and national identity. Instead of suggesting another framework for theorizing cosmopolitanism, I demonstrate how these strategies employed by bilingual writers can precede shifts in the individual and public imagination. To begin, I construct a framework for theorizing literary bilingualism by borrowing selected categories from the methodology of linguistic personality in cognitive linguistics and modify them for bilingual writers. Then, I closely read the authors' selected texts in both languages and examine the changing idea of exile and belonging for the three writers. Chapters two and three dwell on the formal writing and reading strategies that the authors devise in order to correlate several realities, to disrupt narrative stability, and to underscore the simultaneous presence of multiple discourses and languages that never dissolve into pathology. Finally, I review problematics of self-translation and discuss how the authors' interlingual practices illuminate its major theoretical issues.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

My most sincere thanks go to my dissertation committee at Stony Brook University, Robert Harvey, Patrice Nganang, Nicolas Rzhevsky, and Timothy Westphalen, for their continuous encouragement, insightful comments and critiques during various stages of this project. I am especially indebted to my dissertation director, Sandy Petrey, who has seen all the ups and downs of this long project and has helped with every aspect of it – from conceptualizing to fixing translations. His insistence on intellectual and emotional honesty made me confront head-on thorny issues of identity and belonging even when I was at my most reluctant. My deep gratitude for his generosity and unflagging professional and personal support during times that were particularly hard for him is more than I can ever adequately acknowledge.

I am thankful for the financial assistance provided by the Patricia Brennan Dissertation Award (2009) and by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Dissertation Summer Seminar 2009). These stipends enabled me to focus on the project in the summer-fall 2009. The interdisciplinary dissertation seminar offered by Peter Manning and the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook provided an excellent venue for exchanging ideas and discussing the dissertation project with guest lecturers and graduate students from various disciplines. I would like to thank Peter Manning for illuminating observations and his interest in the topic.

I am most thankful to Eva Gentes, who created a blog and an online reading group on self-translation. Her critique of an earlier draft of one of the chapters was invaluable. Most importantly, her infectious enthusiasm about the topic helped me overcome a temporary writing impasse. I wish to express my thanks to other members of the group, Eleftheria. Tassiopoulos and Anil J. Pinto. Our regular exchanges created a much-needed sense of community. I am also grateful to Carolyn Shread, who shared her article on Nancy Huston and self-translation before it appeared in print.

The dissertation would have never been completed without the generosity, patience, warmth, and good humor of my dear friends and above all, my spouse, Okhtay Ilghami. My most heartfelt thanks to them.

Introduction

Bilingual Writing and Cosmopolitanism

On March 16 2007, Le Monde published a manifesto that announced "the death of Francophonie" and the advent of world literature in French (*littérature –monde en français*). The manifesto signed by 44 writers (Michel le Bris, Jean Rouaud, Alain Mabanckou et al) called for a Copernican revolution: liberating the French language from its exclusive pact with a nation, recognizing the de facto de-centeredness of writing in French, and shifting literary focus from obsessive self-referentiality to the increased consciousness of the world around. The appearance of the manifesto is indicative of the following phenomena: undoing the relation between a nation and a language while tacitly accepting the existing system of nation-states, responding to an increase in literary production by foreign-born authors in English, and expressing a desire to form a multinational community centered around a natural language (as opposed to Ur-languages, Esperanto, or sacred languages).

Although its claims are restricted to literary production in French, the manifesto seeks to address the global literary scene. The formulation that harkens back to Goethe's *Weltliteratur* and the Enlightenment dream of the "universalité de la langue française" (Rivarol), brings up old questions in a new context: What kind of world does littérature-monde represent or, rather, create? From whose perspective? Does it seek to emphasize multiple attachments, eliminate the notion of national literature altogether, or to make a case for a model more clearly situated in a language than World Literature? Bruce Robbins reminds us that with the recent return of philosophical arguments advocating some forms of universalism, it is at the same time "assumed more and more that worlds,

like nations, come in different sizes and styles. Like nations, worlds too are "imagined " (Robbins 2). This discussion was long preceded and, in many ways, shaped by the authors who have problematized models of national and transnational affiliation in language.

As Benedict Anderson has demonstrated in Imagined Communities, it is erroneous to regard languages as exclusive emblems of nation-ness. What language possesses is a potential to be appropriated and inscribed within vital institutional frameworks (education, administration, publishing, broadcasting), and this capacity makes it a perfect tool for generating imagined communities (133). First, I would like to investigate why and to what effect language is appropriated by individual authors, and how a body of work produced by the same author in two languages articulates the relationship between the nation and the world. Where does such an oeuvre belong in the evolving national literature of the authors' origin and in the literary space of their choice? Then, I will attempt to examine the ramifications of such practice for theorizing identity, belonging, and cosmopolitanism.

The position of bilingual writers complicates the oppositions between national canon and the margin, between origin and becoming, between cultural assimilation[1] and resistance. On one hand, such terms as littérature-monde and world literature conveniently eliminate the problem of defining literatures outside the national paradigm; on the other hand, they erase the important distinction between post-colonial writing that uses English or French in order to deterritorialize them, and writing in an acquired language of choice. I am particularly interested in examining authors who come from an

[1] Michel de Certeau suggests multiple interpretations of this loaded term in The Practice of Everyday Life. Assimilation besides becoming 'similar to' what one is exposed, may mean "making something similar" to what one is, making it one's own, appropriating or re-appropriating it (166).

established literary tradition (Russian and English literature) and whose writing in another major language (or in more than one language) was determined not so much by a forced exile or colonial experience, as by a conscious choice of a different literary destiny. The scope of my project is limited to studying bilingual writing within primarily European and North-American context. Such geographical divisions are notoriously problematic: Was Nabokov's Russia part of Europe? Is it now? Where are the cultural borders of Europe and North America? Nonetheless, the experience of bilingualism in this situation differs considerably from literary bilingualism in Africa or South Asia .

Despite the array of terminological options available today[2] and the authors' knowledge of more than two languages,[3] I will use the terms "literary bilingualism" and "bilingual writing" to emphasize double cultural and discursive belonging of the writers who composed an important body of work in two languages.[4] Rainier Grutman emphasizes the distinction between textual and literary bilingualism, bilingual authors and bilingual texts. He argues that bilingual authors do not necessarily produce bilingual texts; they usually write for an audience in each of their languages. Conversely, authors

[2] Some of the most commonly used terms are polyglot and multilingual, or plurilingual writers, and literary disglossia. For instance, Steven Kellman in the Translingual Imagination suggests the term translingual and distinguishes between ambilingual and monolingual translinguals; Leonard Foster introduces equilingual in his study of multilingual poets The Poet's Tongues. Although most linguists traditionally distinguish between bilinguality ("a psychological state of an individual who has access to more than one linguistic code" or an individual bilingualism) and bilingualism that refers both to individual bilinguality, but more often to a linguistic community, in which a number of people are bilingual (Hamers and Blanc 6), I will apply the term literary bilingualism in both instances.

[3] In fact, bilinguals' heightened attention to different registers and genres of any given language often causes them to capitalize on the interplay between not two, but multiple *langages* within one language or between several languages. Thus, heteroglossia and literary bilingualism are hardly exclusive.

[4] Many bilingual writers are, in fact, multilingual – they may speak more than two languages, translate from and even occasionally write in three or more languages. In my choice of a more conservative term, I follow the practice of Einar Haugen (Bilingualism in the Americas: a Research Guide and Bibliography), Elizabeth Beaujour (Alien Tongues), and Corinne L. Scheiner (Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Self-translation: Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov as Doubled Novelists), whose use of 'bilingual' includes multilingual and polyglot. Furthermore, I do not split 'bilingual' into smaller categories that depend on the degree of language and cultural competence for each language as the discussion of mastery of the language always tends to be somewhat moot; nor do I wish to base the definition on the authors' celebrity and critical recognition.

creating predominantly in one language can produce a highly bilingual or multilingual text using foreign speech for stylistic purposes ("Mono versus Stereo" 208-12). While this distinction is pertinent for Grutman's delineation of poetics of bilingualism from an indiscriminate use of Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, I chose not to pursue it. To my mind, the texts I am going to examine are imbued with bilingualism at several levels regardless of the number of languages explicitly introduced in each work or of their status as an original or a self-translated work.

Several scholars insist that literary bilingualism became particularly prominent in the twentieth century, due to massive migrations, modernist aesthetics of alienation, and the formation of a new canon inspired by literature of exile – translingual literature.[5] Melvin Friedman, in "The Creative Writer as Polyglot: Valery Larbaud and Samuel Beckett" upholds that only in the twentieth century did writers "ma[k]e polyglot tendencies an essential aspect of their craft" (229). Having contrasted Larbaud's and Beckett's practices as translators and creative writers, Friedman concludes that the two writers used their languages to different ends:

> Thus we have with Valery Larbaud and Samuel Beckett the two types of the polyglot. Larbaud uses his knowledge of languages as a literary device. His translations of other writers serve to enrich his own work. Samuel Beckett, on the other hand, alternates between French and English as the mood dictates. Although he knows fewer languages than Larbaud and is infinitely less cosmopolitan, Beckett has the more professional awareness of the writer who can explain a literary situation equally well in two languages (236).

I contend that it is precisely the profound awareness of two literary spaces that develops a cosmopolitan vision. Due to the term's ambiguity, cosmopolitanism as a theoretical notion embraces both the most utopian and the most pragmatic aspirations, but it is first and foremost a practice. As Sheldon Pollock and his Chicago colleagues argue

[5] See Steven Kellman's Translingual Imagination, Azade Seyhan's Writing Outside the Nation.

"cosmopolitanism is not some known entity existing in the world, with a clear genealogy from the Stoics to Immanuel Kant, that simply awaits a more detailed description at the hands of scholarship" (Pollock et al 1). Existing literary and social practices inform and develop the notion theoretically and practically and illuminate new dimensions of cosmopolitanism as a constant and deep engagement with the other.

Following Pascal Bruckner's definition in "The Edge of Babel," I treat cosmopolitanism as a deliberately chosen state and a laborious process at the same time: "…one is not born cosmopolitan, but becomes so in an act of unlimited devotion and respect by taking on an endless debt to a foreign reality. The elation of playing in several keys, on several keyboards requires the incorporation of another world's structure…" (Bruckner 245). Instead of suggesting another framework for theorizing cosmopolitanism,[6] I will attempt to demonstrate how narrative, thematic and linguistic strategies employed by bilingual writers can precede or articulate shifts in individual and public imaginary.

Admittedly, millions of scientists, musicians, and international businessmen live their lives in a second language, but for people who weave their worlds out of words, signifiers are never arbitrary, and language exercises an enormous power over their lives. Steven Kellman in Translingual Imagination shares a similar observation when he compares musicians and artists switching to a different medium or moving to another country with poets and writers changing their language: "For those who live in and

[6] Curiously, if languages are endowed with souls, and souls can be easily nationalized (see Boym's "From the Russian Soul to Post-Communist Nostalgia"); so can major formulations of cosmopolitanism. Suffice it to mention the appropriation of the Enlightenment ideas of cosmopolitanism by nationalist movements in revolutionary France, Italy, and Germany. In the USSR, the quasi-cosmopolitan project of replacing national identification with the idea of the Soviet man, who would entertain internationalist aspirations, devolved into condemnation of "rootless cosmopolitans" (bezrodnye kosmopolity), a euphemism for a massive antisemitic campaign in 1949-1953.

through words, living in translation is to be racked between life and death" (5). However, the wording of "lives in translation" betrays an important tension underlying bilingual writing: Does translation suggest a secondary, inferior quality of such life as opposed to the original, or, is on the contrary, translation meant as a *modus vivendi*, a way of thinking and interpreting reality?[7] As I will argue in subsequent chapters, it is the tactics and discipline of translation in the most conventional sense that revitalize the author's poetic language, prevent the author and the text from sliding into a schizophrenic abyss, and help develop ways of inhabiting multiple selves.

Elizabeth Beaujour in Alien Tongues, her study of bilingual Russian writers of the first emigration, seconds François Grosjean's conclusion that even neurologically a bilingual presents not "a sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals, but rather a unique and specific linguistic configuration" and then reminds us of a further important distinction between bilingual or multilingual speakers who can switch codes spontaneously and bilingual *writers* who have to make a conscious choice of a symbolic system available to them (50). I contend that many unusual linguistic and cognitive configurations as well as juxtapositions or superimpositions of several symbolic systems introduced by bilingual writers are due precisely to this conscious choice. Most scholars understandably avoid conjecturing reasons for such a switch making an exception for circumstantial (an access to a larger readership or better publishing opportunities) and affective reasons. After all, neither the linguistic capacity of writing in another language,

[7] See, for instance, Octavio Paz's treatment of language itself as translation. Paz takes translation as the primary ontological and epistemological mode, not a supplementary linguistic activity. "On the one hand," Paz writes, "the world is presented to us as a collection of similarities; on the other, as a growing heap of texts, each slightly different from the one that came before it: translations of translations of translations. Each text is unique, yet at the same time it is the translation of another text. No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from non-verbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase" (Paz 154).

nor a forced or a voluntary change of country is sufficient to part, in Nabokov's words, with one's "natural idiom, [one's] untrammeled, rich, and infinitely docile," native tongue (Nabokov "On a Book Entitled Lolita" 319).

A useful distinction can be made between the writers who never published in their first language and for whom a chosen foreign language acquires a status of *pure language* devoid of habitual associations and automatisms (Joseph Conrad, Kazuo Ishiguro, Andrei Makine,[8] Nancy Huston), and those who first established themselves in their national literature (Milan Kundera, Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett) but went on to create an important body of work in another major language and literature. At present, a number of artists adopted even a more perplexing position: reluctant to sever their ties with either language, they consistently create in both their mother tongue and the acquired language (Raymond Federman,[9] Vasilis Alexakis, Nancy Huston, Ariel Dorfman). The spectacular twinning of their work, often via self-translation, prompted Raymond Federman to designate a particular place for such practice in literary taxonomies and to call for a serious study of bilingual poetics.

Kellman judiciously argues that in numerous cases the decision to write in another language constitutes an emancipatory practice (Kellman 28). It is, indeed, plausible that writing in a different tongue becomes primarily a mode of critical disengagement with profoundly personal experiences. Studies of autobiographical writing demonstrate that

---

[8] Makine and his critics persistently conflate his choice of French with the idea of liberation. "It is a literary language, free from prosaic and the vulgar. That fact creates something like a space for freedom between me and my text," he states in an interview with L'Express (Pons 127). Tatiana Tolstaya's astute observations on the Russian vision of France as the homeland of freedom provide the historical context for this view. See Tolstaya's "Love Story: Dreams of My Russian Summers." New York Review of Books 20 Nov.1997:4-5

[9] As I was drafting my dissertation, I kept listing Raymond Federman as one of the prolific contemporary bilingual authors. Sadly, this is no longer true: Raymond Federman passed away on October 6, 2009.

the choice of language often appears to be made "against the logic of subject matter and context" (Beaujour 45). Childhood memories lived in one language may often be written in the other, while the mother tongue is used for other literary genres.[10] Joseph Brodsky expresses this in his poignant "In a Room and a Half" devoted to his parents: "I write this in English because I want to grant them a margin of freedom: the margin whose width depends on the number of those who may be willing to read this. …I want English verbs of motion to describe their movements. This won't resurrect them, but English grammar may at least prove to be a better escape route than the chimneys of the state crematorium…May English house my dead. In Russian I am prepared to read, write verses or letter, for Maria Volpert and Alexander Brodsky, though, English offers a better semblance of afterlife…" (461).

Joseph Conrad, on the other hand, refutes Robert Lynd's definition of his writing as "writing in English by choice," and argues instead that English for him was not really a matter of choice as much as it was imposed on him from within as a subject of his work. He emphasized his interest in the effect his writing "*for* [the English]" produced on them (Conrad qtd. in Walkowitz 39). English becomes a raison d'être of his writing as well as its major subject: "All I can claim after all those years of devoted practice, with the accumulated anguish of its doubts, imperfections, and faltering in my hearts, is the right to be believed when I say that if I had not written in English I would not have written at all," he concludes (41).

Thus, even for the most ostentatiously non-engagés artists in such projects, it is impossible to dissociate the affective from the political. If Afro-French writers try to

[10] For instance, Nabokov continues to write poetry in Russian. See Galya Diment's "English as Sanctuary: Nabokov's and Brodsky's Autobiographical Writing;" Celeste Kinginger's "Bilingualism and Emotion in the Autobiographical Works of Nancy Huston's", Makine's Testament Français et al.

solve their predicament of speaking the very language of the colonizer by doing violence to that language, by what Sartre in "Black Orpheus" calls 'de-Frenchifying' French words by "break[ing] their usual associations" and "violently coupl[ing] them" with unfamiliar images and topics (303), writers of the empires do not seem to have such a clear mission. However, as their texts are inevitably worldly, it would be wrong to ignore the political impact of bilingual writing if by political we imply initiation of new modes of being and belonging with their subsequent absorption into larger theoretical and institutional frameworks.

William Mackey in "Literary Bilingualism and the Thought-Culture-Relation," attempts to address this question by appealing to the audience: "Why have writers whose first and best language was such well-known tongues as French, Spanish, and Russian, elect to write in English? Perhaps the answer is the audience" (2-3). Corinne Scheiner in her doctoral dissertation "Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Self-translation," follows the same path, but treats the audience not necessarily as a larger social group surrounding the author, but as Todorov's "destinataire imaginaire." In a provocative World Republic of Letters (La République Mondiale des Lettres), Pascale Casanova emphasizes the nearly Darwinian drive of writers to reach world centers of literary authority, which may not coincide with contemporaneous geopolitical or economic centers. Leonard Forster in his major work, The Poet's Tongues, provides a historical examination of multilingualism in literature and shows that practice of multilingual writing, in poetry in particular, is not very unusual. The idea of language loyalty was not developed until the mid-nineteenth century when "the Romantics had discovered that languages had souls, that each language, nay each dialect was unique and characteristic; and this discovery had been

utilized by the rising forces of nationalism"[11] (55). It is no secret that ideas of multilingualism and cosmopolitanism can also be appropriated for nationalist interests as the French *impérialisme de l'universel* has demonstrated (Bourdieu qtd. in Casanova 55).

It would be premature to draw any conclusions about analogous instrumentalization of bilingual writing by their host countries as a new way of establishing the countries' pre-eminence at present, but the heightened attention[12] to writers adopting a language of choice is worth note. While writing in a second language or in several languages is certainly not a new phenomenon,[13] fascination with it is fairly recent. When Nancy Huston was asked about the critical reception of her early books written in French in the early 1980s, she explained that the fact of writing in a foreign language was never discussed:

> Non, il n'y a jamais eu de remise en question de mon droit d'écrire en français […], le thème d'écrivains étrangers s'exprimant en français était absent, on n'en

[11] William Mackey in "Literary Biculturalism and the Thought-Language-Culture Relation" discusses "political romanticism" expressed as the dominant ideology of the period: "one people, one nation, one culture and one language. In this one language, the national tongue, the Romantics presumed to have discovered the soul of the nation. Love of the national language became identified with love of the country…" (43-44).

[12] For instance, even the title of the conference held at l'Université du Luxembourg in 2007 is significant: "Ces "étrangers" qui écrivent en français ou: La "francophonie marginale." If prizes and awards are to be considered as meaningful indicators of literary success, many prestigious British and French prizes over the past decade went to the writers who are not British or French.

[13] K. Alfons Knauth provides a detailed survey of literary multilingualism in his "Literary Multilingualism I: General Outlines and Western World." Comparative Literature: Sharing Knowledges for Preserving Cultural Diversity. Ed. Marcio Seligmann-Silva, Paola Mildonian, Jean-Michel Djian, Djelal Kadir, Lisa Block de Behar, Alfons Knauth, Dolores Romero Lopez. Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS), Oxford: Eolss Publishers, 2007 <http://www.eolss.net.> See also: Hokenson, Jan Walsh, Marcella Munson. The Bilingual Text. History and Theory of Literary Self-Translation. Manchester, UK & Kinderhook, NY, USA: St. Jerome Publishing, 2007

> parlait pas[…]. C'est bien plus tard que le sujet est devenu à la mode, avec des colloques, des dossiers, des tables rondes (qtd. in Kroh 92-93).
>
> No, there was no questioning of my right to write in French […], the subject of foreign writers expressing themselves in French was not discussed. It was not until much later that it became a fashionable topic of conferences, reports, round tables.

Academic interest in bilingual writing as the locus of cultural and linguistic negotiations is concomitant with the need to re-examine and rehabilitate the concepts of home and belonging. Literary bilingualism was thought to be one of the most intriguing facets of exile, but the notion of exile itself is problematized in the space of world literature. In his foreword to Extraterritorial, George Steiner singles out Beckett, Nabokov, and Borges as exceptional representatives of the current of literature of exile, whose bilingual writing has been effecting the "language revolution […], the change in the ways culture inhabits language" since the beginning of the twentieth century:

> A striking aspect of this language revolution has been the emergence of linguistic pluralism or "unhousedness" in certain great writers. These writers stand in a relation of dialectical hesitance not only toward one native tongue – as Hölderlin or Rimbaud did before them – but toward several languages. This is almost unprecedented. It speaks of the more general problem of a lost center. It makes of Nabokov, Borges, and Beckett the three representatives in the literature of exile – which is, perhaps, the main impulse of current literature (viii).

More recent theories of cosmopolitanism hinging on multiple attachments to several nations or communities allow for such "unhousedness" or, rather, multiple homes, which can become sites of partial or overlapping allegiances.[14] These theories convey more

[14] See "Cosmopolitanisms" by Sheldon Pollock, Homi Bhabha et al; Bruce Robbins' "situated" cosmopolitics; Scott Malcomson's "actually existing cosmopolitanisms", David Hollinger's and Mitchell Cohen's "rooted cosmopolitanism, Homi Bhabha's "vernacular" cosmopolitanism, Asian cosmopolitanism, examined by Aihwa Ong and Louisa Schein, or African cosmopolitanisms introduced by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Scott Malcomson.These few examples from an almost endless list demonstrate the current usage of the term, which underscores plurality and particularities of cosmopolitanism as well as the

ambivalence in defining home, nation, exile, and transnational communities. Likewise, writers and literary scholars look for ways of accommodating these multiple attachments in their writing. Eva Hoffman in "The New Nomads" warns against facile superimposition of concepts of country, nation and home, which may lead to rejection of 'home' as something parochial, narrow-minded, if not nationalist, and calls for new models, sites, and frameworks that would enable us to integrate our first legacy with other experiences of belonging.

Linguistics, Literary Bilingualism and the Theory of Linguistic Personality

If literary studies associated literary bilingualism with literature of exile, linguists, until recently, considered literary bilingualism as a marginal practice hardly deserving a serious study. Moreover, Vildomec in his Multilingualism, ascertained that active multilingualism is a handicap for literary expression (Vildomec 32). André Martinet, probably guided by preeminence of speech, states in his often quoted preface to Uriel Weinreich's Languages in Contact that "the clash, in the same individual, of two languages of comparable social and cultural value, both spoken by multitudes of monolinguals, maybe psychologically most spectacular, but unless we have to do with a literary genius, the permanent linguistic traces of such a clash will be nil" (Martinet vii-viii). Needless to say, this assertion has been challenged both by writers themselves and theoreticians of literary bilingualism.

---

difficulty of defining *universal* and the complexity of overlapping allegiances to the local and the worldwide.

Linguistic studies of literary bilingualism usually consist in comparison of texts written and self-translated by bilingual authors. Self-translation is undoubtedly one of the most prominent manifestations of literary bilingualism, but it is not the only one. While recent years have seen an increase in much needed interdisciplinary studies[15] in self-translation that redefine notions of original and translation and focus on ideological underpinnings of this practice, it would be a mistake to reduce linguistic studies of literary bilingualism solely to self-translation. There is a need for other methods of approaching literary bilingualism. Such methods should help elucidate the position of bilingual texts within and without their literary traditions through the study of linguistic changes without denying the authors' and their audiences' subjectivity and historical experiences.

The theory of linguistic personality [iazykovaia lichnost'] signified an important anthropocentric move in cognitive linguistics and appeared to be able to mediate between linguistics and literary studies. However, as it was mostly developed in Russia, focusing on the Russian language and literature, there arises an inevitable issue of cultural translatability of the theory and its applicability to bilingual writers. Another difficulty of extending the model to bilingual writers and bilingual corpus of their work boils down to the problem we discussed earlier in regard to bilinguals: Can their work be treated as a summation of two distinct periods and two linguistic personalities? Do they develop a secondary linguistic personality when they switch to writing in a new language, or, accepting the Lockean definition of an enduring, core self, is there a unique linguistic personality of a bilingual author created and modified by two or more codes and

[15] There is a research group (AUTOTRAD) investigating problems of self-translation in translation studies based in Departamento de Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad Autóntoma de Barcelona.

discursive practices? It is also worth remembering that the very premise of the theory – a manifestation of one's subjectivity or even collective dimensions of such subjectivity in and through a national language – is questionable. The easy slippage from national to individual, from nation to personality, and from personality to a national character or culture remains problematic. As Jonathan Rée notes, "personality and nationality are united in a single dialectical blurb" (85).

Although there is a noticeable conflict between multiple linguistic and national identities espoused by bilingual writers and a somewhat unified notion of linguistic personality in cognitive linguistics, its methodology and categories can be selectively used for examining texts produced by bilingual writers in both languages in order to zero in on transformations of identity in language and on peculiarities of the texts' production and reception. I will outline the main tenets of the theory of linguistic personality and will list the elements that I am going to borrow from it for modeling a linguistic personality of a bilingual writer and for theorizing literary bilingualism. In Chapter One, I will selectively apply these categories for analyzing Vladimir Nabokov's major texts originally written in Russian and in English and defining literary bilingualism as a special discursive practice. Despite the awkwardness of the term *linguistic personality* and its limited applicability, this analysis helps us to understand why Vladimir Nabokov, whose work is embedded in Russian, French, British and American literature, has been criticized as a 'foreign' writer indifferent to preoccupations of Russian literature.

The Theory of Linguistic Personality

Based on V. Vinogradov's notion of the image of the author[16] (Vinogradov 92), G. Shpet's sense of the word, aesthetics (397), and Bakhtin's *pure author (304)*, the term "liguistic personality" was first articulated by G. Boguin in his 1982 doctoral dissertation "The Concept of Linguistic Personality" and was further developed by Iurii Karaulov.[17] The theory defines linguistic personality as an ensemble of language and speech meanings that organize human experience within a certain culture; it hinges on the idea of a verbalized national worldview and proposes the following levels of a linguistic personality (Karaulov): 1) the verbal-semantic or structural level which includes the standard language means employed by an individual within a given language (lexicon); 2) the linguistic-cognitive level (thesaurus) reflecting an individual world view; and 3) the pragmatic level (intertextual and philosophical orientation).[18] Part of the appeal of the theory, for Slavists in particular, lies in a possibility of incorporating an individual author's consciousness in language into a rather formalized study of linguistic mechanisms.

---

[16] In his later works, Vinogradov argued that Saussure's hierarchy of *langue* and *parole* did not account for many elements that would structure a literary language (such as, for instance, internal "ideological" language forms, and overall composition decisions) and pointed to the existence of another category that transforms an individualized *parole* in the fictional text (Vinogradov 62). Karaulov concluded that linguistic personality, which comprises both nomothetic and idiographic elements of a given linguistic and cultural community best describes this transitional category.

[17] Vinogradov, Viktor.V. Stilistika. Teoriia poeticheskoi rechi. Poètika.– Moskva: Izdatel'stvo. Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1965; Bakhtin, Mikhail. Èstetika slovesnogo tvorchestva. Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1986;Karaulov, Iurii. Russkii iazyk i iazykovaia lichnost'. Moskva: Nauka, 1987.

[18] The last two categories are very loosely defined in Karaulov's theory; for a productive critique of the applicability of those terms, see Karakutz-Borodina, L.A. Iazykovaia lichnost' Vladimira Nabokova kak avtora khudozhestvennogo teksta. Ufa: Redaktsionno-izdatelskii otdel Bashkirskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2003.

Many Slavists have also reported the unease that they experienced at the pronounced "death of the author, " claiming that the text for a Russian poet is inseparable from his life.[19] The theory of linguistic personality attempts to reconcile the view of an author as a center of consciousness operating in and through language[20] and as a biographical figure as it is manifested in fictional texts. Multiplicity of discourses in a literary text, however, complicates utilization of the theory even for a monolingual author, let alone for a bilingual one. Interestingly, when Julien Green, who was born and raised in France by American parents, related his experience of switching languages, he unwittingly described his discoveries in terms of 'real' and 'borrowed' language personalities. He came to the United States in 1940 and thought of writing a book about his French childhood (Memories of Happy Days). Having written a dozen pages in French, he realized that he might not find a French publisher in the USA and decided to begin the same book in English. However, this switch made him realize that while the subject matter and the intended audience remained the same, the beginnings were quite different:

> 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 re-reading what I had written, realized that I was writing 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[…]. 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 (Green 174).

---

[19] See, for instance, Bethea, David. Brodsky and Creation of Exile. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004

[20] The examination of the author's linguistic personality is often contrasted with the notional collective language personality in a given language. While Karaulov modeled Russian linguistic personality in his monograph, to my knowledge, there is no comparable study of the American linguistic personality. The implementation of this task, therefore, seems extremely problematic even within one language community, and nearly implausible in two or more.

In other words, Green's experience confirms Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity and emphasizes the difference introduced by the language itself. Reflecting on his writing, Green concludes that it is impossible to be absolutely bilingual, especially when writing. Only one of his personalities seems to be deep enough to be real – French in his case. Unlike, Beckett or Nabokov, Green believes that there is an essential, core personality inextricably bound by one language. In his journal, he writes:

> …ma vraie personnalité ne peut guère s'exprimer qu'en français; l'autre est une personnalité d'emprunt et comme imposée par la langue anglaise (et pourtant sincère, c'est là le bizarre de la chose). Cette *personnalité d'emprunt*, je ne puis la faire passer en français que fort malaisément: elle ne *semble* pas tout à fait vraie. "Je suis moins naïf que ça," suis-je sans cesse tenté de me dire en relisant mon livre en anglais (807).
>
> My real personality can only be expressed in French; the other is a borrowed personality imposed by the English language (yet, it is genuine, that's the strange thing about it). This borrowed personality can hardly appear in French: it does not seem quite real. "I am less naïf than that," I am constantly tempted to say when I am rereading my book in English.

In linguistics, *secondary linguistic personality* is mostly discussed in the context of acquiring and approximating communicative competences in the second language and culture (artificial bilingualism). Artificial bilingualism[21] is always a complex social and historical phenomenon, and many of the key factors shaping it are extra-linguistic in nature (class, professional, geographical, or even emotional mobility). In order to describe a secondary linguistic personality, Irina Khaleeva introduces a bifurcation at the linguistic-cognitive level (Thesaurus). She argues that Thesaurus I, responsible for the formation of a worldview in language, is primarily shaped by the verbal level, while

[21] I will reserve the term for language acquisition outside a community of native speakers; when the acquired language is not spoken as native by either parent. Vladimir Nabokov's case is exceptional as he was exposed to English (spoken by his British tutors) and Russian at an early age.

Thesaurus II deals with a conceptual and a global view. The two thesauruses are autonomous, but closely interrelated as Thesaurus II underlies Thesaurus I. According to her, the major differences between the native speakers of various languages are certainly manifested in Thesaurus I; but acquiring Thesaurus II ("secondary cognitive consciousness") for a non-native speaker is a formidable, but a necessary task in order to achieve communicative competence. If approximation of Thesaurus II of a native speaker is probably highly desirable in language acquisition, the gap between linguistic and communicative competences, especially if it is deliberately foregrounded, may be extremely productive in bilingual writing.

Therefore, I do not think that the notion of secondary linguistic personality is particularly relevant to bilingual writers as the consciousness of the bilingual author is shaped by the interaction between the languages and their cognitive models even within a monolingual text. In fact, bilingual authors tend to construct a new linguistic personality inflected by their diverse linguistic practices - reading, translating other authors, producing texts in different genres and languages, as well as by the need to respond to the changing situation and to envisage a world driven by different principles. In this respect, this new personality becomes synonymous with what I define as literary bilingualism, a more felicitous and a more comprehensive term. However, the study of Karaulov's three levels (lexicon, linguistic-cognitive level (thesaurus), and pragmatics) and his emphasis on the inter-dependence of multiple discursive practices and particular historical circumstances can be a productive tool for approaching bilingual texts, and for establishing the sense of identity that these texts create.

In Chapter One, I analyze *lexicon, thesaurus* (also known as conceptosphere[22], frames, cognitive expectations), *intertextual and intratextual* references constituting particularities of Vladimir Nabokov's bilingual idiolect in his two novels belonging to different periods: Dar (The Gift) and Pale Fire. I start by discussing the changing idea of exile for Nabokov, his contemporaries, and his current readers and then show that what was likely to cause accusations of foreignness, made his work especially relevant for the modern Russian reader or any reader experiencing the "unbearable lightness" of living in transition. In addition to the linguistic analysis, I touch upon character development, and compare reception of his works at the time of their first publication and at the time of their re-discovery by Soviet and Russian readers. I conclude by defining Nabokov's literary bilingualism as synthetic innovation, a special discursive practice that underlies his writing in any language and introduces significant innovations regardless of the language of composition.

Chapter Two dwells on the writing and reading strategies that Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett devise in order to imagine escapes from the prison-house of any language, to mediate between phenomenological, linguistic, and fictional reality, and to envision a new form of community. I look at the authors' fictional cosmologies, their use of formal structuring principles and several sign systems that disrupt narrative stability, temporality, and materiality of language and create a greater degree of indeterminacy by presenting dual reading procedures: conventional and iconic. I read closely Nabokov's Приглашение на казнь/Invitation to a Beheading and Beckett's Comment C'est/How It

[22] In Karaulov's model, the level of *thesaurus* is responsible for "establishing a hierarchy of meaning and values for a linguistic personality" (36). It comprises such diverse units as concepts, gestalts, frames, and propositions. I agree with Karakuts-Borodina, who suggests that it would be more appropriate to define this level as *conceptosphere* or *information thesaurus* (20).

Is as well as some of Beckett's short prose, observe the writers' unique ways of correlating the comic and the cosmic, and compare their treatment of imagination and mortality that seems to be historically and culturally contingent.

Although the chapter does not directly approach bilingualism or self-translation, it reflects on the exchanges of mind and body, language and matter that replicate linguistic operations. Moreover, a juxtaposition of the two versions, especially in Beckett's case, reveals subtle discrepancies that allow escapes from the controlling formal principles and serves as a meta-commentary on the nature of translation and self-translation as both a desirable encounter and a torture.

Chapter Three continues studying the effects of utilizing another signifying system – music - as a textual strategy that simultaneously underscores incompleteness of both verbal and non-verbal experiences and attempts to reconcile linguistically and culturally doubled texts. I review the main notions of musico-literary critical vocabulary and the issues arising from applying them to a literary analysis, then I examine Huston's changing vision of self and her practice of literary bilingualism through the prism of musical terms *polyphony* and *scordatura* that she introduces in her writing by doing a close reading of her novella Prodige (Prodigy) and then focusing on a novel Instruments des ténèbres (Instruments of Darkness). I begin the chapter by situating Huston's bilingual writing vis-à-vis Beckett – one of her major models, from whom she departs radically, and conclude the chapter with an analysis of a new modality of writing in which writing and translation overlap, her bilingual text Limbes=Limbo : hommage à Samuel Beckett. I posit that the role of bi-langue (Khatibi), a new entity, a dialogue, a latent translation between the languages occurring even within one language becomes

increasingly important in such texts. Any utterance in these works is molded by the presence of multiple discourses and languages derived from interaction of two or more codes at different levels: phonological resemblances, semantic superimpositions, and proper names, but such texts resist total dissolution into multiplicity as pathology and remain intelligible within each language. The simultaneous presentation of the two texts also requires developing modalities of bilingual reading.

Finally, Chapter Four reviews problematics of self-translation and literary bilingualism and the role of self-translation in the writers' oeuvre. The very impossibility of reconciling the manifest continuity of the bilingual oeuvre with its pronounced decentering impulses, in my view, is a salient feature of literary bilingualism in general and of self-translated texts in particular. Self-translation becomes a unique locus of the intertextual and intratextual dialogue, where in the act of critical re-reading, language has to be temporarily stripped of its baggage, and its automatized associations with nation and history are critically probed before establishing the new ones. If viewed within the Romantic equation nation-language–person-author-identity, self-translation indeed unsettles the categories of original writing, translation, author, reader, translator and raises a number of typological questions, but the categories themselves and even the authors' attitudes to self-translation need to be historicized and contextualized in each instance.

In order to conceptualize models of self-translation, I offer a critical overview of its key questions, then I outline Nabokov's, Beckett's, and Huston's practice of self-translation situating it within their overall writing trajectory, generic experiments, and other interlingual practices; finally, I discuss how their work relates to and illuminates

major theoretical issues of self-translation studies. When I analyze various strategies employed by bilingual authors in the earlier chapters, I closely read the originary text alongside with the author's or authorized translation. The scope of this chapter does not allow me to provide a close reading of self-translations of all the three authors; therefore, I will draw on the previous chapters' material, my earlier work on self-translation as well as on other scholars' research on individual texts.

Since Samuel Beckett's and Vladimir Nabokov's lives have been studied and meticulously documented in several biographies, I only mention circumstances of their lives when they are directly related to their particular work. I include more detailed biographical information on Nancy Huston, who is a less known writer at the moment. While choosing primary texts for all the chapters, I tended toward the works that would best illustrate my arguments and at the same time would benefit from more critical attention. However, I am conscious of the subjective nature of my selection, which, at least partially, must have been motivated by personal resonances.

Chapter 1: Vladimir Nabokov's Gift of Exile

Transformation of Exile

The trope of exile that has dominated the theoretical discourse for the past sixty years, is supposed to lose its relevance in the space of world literature: after all, exile is inextricably connected with the idea of a nation. Even in response to Kristeva's eulogy of the pleasure of exile, Homi Bhabha rightly discerns " how fully the shadow of the nation falls on the condition of exile" (141). However, exilic imagination proves more tenacious than other theoretical frameworks. "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. If true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching motif of modern culture?" inquires Edward Said (137). Although the current project attempts to move away from the notion of exile and identity as a defining trope for bilingual imagination, it would be preposterous to deny that exile was an inexorable experience of "history [that] hurts" (Jameson 102) rather than a facile metaphor for many bilingual writers.

Earning the right to possess two homes as fragmented and incomplete as they may be was what made Vladimir Nabokov one of the unsurpassable models for linguistic exiles: not only did he build his home in two major languages and literatures, but he also managed to turn the loss of his first home – his blissful childhood - into a unique poetic practice that becomes a record of a new identity being established. Many of Nabokov's central characters are émigrés who are often conspicuously at odds with their surroundings (Ganin in Mary, Fyodor-Godunov Cherdyntsev in The Gift, Humbert Humbert in Lolita, let alone a most sympathetic Pnin in the eponymous novel). The

environment itself, according to Brian Boyd, "whether as real as Fyodor's Berlin or as fanciful as Kinbote's Zembla,[23] will be superbly evoked, but the hero will have a tragic or comic or tragicomic disjunction from it" (Boyd "Storyteller" 33). Nabokov's autobiographical writing (Speak, Memory and its Russian version Drugie berega) as well as numerous interviews state his position in regards to exile and his adopted countries and languages quite unequivocally.[24] However, I chose to examine Nabokov's response to exile in his two hybrid novels: his last, longest, and probably most significant Russian novel Dar (The Gift) and Pale Fire, a "monstrous semblance of a novel, " according to one of its narrators (Nabokov PF 86).

My choice of these two texts is predicated on a particular interest in Nabokov's novel language means in both languages that demonstrate a possibility of international "literary exchange through translation and metamorphosis" (Meyer 4). Both novels crystallize the interaction between verse and prose, important for Nabokov and the literary traditions he comes from, and allow us to imagine a reality informed and sustained by literary bilingualism.

Spiritual Exile and Emigration as Apostasy

In one of his interviews in 1966, Nabokov remarked that the émigré community had a world of its own with a greater internal freedom and an incredible concentration of

[23] Jane Grayson made an appropriate observation concerning the evolution of Nabokov's skill at portraying and creating surrounding reality in Russian and in English. Only after meticulous depiction of new surroundings (Russian émigré life in Europe in The Gift or Lolita's and Pnin's Americana), does he turn to creation of fantastic settings. The Gift is followed by Ultima Thule and Solus Rex, and Lolita and Pnin - by Pale Fire and eventually by Ada, set in an entirely fictitious land (Grayson 215).
[24] See Nabokov, Vladimir. Strong Opinions. New York: Vintage International, 1990. 36-37, 98

culture (Nabokov in Boyd NRY 162). He claimed to have been happy where he was, at his writer's desk in a rented room. Nabokov's definition of his place changed little throughout his career – his desk in a succession of rented rooms of various quality, but he never insisted on belonging to or even understanding a typical émigré: "But then, of course, I am not a typical émigré. I am a very non-typical émigré, who doubts that a typical émigré exists" (qtd. in Boyd 162). Exile has figured prominently in the Russian imaginary both at the time of The Gift's first publication and at the time of its reception by Soviet-Russian readers. Every nation has its own mythology of exile and has to find ways to deal with it. Why was Nabokov's position at odds with the views of his numerous contemporaries, and what made it so relevant for those who chose to acknowledge or even artificially create "the condition we call exile" (Brodsky)?

Exile is too loaded a word in the Russian language to be used without an uneasy feeling of posturing and self-aggrandizing for the current generation: the undoubtedly painful condition is still surrounded by an enviable aura of exclusivity, and cannot be applied to migrants driven by economic or professional circumstances. Some of the most revered poems by Pushkin, Lermontov, Mandelshtam, Brodsky were composed against the reality of internal exile, and so were the grand, fantastic poems of a new political order (Chernyshevsky, Lenin, etc). Svetlana Boym in "Estrangement as a Lifestyle" aptly summarizes the conflict between orientation toward spiritual exile and rejection of emigration: while the transcendental homelessness is celebrated as an integral part of the Russian soul with its metaphysical wanderings, an act of voluntary exile from Russia is viewed as ultimate betrayal (244). Lithuanian poet Tomas Venclova describes the

impressive mythologies that are created by the countries that close borders for their citizens:

> …it is immoral and vicious to forsake one's country in her eternal misfortunes. A person cannot survive outside his native landscape. A writer cannot survive outside his language.[25] A human being is not just a human being endowed with reason and dignity, but part and parcel of his soil, a drop of his motherland's blood, a cogwheel in its spiritual mechanism. There is no reason and no dignity outside the collective soul of the people (140-141).

He argues that the best part of Russian and Eastern European culture is the result of the hard struggle with this idea. The conflation of internalized mythology with difficulties of crossing external borders results in even greater fascination with émigrés and dependence on their models of survival in a world guided by a set of different principles. When Nabokov, along with other émigré writers, was reintroduced in Russia in the 1980s and 1990s, his readers discovered that his art defied this axiom. Moreover, since at that time his readers were forced to cross a different kind of border into ideological, political, and economic *otherworld,* Nabokov's compelling ability to join his two historical and aesthetic realities and to construct a world and an identity of his own out of exilic debris became extremely relevant.

Likewise, in the 1930s, Nabokov's contemporaries were struggling to define their own place in the reality of exile. Most authors and critics publishing in Sovremennye zapiski, the leading émigré journal, stated that émigré literature had no future because loss of homeland signified loss of linguistic, social and cultural ties. Vladimir Varshavskii maintained that a younger generation of exiled writers were more isolated than a man on an uninhabited island, and, hence, could only express their own anguish

[25] This romantic belief harking back to Herder's ideas about inseparability of nation and language is probably one of the myths; however, I am inclined to think that the statement can be true in the case of poets, who are dependent on full immersion in all the registers of their constantly changing language, its sonorities, and a more immediate connection between changing sense and sound.

(409-14). Gaito Gazdanov specified three reasons for the sterility of émigré literature: the lack of readers, the lack of socio-psychological foundations, and the lack of moral comprehension, but singled out Sirin's (Nabokov's) unique position among émigrés precisely because of the author's sense of non-belonging: "the writer out of an environment, out of a homeland, out of the world" (404-408). Adamovich complained about émigré literature's (especially a younger generation)'s inability to establish a dialogue with Russia, and Stepun's called for "collective spiritual service", responsibility for one's time and one's nation.[26]" Nabokov's protagonist-narrator in The Gift seems to be defiantly immune to these calls: Godunov-Cherdyntsev's isolated bliss, anticipation of compensation for all his losses (death of his father, loss of his family, country, fortune) in his writing jars strikingly with concerns of the émigré literature. The Gift and Pale Fire articulate a different task for exiled writers that had to overcome the constraints of émigré literature: to construct new narrative and critical structures out of exile, to reflect on appropriate language and genres suited for the marginal position of a national literature as well as to develop new compositional techniques that can be used in any language.

Alexander Dolinin rightly notes that "the intensity and scope of The Gift's dialogue with various literary traditions and voices (unprecedented in Russian prose) can be fully explicated only if we read it as a programmatic statement, a Magna Carta of exilic creative behavior, rather than just the first prototype of the intertextual play in Pale Fire or Ada (Dolinin "The Gift" 146).

---

[26] Struve, Gleb. Russkaia literatura v izgnanii. – 3 izd. – Paris; Moscow.: YMCA-Press; Russkiy Put, 1996; Adamovich, Georgii. "O literature v èmigratsii." Sovremennye zapiski. Parizh, 1932, 50, 327-329; Stepun, Fyodor. "Porevolutsionnoe soznanie i zadacha èmigrantskoi literatury." Novyi grad 10 (1935): 12-28.

Genre and Exile

Although the theme of exile is much more explicit in The Gift, both novels provide a response to Chernyshevsky's famous question "What is to be done?" How can not only an individual author, but literature itself survive exile? The question was central to many émigré writers and to critics who sought a new meaning of exile as something to be transformed creatively. The quest for the appropriate genre to suit a new condition is unlikely to be deliberate, yet significant works written by exiles tend to break the boundaries of genres as if their position itself called for innovation and eclecticism. A distanced relationship with language or ways of living is a significant factor, but it does not entirely explain genre innovations in the works of bilingual writers. There is no such thing as commonplace for them not only because nothing is taken for granted in a foreign language, but also because the very place they attempt to occupy among other national communities is problematic, and the commonality as such is constantly questioned. Nancy Huston writes in Limbo/Limbes: "The absurd was invented by foreigners. No accident. Dirty fur'ners, furretin' around in their dictionaries. My tailor is rich and my soprano is bald…Here, have a rhinoceros. Only a Rumanian in Paris could have come up with the rhinoceros. And only a Russian expatriate would choose to spend her time spying on sub-conversation in French" (Huston 26).

The Gift and Pale Fire pivot around a contentious relation between a poet and a prose writer, but other Nabokov novels also contain verse as an important structural element. Other émigré writers, Cioran and Miłosz, remark that a realist novel cannot

survive exile: in Cioran's view, the author's subject matter will be exhausted by the image and reality of exile; therefore, poetry is better suited to express the feeling of the ground slipping under one's feet. For Miłosz, multiple perspectives available to an author in exile force the author to look for the best means to negotiate transformations of reality (Miłosz 137 qtd. in Karpinski). However, exile is certainly not the only reason for innovations in genre and style. When Sartre included Nabokov in his list of anti-novelists in the preface to Sarraute's Portrait d'un inconnu, Nabokov promptly retorted that "every important novel is 'anti'-because it does not resemble the genre or kind of its predecessors" (Strong Opinions 173).

The decision to switch to another language is not necessarily the one that clearly sets a writer apart from the community of other émigrés or fellow-writers in his home country. In a new country the change of language in a wider sense is inevitable: even if the author keeps writing in his native language, it has to be defamiliarized enough to develop "new eyes" (Miłosz "Notes" 281). Miłosz and Gombrowicz develop a position similar to Nabokov's: Gombrowicz chose to speak about the only thing he really knew well – his own reality, while Czesław Miłosz, believed that an even more difficult task consists in maintaining an imaginary presence in the evolving literary history of one's country of origin and inscribe one's work within this history (Miłosz qtd. in Karpinski 133).

Gombrowicz explicitly articulated the position that was similar to Nabokov's and argued that the writer in exile was to be open to reality, had to avoid viewing emigration as a collectivity, and had to learn how loss could be transformed into gain through a continuous effort. His choice "not to be a statue; not to be a professional mourner; not to

be a grave digger; not to recite; not to repeat oneself; not to exaggerate; not to belittle; not to thunder and roar; not to indulge in witticisms" also irritates the émigré community (Gombrowicz qtd. in Karpinski 134-135). A major responsibility of the émigré writer, he insisted, is to constantly re-evaluate everything, primarily himself. The Gift, a fictional expression of this philosophy of exile, sets itself the same diabolical task: while it conducts a continuous dialogue with evolving Russian literature, each chapter re-evaluates and re-adjusts the narrator's and the reader's positions by rejecting everything that interferes with lucidity of the new vision - former attachments, stylistic penchants, and verbal and ethical automatisms.

Literary Bilingualism as a Special Discursive Practice: Dar (The Gift) and Pale Fire

> How ludicrous these efforts to translate
> Into one's private tongue a public fate!
> Instead of poetry divinely terse,
> Disjointed notes, Insomnia's mean verse!
>
> Nabokov. Pale Fire

Nabokov himself repeatedly noted the contrapuntal disconnection from his linguistic and cultural surroundings: The Gift, a nostalgic tribute to Russian literature, is written and set in Berlin, the first complete vision of Pale Fire set in US and in an imaginary land, appeared to Nabokov on a steamboat sailing from New York to France in 1959 (Nabokov SO 55). It should be noted that while one of the primary lessons of Nabokov's fiction is learning how to establish a unique relationship with both fictional and historical reality, the boundaries of the real are radically different for his new readers. My reading of Nabokov's strategies will inevitably betray a perspective of someone

raised in a different "crystal land" and discovering Nabokov only when "the iron curtain turned out to be a theatre one " (Pale Fire 131). Nabokov's happy, trilingual childhood beautifully evoked in Speak, Memory appears more fantastic to many modern readers, especially those "nurtured on Sholokhov" than peripeteias of the lunatic Zemblan Botkin/Kinbote or non-transparent Cincinnatus.

Nabokov's own reaction to his first Soviet readership[27] was a mixture of delight and incredulity. When the transcripts of the readers' responses were sent to Nabokov, he was astounded at the finesse and originality of the response from one twenty-five year old: "We really did not know that readers in this age bracket, nurtured on Sholohov and his likes, could judge literature from the purely aesthetic point of view" (qtd. in Boyd 524). It was not surprising that similarly to many émigrés, people closed off in their own country, held "the accuracy of the words and the absolute purity of their conjunction" above any explicit ethical message. (Nabokov The Gift 109).

The right to think about butterflies or anything besides the plight of workers is a privilege and an ethical obligation in a culture where, according to Joseph Brodsky, "ethics slip into a dependence on aesthetics" (190). By the same token, Nabokov's new readers may be better served by a few spillages in a futile battle with linguistic determinism than by eulogies or condemnation of existing regimes. Since exile for a writer, according to Joseph Brodsky, is "primarily a linguistic event" (32), it is important to examine what exile meant for Nabokov as a bilingual artist. Contreras notes in "Crisis in Fiction and the Contemporary Novel" that an attempt to find answers in the mechanics of language is one of the most "arduous and tedious" tasks (Contreras 3), but for a writer

[27] Invitation to a Beheading was his first novel to be presented to the Russian reader by Radio Liberty; it was followed by The Defense (see Boyd NRY 524) .

such as Nabokov, there is no shortcut to the glaze of general ideas without first undertaking the Herculean labors of language and composition. In his essay "A Poet and Prose" devoted to Marina Tsvetaeva, Brodsky argues that one of the things determining consciousness, besides being, (a nod to Marx) is language, and for a poet it is "the reflection or continuation of the professional relationship between the poet and her language" (189). Since for a poet semantics and phonetics are often the same, "[t]his identity imparts to consciousness so much acceleration that it carries its possessor beyond the parentheses of any polis a lot sooner and farther than suggested by this or that energetic Plato…Any emotion that accompanies this imaginary or - more frequently – real relocation is edited by that identity" (190). It would be hard to think of any two authors as dissimilar as Tsvetaeva and Nabokov, yet the statement may be equally applied to Nabokov's texts that display a correlation between new forms of consciousness and the language means that are developed to introduce them.

I will first outline the elements of the novels significant to discussion of literary bilingualism and then I will partially use the methodology applied to studying and constructing a monolingual linguistic personality, namely the analysis of the text's lexicon, thesaurus, and its intertextual and intratextual relations. Iurii Levin defines The Gift as a complex model of "synthetic prose" in which the protagonist –narrator is likened to a conductor "of the polyphonic score" (Levin qtd. in Dolinin 125). Although I acknowledge the intentional destabilizing effect of the novel's complex structure, I share Pekka Tammi's and Dolinin's reservations about applicability of the term polyphony.[28]

[28] For more on antipolyphonism in the Gift, see Pekka, Tammi. Problems of Nabokov's Poetics. A Narratological Analysis. Helsinki, 1985. 97-101; Dolinin, Alexander. Istinnaia zhizn' pisatelia Sirina. Saint Petersburg: Academichesky Proekt, 2004.

Moreover, I will further argue that its use in a Bakhtinian sense is also misleading in regard to Nabokov's subsequent works and to other bilingual artists. Their immersion in several linguistic, cultural, and fictional worlds makes the notion of *polyphony* extremely alluring. However, Nabokov assumes tight control over the disparate worlds of his characters and his narrators. In Istinnaia zhizn' pisatelia Sirina, Dolinin suggests that the "conductor" metaphor should be replaced with a more pertinent one, authoritative consciousness of a composer. "[This] consciousness," he writes, "…destroys established hierarchies in order to install a hierarchy of its own" (125). This description does not imply the existence of an immutable, unified self of the bilingual author, but rather points to his recurrent strategy. Needless to say, in each case he employs different means with regard to different languages and audiences.

Nabokov's ninth Russian novel Dar (The Gift) is a generous offering primarily to his future Russian readers. Even after the novel's translation into English in 1952, the novel's popularity could never rival that of Lolita or Invitation to a Beheading. According to Pekka Tammi, although The Gift finally was recognized as one of the major canonical works, it happened to be one of the author's least reviewed and studied novels (82). Nabokov started to plan for The Gift in the winter of 1932-33 and completed the manuscript only in 1938. Nabokov had originally conceived his title as Da (Yes) – an affirmation of love and an allusion to Molly's monologue in the last chapter of Ulysses punctuated by an accelerating series of 'yeses,' and claimed that the major theme of The Gift was poetry and literature itself. Pushkin, "golden reserve of our literature" (84), acts as a guide in the literary peregrinations of the protagonist Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev.

Fyodor's gift writes itself into a new type of a novel through a series of metamorphoses characteristic of Nabokov's beloved butterflies: from the refined but inexperienced poet we see in the first chapter, he becomes a writer of prose in which «мысль и музыка сошлись, как во сне складки жизни» - "thought and music are conjoined as are the folds of life in sleep"(256R /71 E).[29] He is also endowed with another, arguably more important gift – the gift of gratitude – despite the misery and humiliation of exile and the loss of his revered father,[30] Fyodor gradually develops a unique vision of a resplendent world. He is grateful for the isolation that helped strengthen his sensory perception, for his epiphanies, and for the magic combination of circumstances that led to his meeting with Zina – his Muse and lover. After moving into a new room, Godunov-Cherdyntsev composes a poem thanking his land for his exile, in which the word *dar* (gift, gratitude) reverberates again and again:

Благод**ар**ю тебя, отчизна,
за злую даль благод**ар**ю!
Тобою полн, тобой не признан,
я сам с собою говорю.

И в разговоре каждой ночи
сама душа не разберет,
Мое ль безумие бормочет,
твоя ли музыка растет…

Thank you, my land; for your remotest
Most cruel mist my thanks are due.

---

[29] The page numbers refer to the Russian and to the English editions respectively. All the Russian quotes are from Nabokov, Vladimir. Dar. Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 4, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2000. 190-541; all the quotes in English are from Nabokov, Vladimir. The Gift. Trans. Michael Scammell with the collaboration of the author. New York : Vintage Books, 1991.

[30] Even the very first paragraph of the novel parodying Russian classical literary convention of "honest fictionality" – designating location by its first letter or time by the first two or three digits followed by a dreamy ellipsis (192..) - makes an oblique reference to one of the most tragic dates for the author. April 1 192… is the day of Fyodor's move that will change his life, while a less fictional April 1, 1922 is the day of Nabokov's father's burial. Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov was shot in assassination attempt on Pavel Miliukov as he was trying to protect Miliukov. The theme will be poetically transposed into a fantastic assassination plot in Pale Fire.

By you possessed, by you unnoticed,
Unto myself I speak of you[31].

And in these talks between somnambules
My inmost being hardly knows
If it's my demency that rambles
Or your own melody that grows.

What distinguishes the novel from a Künstlerroman is the enactment of each stage of Fyodor's literary development. Chapter one contains the biggest number of poems, most of them are plot-driven and devoted to childhood. However, we first hear Fyodor's poems through the voice of his imaginary reviewer: Alexander Chernyshevsky, one of Fyodor's friends and the father of another poet with a tragic destiny (Yasha), plays a practical joke on April's Fool's day: he calls Fyodor and reads a hoax review to him, which in the course of the reading is supplemented by Fyodor's own critical observations. Then, Nabokov provides a detailed quasi-autobiographical account of Fyodor's 'versificatory illness:' in his youth Fyodor had a predilection for epithets that conveniently filled any gaps, like «таинственный и задумчивый» ("unnumerable ' and intangible") and toyed with 'handy adjectives of the amphibrachic type "печальный, любимый, мятежный» (dejected, enchanted, rebellious) (332 R/162 E).

Fyodor confesses that his early attempts at formal versification were influenced by Balmont and Blok. A little later Fyodor was mesmerized by Andrey Bely's research on 'half stresses, ' he re-read all his tetrameters looking for rectangles and trapeziums that Bely found in great poets, found none of them and admitted that «в продолжении почти года – скверного, грешного года, - я старался писать так, чтобы получилась как можно более сложная и богатая схема» - "for the space of almost a whole year –

[31] As Nocholas Rzhevsky has pointed out, the sense of loss and distance are attenuated in translation: for instance, "cruel distance" becomes "remotest most cruel mist."

an evil and sinful year – I tried to write with the aim of producing the most complicated and rich scud-scheme possible" (332/162). The example he provides is almost impossible to recite:

Задумчиво и безнадежно
Распространяется аромат
И неосуществимо нежно
Уж полуувядает сад…

In miserable meditations,
And aromatically dark,
Full of interconverted patience,
Signed the semidenuded park

…the tongue stumbled but one's honor was saved. (332/163), notes self-deprecating Fyodor.

After abandoning his poems that were «модели [его] будущих романов» - "but the models of [his] future novels," (256R/71E), Fyodor mostly focuses on a projected biography of his entomologist father inspired by Pushkin's Journey to Arzrum. The biography was never completed, but it was later replaced by a novel within a novel, Life of Chernyshevsky (chapter 4), which required a most laborious research on behalf of Fyodor and Nabokov himself. Despite general open-mindedness of émigré circles, the chapter antagonized real critics as much as it did the fictional ones who read it as an unforgivable assault on «одного из чистейших, доблестнейших сынов либеральной России» - "one of the purest and most valorous sons of liberal Russia" (482/319), hence, chapter four was not published until 1952. Chapter five opens with a spate of reviews of Life of Chernyshevsky and reveals that all the previous parts were important exercises that enabled Fyodor to detect the creative impulse behind his destiny to be used for his

new complex novel «с типами, с любовью, с судьбой, с разговорами» - "with 'types,' love, fate, conversations, …descriptions of nature" – The Gift itself (525/349).

Before writing such a novel, Fyodor wants to translate something from an imaginary French sage Delalande «для окончательного порабощения слов» - "in order to reach a final dictatorship over words" (540/376). He is unlikely to write poetry again - as his friend Koncheev rightly notes, «Вы-то, я знаю, давно развратили свою поэзию словами и смыслом, - и вряд ли будете продолжать ею заниматься. Слишком богаты, слишком жадны. Муза прелестна бедностью» - " you, I know, corrupted your poetry long ago with words and meaning – and you will hardly continue writing verse now. You are too rich, too greedy. The Muse's charm lies in her poverty» (515-16/352-53). The structure of the novel is reminiscent of Proust's À la recherche du temps perdu: the finale reveals a compositional trap planted by the narrator: should the book be re-read as the protagonist's major work itself, or as material to be "shuffled, twisted, mixed rechewed and rebelched…so that nothing remains of the autobiography but dust – the kind of dust, of course, which makes the most orange of sky" (376)? Does Fyodor have the supreme authorial control over the entire novel, or is his vision faulty because of his position within the novel?

Irene and Omry Ronen in "Diabolically Evocative: An Inquiry into the Meaning of Metaphor," compared The Gift's structure to a Moebius strip: "the novel being read is at the same time the novel to be written by its protagonist after the narrative's end" (378). However, the narratological puzzles that will become a distinct feature of Nabokov's

English works and that seemed so foreign to many Russian writers and critics,[32] were not entirely without precedent in Russian literature. One of Nabokov's devices used in the novel, "foreshadowing of the not-yet-written-work " can also be observed in Pushkin's Eugene Onegin[33] – one of the central texts for the author's oeuvre (Davydov 494). In fact, Eugene Onegin becomes the meeting point for the two novels: The Gift shows the character's and the novel's continuous movement toward Pushkin, and Pale Fire mirrors Nabokov's controversial translation of Eugene Onegin, dwarfed by twelve hundred pages of commentary.

Anticipating his bliss with Zina and already adumbrating this moment as a memory to be cherished in the future, Godunov-Cherdyntsev ends the book in an Onegin stanza written as if it were a prose passage:

> Прощай же, книга! Для видений – отсрочки смертной тоже нет. С колен поднимется Евгений, но удаляется поэт. И все же слух не может сразу расстаться с музыкой, рассказу дать замереть…судьба сама еще звенит, - и для ума внимательного нет границы – там, где поставил точку я: продленный призрак бытия синеет за чертой страницы, как завтрашние облака, - и не кончается строка (541).
>
> Good-by, my book! Like mortal eyes, imagined ones must close one day. Onegin from his knees will rise – but his creator strolls away. And yet the ear cannot right now part with the music and allow the tale to fade; the chords of fate itself continue to vibrate; and no obstruction for the sage exists where I have put the End: the shadows of my world extend beyond the skyline of the page, blue as tomorrow's morning haze – nor does this terminate the phrase . The End (378).

The final passage becomes a prophetic pronouncement: the gift that sprang from poetry as its source is finally subsumed into a novel. In Russian, the rhyme "границы-страницы» (border-page) underscores that the separation between the beginning and the

[32] For instance, Bunin was infuriated by the novel and in a letter to Aldanov compared Nabokov's "monstrosities" with the moronic babble of Ippolit Kuragin in Tolstoy's War and Peace (Bunin qtd. in Dolinin The Gift 137)

[33] In Eugene Onegin, the poet discerns the shape of his future novel in a "magic crystal" (ch. 8, stanza 50). In the last chapter, Onegin reads the novel projected in ch. 3, stanza 13 (Davydov 494).

end of the book, the author and the reader is illusionary for «ума внимательного» (literally, a diligent mind). This illusionary limit can be extended at any time; the skyline of the page being the only border that Fyodor and certainly Nabokov himself would recognize. The passage acknowledges Fyodor's death as a poet as well as, perhaps, the death of the émigré literature, but his gift reserves itself the right to resurrect and live on beyond the last page.

In Pale Fire, Nabokov will reenact the link between poetry and prose in an entirely different way: through the poem and the commentary. Pale Fire also features an accidental death of the ideal poet, but it is not the poet Shade, who is the carrier of the exilic consciousness, but Charles Kinbote – a zany critic believing himself an exiled king, who will commit suicide as soon as he perpetuated beautiful Zembla in his notes.

Pale Fire's unique form (a foreword, a poem in four cantos followed by a much more extensive commentary and a deceiving index), unreliable narrators, whose number has never been properly established, as well as an overt mockery of literary theories, annotations and American academia in general, should have thwarted the most indefatigable critics, but unlike The Gift, Pale Fire is one of the most studied and annotated books that has sparked endless debates about its genre and its place within modernist or postmodern traditions and has offered endless epistemological possibilities to its re-reader.

Here is a significantly simplified outline: twenty days before his murder, a poet John Shade, an expert on Pope, starts writing an autobiographical poem (and, arguably, an Index) about his family, his daughter Hazel Shade, and possibilities of afterlife. An editor, Charles Kinbote, supplies irrelevant notes to the poem without which, as he states:

> Shade's text simply has no human reality at all since the human reality of such a poem as his (being too skittish and reticent for an autobiographical work), with the omission of many pithy lines carelessly rejected by him, has to depend entirely on the reality of its author and his surroundings, attachments and so forth, a reality that only my notes can provide (29).

Kinbote's presumptuous comments representing "an attempt to sort out those echoes and wavelets of fire, and pale phosphorescent hints" (297) immediately raise our suspicion. Then we realize that Kinbote is not just an academic editor, but an intimate friend of the poet, and coincidentally, the disguised king of Zembla.[34] The commentary part alone suggests at least three synchronized plots, which will converge by the end of the novel: Kinbote's life in a college town in New Wye and his friendship with John Shade, Charles II's escape from Zembla, and Gradus's[35] pursuit of the king. Kinbote's ludicrously tangential remarks may reveal a glaring disparity between the world of Shades's poem and Kinbote's own world, but as Kinbote's story progresses, the strange connection between the two begins to develop. It displays one of Nabokov's key devices: juxtaposition of several languages, discourses, but more importantly, of at least two consciousnesses, real or fantastic, that have to come into contact, and be refracted in each other in order to create a new sense of reality.

Kinbote reveals that in order to transpose his unique vision of Zembla into verse, an unlikely union between the two had to be formed: "surely, it would not be easy to discover in the history of poetry a similar case – that of two men, different in origin, upbringing and thought associations, spiritual intonation and mental mode, one a cosmopolitan scholar, the other a fireside poet, entering into a secret compact of this

[34] Zembla is an imaginary Nordic country reverberating with Nova Zembla mentioned in Pope's "Essay on Man" and evoking Russian 'zemlya' (land) and semblance, resemblance, mirror-land that can, in fact, be dangerously close to one's real country.

[35] Gradus in Russian mean 'degree', hence his aliases Jacque Degré, Jack Degree, etc.

kind" (80). Shade's poem, an imitation of Pope's measure with "glimpses of Wordsworthian pastorals" (MacCarthy 83), would not seem as remarkable in itself if it were not for its role in the entire novel. The book revolves around the shadow of Shakespeare's Timon of Athens disfigured into Zemblan by Kinbote's uncle Conmal and re-translated into English, while Kinbote's commentary emulates Nabokov's own commentary to Eugene Onegin. Such synthesis of several literary traditions performed in a hybrid language that blends real languages with an imaginary Zemblan creates an artistic reality of its own and adds to the reader's detective quest. However, the 'truth' (the killer is a local criminal lunatic Jack Grey, who killed Shade because he had mistaken the poet for judge Goldsworth, and Gradus is a paranoid fabrication of Kinbote) does not bring about the expected resolution.

Peculiarities of Lexicon[36] in Nabokov's Dar (The Gift) and Pale Fire

The two novels differ in structure, and narrative aesthetics, written in Russian and English respectively and probably as dissimilar as Shade and Kinbote, display a certain consistency of the author's idiolect. Karaulov's model implies that individual particularities of the author's idiolect and style can only be effectuated on the cognitive (thesaurus) and pragmatic levels. Following Karakuts-Borodina (18), I consider a study of units of lexicon equally significant, especially for a bilingual writer. Continuous and at times excessive punning in a foreign language is often attributed to the writer's fresh perception of many phonetic and semantic turns that are viewed as pedestrian by most

[36] Most examples will be provided from the Russian Dar and followed by the authorized translation by Scammell-Nabokov.

native speakers. However, even in the writer's first language, there are multiple deviations from the standard usage:

1) There is a certain number of irregularities and nonce-words, but they are few compared to Bend Sinister, Pale Fire or Ada, and are used sparingly.

Many coined epithets are based on similes ending in 'видный, образный, подобный' (like) кончеевовидный (Koncheyevoid), жорж-сандо-царственное (George-Sandesque regality); others tend to literalize visual perception in a mammoth of a word:

«бриллиантоволуннолилитовосизолазоревогрозносапфиристосинелилово». The word was more than halved in translation:

«The illuminated sign of a music hall ran up the steps of vertically placed letters, they went out all together, and the light again scrambled up: what Babylonian world would reach up to the sky? …a compound name for a trillion tints: diamondimlunalilithlilasafieryviolenviolet and so on» (337).

The most interesting ironic nonce noun Ямщикнегонилошадейность is based on a culturally significant allusion (from a popular maudlin song « Ямщик, не гони лошадей»): «от стихов она требовала только ямщикнегонилошадейности»

her taste in poetry was limited to fashionable gypsy lyrics (87).

Pale Fire's English, besides its share of newly coined words (versipel), is peppered with Zemblan, which, in its turn, is a mixture of Slavic and Scandinavian roots (on sagaren werem tremkin stana verbala wod gev ut tri phantana)

Hybrid names, favored by Nabokov in both languages, often betray characters' insensitivity and flawed ideas about art and literature: « 'Vrublyov's frescoes' - an

amusing cross between two Russian painters (Rublyov and Vrubel) […] (51); a writer Shirin who was «blind like Milton, deaf like Beethoven, and blockhead to boot» (315) could be a botched twin of Sirin-Nabokov - due to his speech impediment, he pronounces his own name as Sirin – or, according to Dolinin, a combination of two Russian nationalists Iurii Shrinsky-Shikmatov and the novelist Ivan Shmelev, «who was known as a singer of Russian shir; (boundlessness, open space)» (Dolinin 149).

In Pale Fire, a series of anagrams complicate character development and underscore the presence of several fictitious worlds: assassin Jacob Gradus, (alias Jack Degree, de Grey, d'Argus, Vinogradus, Leningradus), is said to be a descendant of a mirror-maker Sudarg of Bokay; Kinbote can conveniently metamorphose into Botkin,[37]"American scholar of Russian descent…botkin or bodkin, a Danish stiletto" (306); a famous Zemblan actor and patriot Odon has a half-brother Nodo, "a cardsharp and despicable traitor", according to the Index (311).

2) Nabokov is extremely keen on playing with rhythm and sound in both languages,[38] and alliterative sequences are very common in The Gift and in Pale Fire: банальный бес бульварных блаженств - «oh trite demon of cheap thrills « (341); когда дружба была великодушна и влажна – when friendship was magnanimous and moist (210-11).

Pale Fire: the hint of a haze (92), the great mansions of madness (92)

The French sandwich was engaged in an intestinal internecine war with the «French» fries (280).

[37] There is a higher probability that an émigré Russian scholar Vseslav Botkin inverts himself into a king Kinbote (see Nabokov's 1962 diary's note in Boyd NAY 709).

[38] Jane Grayson points out that Nabokov carried over the metrical prose of his Russian writing into English and intensified it with "balanced pairs of words and phrases" or doublets, as Carl Proffer calls them in his study of Lolita (Grayson 208).

Nabokov's revision of Michael Scammel's translation[39] of Dar shows the same tendency: whenever possible, Nabokov opted for keeping alliteration and onomatopoeia or compensating for them by focusing on different consonants:

Vladimir Nabokov, Dar: С такой же солидной серьезностью

Michael Scammel: with equally respectable seriousness

Vladimir Nabokov, The Gift: with equally stolid seriousness

VN, Dar: Резкостью взглядов и развязностью манер…

MS: with the sharpness of his views and the undue familiarity of his manner

VN, The Gift: with the harshness of his views and the brashness of his ways (222).

3) A number of striking images are synesthetic: Многоугольный звук - a polygon of music (358).

«цвет дома …сразу отзывающийся во рту неприятным овсяным вкусом, а то и халвой…» (192) the color of a building…that immediately provoked an unpleasant taste in the mouth, a smack of oatmeal, or even halvah (16).

4) Winding, Proustean sentences in The Gift display an abundance of precise botanical and lepidopterological terms that do not, nonetheless, mask the humorous content. The chapter intended as a sketch for a novel about Fydor's father, provides detailed descriptions of lepidoptera:

> […] мой отец открыл истинную природу роговистого образования, появляющегося под концом брюшка у оплодотворенных самок аполлонов, выяснив, что это супруг, работая парой шпадлевидных отростков, налагает на супругу лепной пояс верности собственной выделки, получающегося другим у каждого вида этого рода, то лодочкой, то улиткой, то – как у редчайшего темно-пепельного orpheus Godunov – наподобие маленькой лиры (295).

[39] Michael Scammell offered his manuscript to Grayson for comparing his version with Nabokov's revised and published version. See Grayson's Nabokov Translated.

> […] my father discovered the true nature of the corneal formation appearing beneath the abdomen in the impregnated females of Parnassians, and explained how her mate, working with a pair of spatulate appendages, places and molds on her a chastity belt of his own manufacture, shaped differently in every species of this genus, being sometimes a little boat, sometimes a helical shell, sometimes – as in the case of the exceptionally rare dark-cinder gray orpheus Godunov – a replica of a tiny lyre (124).

5) Interlingual puns are introduced early in Nabokov's Russian work when they examplify wanderings of a bilingual mind, and they clearly become an integral part of his style in English. In a letter to his mother, Fyodor describes how words grow unfamiliar in a transition from alertness to a lucid dream: «потолок, па-та-лок, pas ta loque, патолог…» - until it turns into something completely unfamiliar (локотоп, покотол) (524). «you know, like taking a simple word, say 'ceiling' and seeing it as 'sealing' or 'sea-ling' until it becomes completely strange and feral, something like 'iceling' or 'inglice'» (361).

The name of the moving company in The Gift is Max Lux. «что это у тебя, сказочный огородник? Мак-с.А то? Лук-с ваша светлость.» (215).

Max Lux. Mac's luck (41).

For the narrator and for the reader, The Gift is, in a sense, an exercise in accurate reading and translation of intimations of the world around. Pale Fire takes the reflection on translatability to the extreme and creates the world of the mind based on mistranslations and slippages. It is not surprising that the novel becomes a riot of interlingual puns: "a proud and happy linguist: je nourris les pauvres cigales – meaning that he fed the poor sea-gulls"(41)…shootka[40] – a little chute" (221), "I like my name:

[40] Both puns are based on mistranslations caused by phonetic proximity between the two words in two languages: *shootka* is a joke, while c*igales* are cicadas, not sea-gulls.

Shade, Ombre, almost "man" in Spanish", zhiletka blade (94). As flawed and strange as this world based on mistranslations can be, it is, nevertheless, real.

6) In The Gift, Nabokov increasingly resorts to transferred epithets (hypallages) that dehumanize people and personify things. This particuliarity of his mature Russian style must have provoked numerous accusations in coldness, callousness, and detachment from human concerns.[41]

Новорожденный револьвер, револьвер вырос (231) – the revolver «which had become by now quite burly and independent» (58).

«опущенные ресницы скромной цены» (193) - «the lowered lashes of modest price, nobility of the discount» (17).

«Запах вяленых, копченых, грошевых душ» (511) – «The smell of dried, smoked, potted souls a penny a piece» (348).

«Солнце лизало меня большим, гладким языком…Как сочинение переводится на экзотическое наречие, я был переведен на солнце» (508). The sun licked me all over with its big, smooth tongue…as a book is translated into an exotic idiom, so was I translated into sun» (345).

People and things are equated in a zeugma: «в прихожей было полно народу и вещей» - the hall was full of people and things» (359).

Pale Fire: He and his briefcase re-offended the sun (280).

[41] See, for instance, comments by Zinaida Shakhovskaya and Georgy Adamovich. Adamovich, Georgy. "O literature v èmigratsii." Sovremennye zapiski. Parizh, 1932, 50, 327-329; Shakhovskaia, Zinaida. V poiskakh Nabokova. Otrazheniya.- Moskva: Kniga, 1991.

Thesaurus[42]

I believe that peculiarities of Nabokov lexicon and thesaurus (cognitive structures) are inseparable. As a result, they convey a very distinct, «un-Russian» point of view. When the local Germans become the butt of Fyodor's scorn, his gaze totally dismembers them. We only see eloquent parts of the body, never a whole person:

> Серые, в наростах и вздутых жилах, старческие ноги, какая-нибудь плоская ступня и янтарная, туземная мозоль, розовое, как свинья пузо, […], глобусы грудей и тяжелые гузна, рыхлые, в голубых подтеках ляжки, гусиная кожа, прыщавые лопатки кривоногих дев, крепкие шеи и ягодицы мускулистых хулиганов, безнадежная, безбожная тупость довольных лиц, возня, гогот, плеск – все это сливалось в афофеоз того славного немецкого добродушия, которое в такой естественной легкостью может в любую минуту обернуться бешеным улюлюканьем (511).
>
> old men's gray legs covered with growths and swollen veins; flat feet; the tawny crust of corns; pink porcine paunches; […] the globes of breasts; voluminous posteriors; flabby thighs blueish varices; gooseflesh; the pimply shoulder blades of bandy-legged girls; the sturdy necks and buttocks of muscular hooligans; the hopeless, godless vacancy of satisfied faces; romps, gaffaws, roisterous splashing – all this formed the apotheosis of that renowned German good-naturedness which can turn so easily at any moment into frenzied hooting (348).

The concept of 'soul,'[43] a prized part of the Russian linguistic personality deserves special attention. In The Gift, the soul can be exteriorized and described in sensory terms. Thus, Germans resting in Grünewalde are reduced to "the smell of dried, smoked, potted souls a penny a piece" («Запах вяленых, копченых, грошевых душ» (511) …The potted souls are contrasted with an animate lake: «но самое озеро […]

[42] The term is quite misleading, but I prefer to keep it as its further elaboration enables me to elucidate Nabokov's position not only in each of his respective languages, but in the literary space he occupies. It may also glean insights into reception of his work.

[43] For cognitive models of soul in Nabokov's Russian works, see Karakuts-Borodina.

держалось с достоинством» - “but the lake […] bore itself with dignity» (348). Nabokov most frequently conjures the soul as a receptacle and as a part of the body that can experience physical sensations:

«душа сонная и зажмуренная, довольная своей клеткой (488) – “soul[…] lay there sleepy eyes shut, content with its cage” (314).

Since such frames tend to play against the cognitive expectations of Russian readers, the dissonance compels them to develop an additional, unique vision of one's life – the only realistic lesson that proved so invaluable to the generation of the Soviet and post-Soviet readers, wary of easy recipes of salvation, «massive friendships, asinine affinities or the spirit of age» (Nabokov The Gift 353). As Brian Boyd writes: “Nabokov’s images leap a gap of surprise, they are meant to look artificial, unnatural, and yet awaken the possibility of a universe somehow coruscating with consciousness in ways we cannot see” (Boyd NRY 296).

When a political change can mean an imposed poetical vision of a megalomaniac, otherwordliness becomes not only a spiritual, but also a very tangible everyday concern: How do I read the rules of a new order? With whom do I ally myself? and What does 'I' mean in the new world? Victor Erofeev argues that by taking humans apart, depriving them of the automatic right to have soul, Nabokov tests people in the most physical sense of the word. Those who fail the test, are relegated to the status of things. Erofeev describes this move as affirming primacy of 'I' over 'we': «Nabokov's metaphysical doubt closed the upper level of the symbolic prose, i.e., not only did it make impossible merging of his 'I' with horizontal 'we,' but it also shut the way to the vertical plane – the possibility of merging with the world soul into a certain mystical 'we'» (Erofeev 16).

Fyodor becomes Nabokov's spokesperson when he attempts to provide a glimpse of this unusual vision: an acute perception of both humans and things that endows objects with consciousness transforms all "the trash of life" into beautiful things. On his way to a language lesson, Fyodor deplores wasting his youth on teaching foreign languages while he should be teaching:

> […] that mysterious and refined thing which he alone - out of ten thousand, […] perhaps even a million men – knew how to teach: for example multi-level thinking: you look at a person and you see him as clearly as if he were fashioned of glass and you were the glass blower, while at the same time without in the least impinging upon that clarity you notice some trifle on the side - such as the similarity of the telephone receiver's shadow to a huge, slightly crushed ant, and (all this simultaneously) the convergence is joined by a third thought – the memory of a sunny evening at a Russian small railway station […]. Or: a piercing pity – for the tin box in a waste patch, for the cigarette card from the series *National Costumes* trampled in the mud, for the poor stray word repeated by the kind-hearted, weak, loving creature who has just been scolded for nothing – for all the trash of life which by means of momentary alchemic distillation – the "royal experiment" – is turned into something valuable and eternal" (176).

It would be presumptuous to claim that these cognitive concepts, unusual for Russian, are purely a result of the author's multilingualism. His trilingual childhood, and translations of other authors certainly inflected Nabokov's cognitive and linguistic experience even in his first literary language, which became an important site of cultural and stylistic innovation. However, Nabokov's project consisted in developing a unique relationship with words and reality regardless of a concrete language. "Bearing an outwardly strong resemblance to the striving for truth, the striving for precision is by nature linguistic; that is, it is rooted in language, has its source in the word, " notes Joseph Brodsky in "A Poet and Prose" (190). For Nabokov, this striving for truth means finding or inventing the best means to inscribe his world within the limits of a given language.

The novel's metacriticism constitutes another level of thesaurus that sheds light on the evolution of Nabokov's style: Koncheev, Fyodor's alter ego, an imaginary ideal poet modeled after Khodasevich, disapproves of the narrator's (Fyodor's) "excessive trust in words," awkwardness in choosing his style when using other sources, somewhat mechanical use of puns as transitions, and naturalizing parody so much that it loses its role and may pass for a genuine thought. Curiously, his observations that can easily be applied to the entire novel also betray what I would call a reverse interference: the fresh and unusual phrase in Russian «слова провозят нужную мысль контрабандой» ("words smuggl[ing] in a necessary thought") evokes in the mind of a bilingual reader a fairly common expression in English «to smuggle something in»:

> У вас случается, что слова провозят нужную мысль контрабандой. Фраза, может быть, и отличная, но все-таки это – контрабанда, - и главное зря, так как законный путь открыт […]. В-пятых, наконец, - вы порой говорите вещи, рассчитанные главным образом на то, чтобы уколоть ваших современников, а ведь вам всякая женщина скажет, что ничто так не теряется, как шпильки, - не говоря уже о том, что малейший поворот моды может изъять их из употребления: подумайте, сколько повыкопано заостренных предметов, точного назначения которых не знает ни один археолог! Настоящему писателю должно наплевать на всех читателей, кроме одного: будущего, - который, в свою очередь, лишь отражение автора во времени (514-15).

> The sentence may be excellent, but still it is smuggling, and moreover gratuitous smuggling, since the lawful road is open. …Fifthly and finally, you sometimes say things chiefly calculated to prick your contemporaries, but any woman will tell you that nothing gets lost so easily as a hairpin – not to speak of the fact that the least swerve of fashion may make pins obsolete: think how many sharp objects have been dug up whose exact use not a single archaeologist can tell! The real writer should ignore all readers but one, that of the future, who in his turn is merely the author reflected in time (351-352).

As if following Koncheev's advice, Nabokov solves these problems in his English novels. Pale Fire's lexicon and thesaurus are even in tighter conjunction with the overall structure of the novel. In Pale Fire, scathing remarks are intended for another kind of

audience. Many parodies are inspired by Nabokov's own experience of teaching literature in American academia:

> of students' papers: […]The author uses the striking image green leaves because green is the symbol of happiness and frustration.' I am also in the habit of lowering a student's mark catastrophically if he uses 'simple' and 'sincere' in a commendatory sense; examples: 'Shelley's style is also very simple and good'; or 'Yeats is always sincere'» (156).

Nabokov, in the guise of Kinbote, continues his habitual attacks on Freudism in his note to line 929:

> […] certain tidbits from a book I had filched from a classroom: a learned book on psychoanalysis, used in American colleges […]: By picking the nose in spite of all commands to the contrary, or when a youth is all the time sticking his finger through his buttonhole…the analytic teacher knows that the appetite of the lustful one knows no limit in his phantasies (Quoted by Prof. C. from Dr. Oskar Pfister, The Psychoanalytical Method, 1917, N.Y., p.79) (271).

In addition, Pale Fire contains a considerable number of self-referential allusions: "It was a year of Tempests: Hurricane Lolita swept from Florida to Maine (679)"; Pnin is promoted to be the Chair of the Russian department, "a regular martinet in regard to his underlings" (happily Prof. Botkin, who taught in another department, was not subordinated to that grotesque "perfectionist" (155).

The staggering number of references as well as the complexity of the narrative structure of both novels may produce an effect of assemblage of parodies designed "to prick the contemporaries" on both sides of the Atlantic, but in both novels there seems to be a controlling consciousness superseding all the narrators, and the presence of this consciousness is perceptible irrespective of the reader's solution to the narrator's problem.

Let us recapitulate various views on the narrator:

1) The most straightforward view: there are two narrators. One of them corresponds to Shade (the poet); the other resembles Kinbote (the commentator).
2) Ingenious suggestions by Brian Boyd[44]: Shade, embodying inventiveness at its best, is the author of both the poem and the commentary. He makes up his own death and inhabits the persona of Kinbote, which allows him to express something he could not express in his own voice. Paranoid Kinbote is too fixated on his obsession to take any interest in a happy, heterosexual man, let alone write a poem requiring a certain degree of mental and verbal discipline. (Nabokov's Pale, 446-447). Later, Boyd comes up with another solution: ghosts of Hazel Shade and John Shade send coded messages and exert pressure on the narrative of the poem and the novel.
3) Dowling in "Who's the Narrator of Nabokov's Pale Fire?" asserts that they are all creations of a narrator resembling Nabokov.
4) Dmitri Nabokov in an Internet discussion wrote that his father "thought the idea that either Shade or Kinbote could have invented the other barely less absurd than the idea that each could have invented the other" (qtd. in Boyd 115).

I am not going to suggest yet another solution to the narrators' problem. Suffice it to say that there is enough evidence for Boyd's and Dowling's explanations, and although Boyd's solutions are infinitely more poetic, brilliantly researched and, perhaps, more Nabokovian in spirit, I am inclined to side with Dowling.

What the inclusion of Shade and Kinbote demonstrates is Nabokov's method of correlating two realities; whether they are fictional or real is of no consequence. If we zoom in on the approach of Gradus, whom Dowling treats as temporary 'death' of poetic

[44] One of the most imaginative and well-informed treatments of the problem is offered by Brian Boyd in Nabokov's Pale Fire: The Magic of Artistic Discovery.

consciousness inhabiting the author at the moment of completion of his work, we can see how the narrator's 'I' clearly distinguishes itself from Shade's and Kinbote's. The answer lies in the same trick Nabokov deployed in The Gift: there is a point where the two worlds converge, and flights of fancy abide by the same rules as the events of the phenomenal world, which are to be pedantically researched and documented. The actual copies of The New York Times dated July 20-21 that Gradus is supposedly reading in Central Park do contain the same facts about Khrushchev's canceling his visit to Scandinavia, a revolt in Iraq, and Queen Elizabeth's visit to Whitehorse that the narrator sees "over the shadow of a padded shoulder:"

> He began with the day's copy of The New York Times. His lips moving like wrestling worms, he read about all kinds of things . . . The United States was about to launch its first atom-driven merchant ship (just to annoy the Ruskers, of course, J.G.) Last night in Newark, an apartment house at 555 South Street was hit by a thunderbolt that smashed a TV set and injured two people watching an actress lost in a violent studio storm (those tormented spirits are terrible! C.X.K. teste J.S.). The Rachel Jewelry Company in Brooklyn advertised in agate type for a jewelry polisher who "must have experience in costume jewelry" (oh, Degre had!). The Helman brothers said they had assisted in the negotiations for the placement of a sizable note: $11,000,000, Decker Glass Manufacturing Company, Inc., note due July 1, 1979, and Gradus, grown young again, reread this twice, with the background gray thought, perhaps, that he would be sixty-four four days after that (no comment). . . . A pro-Red revolt had erupted in Iraq. Asked about the Soviet exhibition at the New York Coliseum, Carl Sandburg, a poet, replied, and I quote, "They make their appeal on the highest of intellectual levels." A hack reviewer of new books for tourists, reviewing his own tour through Norway, said that the fjords were too famous to need (his) description, and that all Scandinavians loved flowers. And at a picnic for international children a Zemblan moppet cried to her Japanese friend: Ufgut, ufgut, velkam ut Semberland!" (Adieu, adieu, till we meet in Zembla) (274-75).

Not only does the narrator playfully allow his different spokesmen comment on the articles of interest to them: "J. G." – Jack Grey or Jacques Gradus on US-Soviet rivalry, "CXK teste J.S" – Charles Xavier Kingbote teste John Shade - on spirits responsible for a thunderbolt, but he finishes this excursus by revealing the source of

these tidbits: “I confess it has been a wonderful game--this looking up in the WUL of various ephemerides over the shadow of a padded shoulder” (275).

Neither Kinbote, who has complained about having no access to the library in the “desolate log cabin where I live like Timon in his cave” (79), nor Shade who was dead by that time, could have written this ‘I.’ Instead, the composer of this game reminds of his own shadow and when asked what he will be doing with himself when [his] “notes and self are petering out” (300), he states his credo: “I shall continue to exist. I may assume other disguises, other forms, but I shall try to exist. I may turn up yet, on another campus, as an old, happy, healthy, heterosexual Russian, a writer in exile, sans fame, sans future, sans audience, sans anything but his art […]. Oh, I may do many things” (301).

This position describes Nabokov’s own choice of “continuing to exist” under any guise, but it becomes ambivalent in Russian and American contexts: such adaptability is extremely unflattering within the paradigm, in which one’s poetic language is inextricably linked to one’s native soil, if not soul. Surprisingly, Nabokov’s celebration of vitality and multiplicity also caused virulent remarks of a New York Times critic George Cloyne, whose criticism curiously echoed the recriminations of the Russian émigrés in the last chapter of The Gift. “It is refreshing, too, that he has made no attempt to repeat any of the patterns that have brought him success in the past. Much of the detail in this book can be paralleled in earlier novels…. But “Pale Fire” sets a course all its own. It is one more proof of Mr. Nabokov’s rare vitality. Unluckily it is not much more than that,” concludes Cloyne in his 1962 review. On the other hand, refusal to die outside one’s country and language can be considered as an act of extraordinary devotion and

honesty toward one's art, language and self if these notions are viewed not as established and static, but as evolving, critically examined, and re-evaluated.

Intertextuality and Intratextuality in The Gift and Pale Fire

The Gift's Dialogue with the Russian Literature

On one hand, as the analysis of Nabokov's lexicon and thesaurus shows, switching to English reinforced some of the already existing peculiarities of his style in Russian, on the other hand, it is impossible to deny that a major novel of this "foreign, cold and the most un-Russian" of the émigré writers, The Gift, is steeped in the history and major concerns of Russian literature. The first paragraph of the novel that introduces a lengthy description of a moving van, «очень длинный и очень желтый, запряженный желтым же трактором с гипертрофией задних колес и более чем откровенной анатомией» - "very long and very yellow hitched to a tractor that was also yellow, with hypertrophied rear wheels and a shamelessly exposed anatomy" looks back at the beginning of Gogol's Dead Souls that opens with a similarly irrelevant discussion of the carriage's wheels (191/3). Furthermore, Fyodor's (and in this case) Nabokov's continuous conversation with Pushkin and Lermontov is impossible to ignore for a Russian reader[45].

[45] See Lermontov's «Blagodarnost'» (*Gratitude*) written in 1840 as a sarcastic response to Krasov's earlier poem "Prayer." For more on Pushkin's subtext see an excellent article by Dolinin «Три заметки о романе Дар»; Davydov, Sergej. "Nabokov and Pushkin." The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov. Ed.Vladimir E. Alexandrov. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995. 482-496; Davydov, Sergej. «Pushkinskie vesy» V. Nabokova» . Iskusstvo Leningrada. 1991, N 6, 39-46; Johnson, D.B. Worlds in Regression.100-106; Karlinsky, Simon. «Vladimir Nabokov's Novels as a Work of Literary Criticism: A Structural Analysis.» Slavic and Eastern European Journal 7.3 (1963): 284-296

The title alone evokes Pushkin's polemical poem written on his twenty--ninth birthday (1828).

Дар напрасный, дар случайный,
Жизнь, зачем ты мне дана?
Иль зачем судьбою тайной
Ты на казнь осуждена?

Gift haphazard, gift unbidden,
Life, why were you lent to me?
Whence this gift, its motives hidden,
That ends in death, by Fate's decree.[46]

The Gift (Dar) and Invitation to a Beheading (Priglashenie na Kazn'), the novel inspired by Nabokov's research on Chernyshevsky, revolve around these questions. Dolinin divides major intertextual references in The Gift into three categories with different structural functions: 1) masterpieces of Russian poetry (Derzhvian, Pushkin, Blok, Gumelev, Khodasevich elucidate major themes; 2) Nineteenth- century Russian prose is used for plotting and character development 3) contemporary literature is often discussed derisively and parodied.

There was a significant split in émigré circles, and attitude to Pushkin came to symbolize one's own position in émigré literature: Was Pushkin an appropriate model for the émigré literature or not? Nabokov was no exception to the Pushkin revival. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Pushkin became a major inspiration for most Silver Age poets (Mandelshtam, Blok, Bely, Akhmatova, Khodasevich (Davydov 482). In 1937, the polemics fell on the centennial of Pushkin's death when many events were devoted to

[46] Translated by Lydia Razran Stone.

Pushkin. Nabokov gave a lecture on Pushkin in Paris "Pouchkin ou le vrai et le vraisemblable," in which he expounded his own aesthetic theory.

Nabokov's vision of life and art as a divine gift with Pushkin as model and a key to surviving exile, set him against the 'anti-cultural' position chosen by influential Paris writers and critics contributing to a journal Chisla (Georgy Adamovich, Georgy Ivanov, Nikolai Otsup, Boris Popplavsky, Iury Terapiano, et al). The Chisla writers maintained that the duty of a writer was to convey the anguish and isolation of the modern man in a world without God, meaning, hope and beauty. In this context, Chisla started a campaign against Pushkin's formal perfection, supposed lack of depth, and frivolity and irony unacceptable to the Russian soul (Poplavsky in Dolinin "The Gift" 143); instead, Lermontov was presented as an exemplary artist in the times of turmoil. Many young émigré intellectuals fell under the influence of eschatological themes dominating Chisla's writing, while such influential writers and thinkers as Khodasevich, Weidle, Fedotov and Nabokov lambasted Chisla's morbidity, "artless and sorrowful" confessions, "human documents" dictated by emotion and despair (Dolinin 142-143).[47]

Although most writers and critics mercilessly derided in The Gift had several prototypes,[48] Nabokov' s scathing parodies were not meant to be in Zina's words, «mass executions of good acquaintances» (364), but rather «a desire to show a certain order of

[47] Another important Pushkinian thematic opposition is between fashionable morbidity of Yasha Chernyshevsky, Lensky-like poet dying in a love triangle, and Fyodor's rejection of such position as a gross misreading of literature's lessons. In Grünewalde, Koncheev makes the parallel with Lensky absolutely obvious: « […] you know, his Olga recently married a furrier and went off to the United States. Not quite the lancer whom Pushkin's Olga married, but still …» (350).

[48] Parodies of antiwestern writing coming from new Soviet and émigré writers: Gorky, Mayakovsky, Severianin; a farcical symbolist drama (a play by Busch in ch. 1), Andrei Bely's "cabbage hexameter" in ch. 3.

literary ideas, typical at a given time, » as the author wrote to Mark Aldanov (Nabokov qtd. in Dolinin "The Gift" 149). However, many of the first readers recognized Chisla's Georgy Adamovich in the novel's critic Mortus.[49] Nabokov's real and fictional parrying with Adamovich might have foreshadowed Nabokov's endless hoaxes based on mistaken identity and intended for imaginary critics.[50]

One Nabokov scholar, Alexandrov, contends that Nabokov's textual patterns and inclusion of fictional texts are not gratuitous, but rather imitate the interaction between man, nature, and otherworld: "the metaliterary is camouflage for and a model of the metaphysical" (Alexandrov "Nature and Artifice" 554). But the metaphysical in Nabokov's world can only be communicated in and through literature. For instance, a fictitious sage Delalande, who will re-appear in Invitation to a Beheading, obliterates the distinction between the graspable, sensory realm of a conscious life and afterlife in his treatise Discours sur les ombres:

> Наиболее доступный для наших домоседных чувств образ будущего постижения окрестности, долженствующей раскрыться нам по распаде тела, это – освобождение духа из глазниц плоти и превращение наше в одно свободное сплошное око, зараз видящее все стороны света, или, иначе говоря: сверхчувственное прозрение мира при нашем внутреннем участии.
>
> For our stay-at-home senses the most accessible image of our future comprehension of those surroundings which are due to be revealed to us with the disintegration of the body is the liberation of the soul from the eye-sockets of the

[49] A linguolepidopterological connection between Mortus and Adamovich (via Dahl's dictionary describing a butterfly Sphinx Caput mortuum – Adamova golova in Russian) was first suggested by John Malmstad. " Iz perepiski V. F. Khodasevicha (1925-1938)." Minuvshee 3 (1987): 262-91. Dolinin writes that in a letter addressed to V. F. Odoevsky, N.F. Pavlov call Vissarion Belinsky « our Mortus» (241).

[50] The *Vasily Shishkov* episode is a perfect example of Nabokov's parrying with Adamovich, whose reviews of Sirin/Nabokov poetry were particularly hostile. Nabokov published a poem in Современные записки (Sovremennye zapiski) signing it as Vasily Shishkov. Adamovich promptly wrote a very favorable review hailing Vasily Shishkov as one of the most important names in contemporary Russian poetry. Less than a month later, Nabokov published a short story "Vasily Shishkov," which featured meetings between Shishkov and an unknown narrator, a writer and a critic. Fictional Shishkov's opinions of the writer's work parody Adamovich's criticism of Nabokov's writing. Adamovich seemed to have guessed the identity of Shishkov, but Nabokov wrote yet another poem under that pseudonym (Grayson 116-18).

> flesh and our transformation into one complete and free eye, which can simultaneously see in all directions, or to put it differently: a supersensory insight into the world accompanied by our inner participation (Nabokov The Gift 322).

In a conversation with Delalande, dying Alexander Chernyshevsky discovers that another realm has always surrounded us, and the belief in ghosts, symbols, quest for God, the traditional parade of the afterlife is cumbersome and disappointingly earthly (322-323). Even when Chernyshevsky believes that he finally reached lucidity before his death and announces: «Какие глупости. Конечно, ничего потом нет. […] Это так же ясно, как то, что идет дождь» - "What nonsense. Of course, there is nothing afterwards. […] it is as clear as the fact that it is raining" (486-87/324), it turns out that he was still not immune to mistakes. Meanwhile, there was no rain; the sky was bright and cloudless, and the tenant from upstairs was watering the flowers on her balcony.

Intertextual incursions in The Gift help define a philosophical position that Nabokov will perpetuate in his subsequent novels: such surprises and mistaken intuitions are inevitable in the world which is intellectually above us all, and, therefore, is never fully intelligible. Only through an incessant attempt to find the best suited form and voice in order to communicate the incommunicable, can one get closer to truth. **"**You can get nearer and nearer, so to speak, to reality; but you can never get near enough because reality is an infinite succession of steps, levels of perception, false bottoms, and hence unquenchable, unattainable," stresses Nabokov (SO 11). By rejecting all the irrelevant literary models that are unable to survive the test of exile, and positioning himself against popular eschatological theories of the time, he seeks to extend "the shadow of [his] world" not only beyond the confines of émigré literature, but also beyond the scope of national literature.

Intertextuality in Pale Fire: Mistakes and Mistranslations

Besides the shadow of Eugene Onegin, there are important English texts and allusions that provide keys to reading Pale Fire: Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and "The Prelude,"[51] Alexander Pope's "Essay on Man" ("see the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing" has the unmistakably vulgar ring of its preposterous age (PF 48), and "The Dunciad;" Jonathan Swift's "Cademus and Vanessa", and John Keats' poem "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer." "The Dunciad," according to John Lyons, elucidates more of Pale Fire's narrative puzzles than the overtly mentioned "Essay on Man." Reportedly, in the summer of 1726 or 1727, after snatching an earlier version of the Dunciad from the fire[52] where Pope had thrown it, Swift, posing as Martinus Scriblerus, supplemented it with an introduction and pseudo- scholarly notes (Lyons 244). "I notice a whiff of Swift in some of my notes," remarks Kinbote in his commentary to line 270. Kinbote cannot locate the lines from Cademus and Vanessa ("when, lo! Vanessa in her bloom Advanced like Atalanta's star") and goes on to comment on the Vanessa butterfly (Red Admirable) whirling around Shade before his death.

Several scholars[53] pursued the curious connection between Shade and Robert Frost. While waiting for his daughter from a fatal blind date, Shade overhears his name

---

[51] For more on Worsworthian allusions, see Meyer, Priscilla. What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988

[52] Stacy Schiff in Véra adds a curious vignette to the muddled history of poetic fires and their reflections in a story of Vera Nabokov, who rescues the manuscript of Lolita that Nabokov tried to burn in a moment of exasperation.

[53] Michael Wood notes a physical resemblance between the two, but Shade, according to him, is a kinder character "and a lot more than a footstep behind him [Frost] as a poet." For more on Frost in Pale Fire, see Abraham P. Socher's article "Shades of Frost: a Hidden Source for Nabokov's Pale Fire."

on TV "as usual just behind (one oozy footstep) Frost"(48), which prompts Kinbote to write an elegant encomium to Frost's "poem that every American boy knows by heart, about the wintry woods, and the dreary dusk" (203). Kinbote does not mention the title of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and does not dare to quote from memory, but he is certain that "with all his excellent gifts, John Shade could never make *his* snowflakes settle that way" (203). Abraham Socher disagrees with Kinbote's (and Wood's) judgment about the metaphysical inferiority of Shade's poem and sets out to prove a much more significant connection. A less known Frost short poem "Of a Winter Evening" published in The Saturday Review of Literature on April 12, 1958 becomes an important clue to some central images linking the worlds of New Wye and Zembla in Pale Fire (glassed-in figures, a bird nearly smashing in the reflection of sky in the window pane). The 'pale fire' of the image taken from the revered American poet grows into a richer, and, according to Socher, more metaphysically and discursively complex form.

If Pushkin is central to The Gift, Shakespeare illuminates the entire creation of Pale Fire. Shakespeare is also the only figure who could vie with Shade and Kinbote for a number of studies proving integrity and 'disintegrity of his plays and his persona. In Nabokov's Pale Fire: the Magic of Artistic Discovery, Brian Boyd expounds an «electrifying» connection between Hamlet and Pale Fire citing the ghost's words in Hamlet («Fare thee well at once! The glow worm shows the matin to be near and `gins to pale his uneffectual fire» 1:87-89) alongside Shade's poem «On Nature of Electricity»:

The dead, the gentle dead–who knows?

In tungsten filaments abide,
And on my bedside table glows
Another man's departed bride.

And maybe Shakespeare floods a whole
Town with innumerable lights…
(Nabokov PF192).

Boyd's associations are Kinbotianly rapturous, but at the same time extremely cogent. His incisive comments establish the creative genealogy of the novel: "The evocation of Shakespeare flooding a whole town with light [suggests] something particularly pervasive and haunting about Shakespeare's creative energy … From start to finish of Pale Fire Shakespeare recurs as an image of stupendous fecundity" (Boyd NP 113).[54] In "Shade and Shape in Pale Fire," Boyd also reminds us of another connection between Pale Fire and Shakespeare's works: most Shakespeare scholars now confirm that some scenes in Timon of Athens are written by Christopher Middleton.

The use of these British and American texts providing important thematic and generic direction to Pale Fire may lead to the conclusion that Nabokov completely restructured his linguistic personality and addressed the text primarily to Anglo-American readership. However, an abundance of allusions to French and German literature as well as to Norse and Icelandic mythology, makes it almost esoteric to the American reader.

Resentful Kinbote who was not invited to Shade's birthday party, chooses to signal it with an allusion to a passage in Proust. He hands the last volume of A la recherche du temps perdu to Sybil Shade after bookmarking the conversation between Mme de Mortemart and Mme de Valcourt (162). Goethe's "Erlkönig," shaping the story

[54] Priscilla Meyer also extensively discusses the role of Shakespeare and Hamlet in Pale Fire situating it in history of the English language. She traces transformations of Old Icelandic tales and Norse sagas in which the legend of Shakespeare was first recorded. Meyer, Priscilla. What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988

of Hazel Shade's death ("who rides so late in the night and the wind"), is another important text central to understanding of the international orientation of the novel. Gerard de Vries in "Nabokov's Pale Fire and the Romantic movement" discusses important references to Goethe, Northern Germanic mythology and poetry and observes that the significance of the Romantic movement for Nabokov consisted in similar supranational literary interactions and "the diminution of linguistic distances in Europe" (de Vries).

As an homage to Shakespeare, Pale Fire unfolds a gamut of tricks based on misrecognition, misreadings, and mistranslations. Kinbote senses the connection of the novel's title with Shakespeare, but fails to locate it. In his commentary, Kinbote provides an alternative reading of lines 39-40 claiming that that's the way they appeared in the earlier draft. When Shade talks about his eyes possessing a photographic memory and taking in all that he would like to reproduce later, he writes: "And while this lasted all I had to do was close my eyes to reproduce the leaves, or indoor scene, or trophies of the eaves". Instead, the draft reads as follows:

> …and home would haste my thieves,
> the sun with stolen ice, the moon with leaves.

Kinbote, puzzled by the seeming irrelevance of the poem's title, interprets this passage as a reference to Shakespeare's Timon of Athens (act iv, scene 3) where Timon talks to the three bandits. Kinbote does not have access to libraries, but he feels compelled to provide a quick citation, which he retranslates from Zemblan into English. The Zemblan version, Kinbote insists, "sufficiently approximates the text, or is at least faithful to its spirit" (80):

> the sun is a thief: she lures the sea
> and robs it. The moon is a thief:
> he steals his silvery light from the sun.

The sea is a thief: it dissolves the moon.

Any creative act illuminated by its predecessors is, in a way, a thievery, but a bad translator steals light and life from the original creation - a crime that Nabokov is unwilling to disregard. The parody, however, is much more didactic than Nabokov is willing to admit; once again it displays Nabokov's method of guiding the reader through the "antithetic inferno […] of round-about-route" (Nabokov Speak, Memory 301). The suspected mistake urges the reader to pick up Timon of Athens[55] and verify the translation. The reader realizes that Conmal's ardent translations from the English were hilarious and grossly misleading. By contrast, for Shade, approximations in poetry and translation will never work: his understanding of the universe is impossible without precision in his art:

> And if my private universe scans right,
> so does the verse of galaxies divine
> Which I suspect is an iambic line.
> I'm reasonably sure that we survive
>
> And that my darling somewhere is alive,
> As I am reasonably sure that I
> Shall wake at six tomorrow, on July
> The twenty-second, nineteen fifty-nine (69).

Ironically, Shade is also wrong (he dies on July 21) unless we assume that he wakes up the next day after his fictional death to resurrect in the commentator.[56]Shade's extraordinary experience of another reality during his cardiac arrest is tarnished by

---

[55] Pale fire is, indeed, mentioned in Timon of Athens, and this is how it sounds:
The sun is a thief, and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
The sea is a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears…(iv:3)

[56] See the aforementioned views on the narrators.

another mistake. His vision included a tall white fountain, and he was thrilled to discover that an account of a Mrs. Z , whose story of being brought back to life after a heart arrest was published in a magazine "The Land Beyond the Veil," also mentioned "a tall white fountain" beyond an orchard. Shade inebriated by this shared 'truth,' gets hold of Mrs' Z's address and drives 300 miles only to discover that there was a misprint in the paper. "Life everlasting - based on misprint!" exclaims Shade realizing that his feeling of shared experience of afterlife was based on a misprinted word in a woman's account (62).

> There is one misprint – not that it matters much;
> *Mountain, not fountain*. The majestic touch (62).

Life is based on misprint, his own death - on semblance and misrecognition, and Kinbote's story shedding light on 'reality' is often the result of mistranslations or misreading. Shade continues:

> But all at once it dawned on me that *this*
> *W*as the real point, the contrapuntal theme;
> Just this: not text, but texture; not the dream
> But topsy-turvical coicidence,
> Not flimsy nonsense, but a web of sense (63).

Shade becomes the spokesperson for Nabokov himself and professes the author's discovery of patterning:

> …coordinating these events and objects with remote events
> And vanished objects. Making ornaments
> Of accidents and possibilities (63).

Intertextual references and allusions in Pale Fire signal Nabokov's skill at inscribing his linguistic personality in a different literary space and adjusting his text to a different imaginary audience, but demonstration of such verbal and cognitive virtuosity does not serve to mask a shallow psychology of a blasé aesthete without a country and

without attachments, but rather show a painstaking search for a new sense of home and identity in the multiplicity of texts. Labyrinths of the narrative, multilingual puns and irony are not entirely causa sui; they mimic splendor and misery of an incessant process of translation and metamorphosis of genres, cultures, and self. In my view, Pale Fire's co-existence of multiple realities, tolerance of otherness, rejection of determinism, delight at infinite comical and insane facets of the world are salient traits of literary bilingualism. Even though both Shade and Kinbote are destroyed, their imaginary worlds live on and are given a chance of re-birth in yet another story, another language, and another body.

Pale Fire exemplifies the process of innovation at the level of character development as well as at the linguistic and compositional level. The collision between the poetic codes of the poet Shade and the commentator Kinbote results in a superceding will of Nabokov-like narrator who introduces and controls a reality of his own. The character of Kinbote provokes a strange feeling of compassion for a creative lunatic who conceives a new world in order to interpret the alien world of New Wye, but becomes too enmeshed in it.

Literary Bilingualism as Translingual Synthesis

Although I agree with Corinne Scheiner's skepticism regarding the existence of 'the unifying core' or transcendental referent underlying production of texts in different languages, I believe that it would also be misleading to consider Nabokov's work as an assemblage of two or three linguistic personalities or rank them as primary or secondary. Elizabeth Beaujour notes that "the later works of writers who have made peace with their bilingualism may […] be permeated by a personal idiolect in which elements from their

various languages appear in a polyglot synthesis" (Beaujour 55). Scheiner opposes Beaujour's view of the Ur-language or a "third language, " emerging from the depth of the writer's linguistic identity and maintains instead that bilingual writers create meaning within each language taking into consideration the cultural specificity of the context and the text's intended reader.

I suggest that in addition to the personal idiolect, the author's individual poetics undergoes cognitive and pragmatic transformations. Nabokov's texts are undoubtedly bicultural, and the analysis of lexicon, thesaurus and pragmatics of his writing points to his profound awareness of the readers. However, my contention is that the linguistic personality that the author cultivates is a special translingual discursive practice that underlies his writing in any language and introduces significant innovations regardless of the language of composition. The multilingual writer and critic George Steiner expresses a similar view when he speaks of at least two hierarchies organizing interlingual contacts in his mind, one of them being responsible for his unique reality:

> One seems to draw on the objective analogies ("cross-echoes) and mnemonically salient contrasts between phonetic units in several languages. The other would appear to be based on a prodigiously tangled and *private network of associations* between *morphemes or semantic units* on the one hand and the *circumstances of my own life* on the other. This second topology operates irrespective of formal linguistic barriers. […] Thus one of the "languages" inside me, probably the richest, is an eclectic cross-weave whose patterns are unique to myself though the fabric is quite palpably drawn from the public means and rule-governed realities of English, French, German, and Italian (Steiner After Babel 292).

This internal topology may be marked by an early or sometimes deliberate interference of another code (multilingual childhood in the case of Nabokov), acquisition of a foreign language, translation activities, and deliberate estrangement techniques in the first language (superimposition of cognitive models originating in thesaurus I and II,

lexical and syntactic hybridization). In a second language, the difference between linguistic and communicative expectations of the potential readership is often brought to the forefront.

Moreover, literary bilingualism is predicated not only on interlingual interaction between several poetic codes, but also on intralingual resonances and continuous self-referencing, which reinforces the lineaments of the newly created world. Following Omry Ronen, I consider an entire ensemble of Nabokov's activities (fiction, translations, and essays) as "a broad linguistic confrontation and an inspired synthesis of several literary traditions in a twin, yet manifestly whole, body of bilingual writing, "which [becomes] the embodiment of a new, interlingual, transnational literature" (Ronen 173).

Apology for Kinbote: Kinbote, c'est moi

> It gives one the sensation of something ludicrous and at the same time stellar, lurking constantly around the corner – and one likes to recall that the difference between the comic side of things, and their cosmic side, depends on one sibilant.
> Nabokov. Nikolai Gogol

The tandem of Shade and Kinbote is a perfect example of how the comic and the cosmic always go together in Nabokov's work. Especially in a situation of exile, fraught with misunderstanding, loss of ground, cosmic aspirations and unavoidable ridicule, the obligation to balance the two becomes nearly incontrovertible. Disregarding this connection and privileging only one of them may result in delusion of grandeur, pathology, or a creative impasse. Thus, Pale Fire produces several scenarios for exiles. The narrator confirms Fyodor's choice of constant innovation and vitality: when asked what he will be doing with himself when [his] "notes and self are petering out," he

announces that he will continue to exist in various forms in his "recovered kingdom" (300-1). Kinbote deals with a different kind of exilic consciousness. He could not make anyone see "the truth of the tragedy" – a tragedy in which [he] had been not a "chance witness" but the protagonist, and the main, if only potential, victim" (PF 299). He cannot accept the poem that deals with something other than his Zembla the Fair or deal with the locals conspiring against him. The crucial distinction between Kinbote and Shade is that Kinbote, doubly exiled in his megalomania, refuses to accept any other reality that does not fit into his story.

Fyodor and Shade make mistakes in reading "ornaments of accidents and possibilities," but they accept them as an indication of the world's superiority and existence of rules other than their own. They are capable of reconciling the existence of their unique, private universe with those of others. Instead of fitting all the facts into a facile explanation, Fyodor accepts all the mistakes and false-starts as keys to reading and writing his life the way he reads and writes his novel; Shade's "web of sense" is woven out of the pain of his private tragedy, out of delightful incongruities, and misunderstandings.

It is easier to conjure up a fantastic, distant land than to develop appreciation for the magic of the imperfect world around you. Here is the crucial distinction between an exile Fyodor who endeavors to critically assess his work and his world, excise all the false voices, and write himself out of exile and Kinbote longing to "sort out those echoes and wavelets of fire, and pale phosphorescent hints" of his Zembla the Fair (297).

However, it is time to make an apology for a Kinbote and millions of other astonishing voyagers who "voyage in the light of a lamp […] without steam and without sails to

brighten the ennui of our prisons" (Baudelaire 95). Without the certainty of existence of another land (whether it is real or imaginary is of little importance), without a (or the) Kinbotean "special streak of magical madness" (296), no hope and no art is possible. Kinbote picks up Don Quixote's armor to make his way into the world.

Nabokov explains that the secret of Don Quixote's phenomenal vitality lies in his "eccentric diffusion:…a literary hero losing gradually contact with the book that bore him; leaving his fatherland, leaving his creator's desk and roaming space after roaming Spain. In result, Don Quixote is greater today that he was in Cervantes's womb…We do not laugh at him any longer. His blazon is pity, his banner is beauty. He stands for everything that is gentle, forlorn, pure, unselfish, and gallant. The parody has become a paragon" (LDQ 11-12). For Nabokov's new Russian readers, riding a Kinbotean hobby-horse and looking for signs and shadows confirming the presence of the otherworld, could be the first necessary step toward transporting themselves.

However, the excessively tight focus on a self-made idea of the world around precludes any human development and communication. Hence, the secret of the perfect symmetry of Pale Fire: despite all its hermeneutic joys, Zemblan, a language of exile, holds less promise for creating another life than English, which, in Beaujour's words, is "infuse[d], but not overwhelm[ed]" by the pressure of polyglotism (55). Zemblan beauty is guided by its own immutable laws that do not accept incursions of other realities, but interaction between the poem and the commentary, between the imaginary and the real never results in any form of totality, *sobornost'*, or a spiritual union. The reader's chance to identify with the narrator is by literally feeling 'beside herself' - learning about one's

own multiplicity, propensity to metamorphosis, and, in a sense, one's vitality. Moreover, not only is it possible to imagine and re-invent oneself, but this fantasy can be acted out.

The novels alluding to one of the central tragic events in Nabokov's life – the murder of his father – transpose the loss into an apprenticeship in happiness and artistic sensitivity (The Gift), and the joy of discovery of "the bewildering bounty of life" (Boyd NP 5). They are not abstruse exercises in sublimation, but an invitation to move "from fantasy to performance" (Seidel 841).

Chapter 2: Imagining Escapes from the Prison-House of Language

Bilingual Writing and the Limits of Language

Laughter and Silence

Fritz Mauthner, whose writing is said to have influenced Beckett's philosophy of language,[57]postulated that "the highest form of a critique of language are laughter and silence" (qtd. in Ben-Zvi 188). Although it is hard to think of two artists more dissimilar[58] than Beckett and Nabokov, both writers practiced this form of critique. Sharing awareness of limitations of language as a means of communication and self-expression, the authors ultimately pursued the same project in different ways: Beckett by rejecting "the stink of artifice" (Mercier et Camier 9) and Nabokov - by celebrating it .

There is a temptation to employ this dichotomy for contrasting the writers' styles: to view Beckett's striving for unwording[59] the world as an attempt to voice the uncommunicable – pain and silence, and to hear Nabokov's laughter at the irony of the world, in which beauty and mystery reign despite all the failures of communication

---

[57] Beckett is said to have read Mauthner's "Critique" to Joyce. For an informative study of Mauthner's Philosophy of Limits of Language and its relation to Beckett, see Ben-Zvi, Linda. "Samuel Beckett, Fritz Mauthner, and the Limits of Language."

[58] Paul West underscore the difference between them and indicates that reading these two radically different authors in conjunction with each other can provide a new vision of their work:"[There] are some writers you have to be alone with, and Beckett is by far the most disquieting of these because he is the complementary opposite to Nabokov who believes in the full pageant and panoply of life and word, a maximalist author if we ever had one after Shakespeare. Beckett is starch, astringent, the hunchback closing in ever more tightly on himself while great bells toll. Nabokov is the magician being suckered by the fake eyes of a certain butterfly because they are beautiful fakes. To read these two in conjunction gives one a pole and an equator…"West, Paul. "Whispering the Turmoil Down."Review of Samuel Beckett: The Complete Short Prose. 1929-1989. Ed. S.E. Gontarski, The Bookpress 6. 4 (May 1996).

[59] Beckett introduces this neologism ("a literature of the unword" [Literatur des Unworts] in his 1937 letter to Alex Kaun (The Letters of Samuel Beckett 518-20).

.

between this world and the other, between the narrators and the characters, and between fiction and reality. Yet, the dichotomy is misleading. Beckett's narrative prose and plays are not only painful and disturbing; they are also incredibly funny. Who else could profess that there is no better way of "magnify[ing] the Almighty than by sniggering with him at his little jokes, particularly the poorer ones" (Happy Days 24) or could conclude that "[n]othing is funnier than unhappiness[…]. Yes, yes, it's the most comical thing in the world" (Krapp's Last Tape 18)? Although Nabokov's writing seeks to exhaust the possibilities of language rather than to silence it, his key characters (Lolita, Lucette, Hazel, Sebastian Knight) do not have voice; they cannot speak for themselves, and depend on the reader's capacity to question the dominant, authoritative voice of the narrator and to free the characters by listening to their voices. In their later works, there is a surprising similarity between Nabokov's and Beckett's fictional cosmology and their visions of two correlated worlds: the distinction between experiences of reality and afterlife becomes barely distinguishable. Nabokov's Anti-Terra is built of literary texts, but it needs the terrible dreams and darkness from hellish (*iz Ada*)[60] Terra to imbue them with sense and to make the parts cohere (Albright 74-5). Likewise, Beckett's bleak vision of regulated afterlife reminiscent of Dante's Inferno and Purgatorio depends on random and unfair rules of "life above in the light" (Beckett How It Is 3).

Writing in two languages can also be treated as a metaphor for living with and reconciling two realities – an atemporal reality of ideas and language and that of a finite human life with its implacable physical and emotional constraints. Stephen Kellman notes that the awareness of incompletes of any language or any mind prompts many

[60] A bilingual pun: "your sister who teper is Ada." Iz ada signifies "from hell" in Russian.

bilingual authors to "offer intimations of what is beyond not just the languages they know but beyond any language that they could ever know" (114). Silence is not an uncommon resort of a bilingual, be it a migrant worker or a mandarin writer, who is constantly plagued by a verbal clamor, conflicting meanings, uncooperative words, and the jealous hold of his competing tongues. Such silence or "polymorphic mutism" of polyglots is as much a result of a losing battle with words that will always sound artificial or baroque, as the consciousness of "an impervious fullness" coming from within (Kristeva "Toccata" 15-16).

What Mauthener seemed to imply, however, was a different kind of silence and laughter. He challenged language to stop representing and wanted it to turn into a pure affect that did not require any mediation. The task is yet to be performed; for now, as long as language is used, it is impossible to resist language games. Instead, the writers under my investigation devise strategies to explode language from within. Albright asserts that Beckett's decision was to develop elaborate methods "for betraying our habit of seeing through the mere verbality of empty breath of air to some tangible reality behind it. Words must be mollified, deadened, made to stop doing tricks, made to be noises, not words; the turd that looks like an apple must be shown to be only a turd" (163). In 1937, Beckett came to see his own language as a veil to be torn apart, and articulated his search for literature of the unword in a letter to Axel Kaun:[61]

> It is hoped that the time will come […] when language is best used when most efficiently abused. Since we cannot dismiss it all at once, at least we do not want to leave anything undone that may contribute to its disrepute. To drill one hole

[61] The letter was originally written in German as a response to Kaun, who had asked Beckett to do some poetry translations. The translator of the letter, Viola Westbrook, comments on the difficulties of interpreting the letter, whish exists only as a corrected draft. In addition, since German was a more 'estranged' language for Beckett than French, it is hard to decide whether some unusual and ambiguous turns are caused by deliberate language play or by interference of English (xliv-xlv).

> after another into it until that which lurks behind, be it something or nothing, starts seeping through. […].Or is literature alone to be left behind on that old, foul road long ago abandoned by music and painting ? Is there something paralyzingly sacred contained within the unnature of the word that does not belong to the elements of the other arts? […]
>
> Is there any reason why that frightfully arbitrary materiality of the word surface should not be dissolved, like, for example, the sound surface, devoured by great black pauses, of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, so that through whole pages we can perceive nothing but a path of sounds suspended in giddy heights, linking unfathomable abysses of silence? (The Letters of Samuel Beckett 518-20).

The goal that he sets for himself is an «assault against words in the name of beauty». Since then, Beckett never abandoned this pursuit and found a way to dissolve the words' surface and to make silence speak – first in French and then, as he had hoped, in his sufficiently estranged English. The desire to make language attain the condition of music was not new. Even before Mallarmé made a strong case for it, Walter Pater asserted that "the constant effort of art [was] to obliterate" the distinction between the matter from the form, a quality characteristic of music (The Renaissance 106).

Literature may aspire to the state of music, but it will never quite become music. All the writers can do in an attempt to directly experience laughter, silence, pain and beauty of humanity is to initiate a new language game. Albright remarks that the travail of capturing the real is "exactly what inspires, gives energy to the imagination in its construction of the fantastic. The best griffins appear for the artist who is trying to draw lions; he who sets out to draw griffins will produce only mangy and tuberous lions" (65). Beckett's and Nabokov's intervention in the texts I am going to examine consists in an ingenious solution of plying language to make it act unlike language: an icon, an image, a math problem, music, and even as a being.

Writing in more than one language can be one way of responding to Wittgenstein's famous dictum "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world"

by shifting those limits (Wittgenstein Tractatus 148-49). John Coetzee suggests that a bilingual literary translator is in a unique position to assess von Humboldt's thesis about the national linguistic community being "a circle from which it is possible to escape only insofar as one steps into the circle of another language" (von Humboldt qtd. in Coetzee Doubling 181). However, as compelling as it is, stepping into the circle of another language, does not fully resolve the philosophical problem of limits unless there is a way of keeping the circles open and ensuring that there is communication between them. The Humboldt - Sapir –Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativism betrays the same tension: if each language is responsible for shaping and representing a particular world view and if knowledge of the world is understood as something other than a sum of disparate world views,[62] cognizing the world becomes impossible.

This chapter will dwell on the writing and reading strategies that Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett devise in order to imagine escapes from the prison-house of any language, to mediate between phenomenological, linguistic, and fictional reality, and to envision a new form of community. Even though the impact of colliding two or more worldviews in an attempt to gain knowledge is significant, it would be preposterous to reduce the authors' existential and literary inquiries to their struggle with the limits of "alien tongues." As we have previously observed, loss of transparency of language for bilinguals and a greater awareness of its incompleteness make them realize that "their

[62] Yuri Lotman in his latest book Культура и взрыв (Culture and Explosion) argues that it is possible to apprehend the "outside world " in language, but it takes at least two languages. "The idea that a single ideal language can constitute the optimal mechanism of denoting reality is an illusion. A minimum working structure requires two different languages and their inability, each of them taken separately, to grasp the outside world. This inability, as it were, is not an imperfection but an essential condition of these languages' very existence; it is precisely this inability that dictates the need for the other (the other individual, the other language, the other culture). […]Their mutual intranslatability (or limited translatability) is what provides an adequate reflection of an extra-linguistic object in the world of languages" (transl. Yakov Klots). It is interesting to note that Lotman, whose works are heavily inflected by structuralism, seems to move away from its tenets in this book.

verbal prowess is woefully inadequate to the task" (Kellman 115). Language may be their only home, consolation, and the best material available for constructing identity, yet it is not their only concern. It is what is "seeping through" the materiality of the word surface that becomes central to the authors' task. Nabokov's Приглашение на казнь/Invitation to a Beheading and Beckett's Comment C'est/How It Is as well as his short prose texts that I will discuss experiment with ways of disrupting this materiality and explore the limits of imagination and mortality.

It is not accidental that Beckett's and Nabokov's careers in fiction coincide with emergence of new significant theories based on language as a model of reality. Frederic Jameson shows that the new models were always polemical and emerged largely as a response to the dominant theoretical discourses at the time. In his book The Prison-House of Language, A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism, Jameson attempts to elucidate the paradoxical relationship between synchronic methods of linguistics and the mode of diachronic thinking defining the realities of time and history. The insistence on language as a measure of all things inevitably becomes a prison-house of theoretical thought. "Perhaps," he writes, "that is, indeed, the ultimate propadeutic value of the linguistic model: to renew our fascination with the seeds of time" (The Prison xi).

I argue that while obsessive attention to workings of language might have temporarily diverted theoretical thought from "the seeds of time," the two approaches have never been irreconcilable in literature. The lives of bilingual writers are particularly marked not only by the co-existence of two linguistic universes, but also by geographical and temporal disruption that doubles their actual living experience as a constant interplay

of 'how it is' and 'how it could have been.' Moreover, the multiplicity of linguistic and fictional identities is still pitted against the boundaries of a finite human life; therefore, bilingual writers are prone to develop a unique relation with temporality in fiction. Nabokov and Beckett's retinue of messengers from other worlds - voices, ghosts, shadows – easily cross the boundaries and strive to communicate between the worlds, but their ephemeral intimations are difficult to understand.

I focus on the texts that question the possibility of representing the world, and show instead how fictional worlds can be constructed. Such poiesis, as well as the union between subject and object, according to Eyal Amiran, is at the heart of the romantic project (5, 8, 67). In order to establish their own relationship with reality and language, Beckett and Nabokov create complex fictional cosmologies and perform an act of translation between the constructed fictional worlds and an elusive phenomenal reality.[63] The elaborate traps that the authors plant for the reader make the study of these cosmologies even more compelling.

Language does not necessarily endow a speaking subject with identity as the narrator of The Unnamable has already demonstrated as he stubbornly kept naming his creations. If search for identity in language and fiction is futile, the process of creating identities that remain solely in the space of fiction, is not. Both Beckett and Nabokov kept developing notions of identity as they are perceived and reflected by others. Beckett had been preoccupied with Berkley's idea of "being as being perceived" throughout his

[63] In numerous interviews and in his Lectures on Literature, Nabokov stressed that he found the use of the word "perplexing." Similarly to Fritz Mauthner, he is skeptical about a possibility of shared vision of reality; there are only subjective realities that differ in degree of knowledge and discernment." To be sure, there is an average reality, perceived by all of us, but that is not true reality, it is only the reality of general ideas, conventional forms of humdrummery, current editorials" (SO 118). For more, see Lectures on Literature, 470-71.

entire career - from trying to envisage Murphy as "a speck in Mr. Endon's unseen" (Murphy 250) to Film, which explicitly tackles the impossibility of non-perception, hence, impossibility of non-being: O (object or Unity-One[64]) is trying to elude the gaze of E (camera-eye), but avoiding self-perception proves impossible.[65] Nabokov also starts developing the theme of identity as it is perceived and reflected by others early in his career. He first introduces it in his novella Soglyadatai (The Eye), in which "poor Smurov only exists as he is reflected in other brains, which in their turn are placed in the same strange, specular predicament as his" (Nabokov The Eye Introduction). In Comment C'est, the identity and self-perception of the protagonists are defined only as encounters - "before Pim, with Pim, after Pim." In Invitation to a Beheading, Cincinnatus's consciousness of gnostical turpitude is projected onto him, and his sentence is based on his being perceived as opaque by others; his liberation, therefore, hinges on the possibility of developing a different self-perception and imagining a new world.

Nabokov endows his best characters with an ability to imagine a unique world, which allows them to escape from the constraints of nightmarish fantasies inflicted on them. When Cincinnatus unwittingly confides in his executioner M. Pierre, he still believes that there is a hope of escaping, and there could be a savior - imagination (Nabokov Invitation 114). Although both authors' worlds are atemporal and undeniably fantastic, I will attempt to demonstrate that their perception of freedom of imagination is historically and culturally contingent. 'Going on' constitutes a distinct part of the authors' and their characters' identity, but while Nabokov's way to continue existing is to free

[64] The original script's title was "The Eye" (Alan Schneider 65) and *O* was to stand for "One" as the sought state of unity between the subject and the object (Gontarski The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Backett's Dramatic Texts 105).

[65] See Harvey, Robert. "Droit de regard droit. *Film* de Samuel Beckett au regard de *Tu m'*" *Étant donné-Marcel Duchamp* 4 (2003): 84-93.

one's mind and to show that metamorphosis is empowering, for Beckett, going on is an obligation, and the movements of imagination oscillating at the limits of life and death are circumscribed by a small edifice of his own making ("Imagination morte imaginez"/ "Imagination Dead Imagine"). Beckett's characters in Comment c'est reveal a strange sense of equality: they may all be figments of the narrator's imagination; all of them can be damned or saved, and there seems to be no difference between external and internal voice, love and possession, attachment to things (a sack) and fellow-creatures:" J'entends sans nier sans croire je ne dis plus qui parle ça ne se dit plus ça doit être sans intérêt […] que les miens mes mots à moi […] c'est la différence grande confusion" - "I hear and don't deny don't believe don't say any more who is speaking that's not said any more it must have ceased to be of interest […] only mine my words alone […] that's the difference great confusion (Beckett Comment 22/How It Is 23). To find a way from the impasse, the speaking subject has to open itself to alterity and to stop recoiling upon its own interminable speech. But admitting the presence of the other or even a voice of the other means that there is a possibility of suffering: loneliness, separation, and physical pain, which resists objectification and language.

I will first introduce the elements of both novels important to my argument, then I will examine effects of language transformed into other sign systems, and finally I will discuss the unique spatial and temporal relations the authors' works establish in order to collapse the distinctions between past and future, the physical and the psychic, and self and the other.

***Invitation to a Beheading*: Double Life of the Writer**

Researching Chernyshevsky's biography for Dar (The Gift), Nabokov suddenly felt a pulsation from another novel and "in one fortnight of wonderful excitement and sustained inspiration," he created Приглашение на казнь (Invitation to a Beheading), his only " poem in prose" (Nabokov qtd. in Dolinin 107) . Invitation's world is one of Nabokov's nonnons, a" nightmarish jumble" that becomes intelligible only when viewed in a special mirror. If The Gift ridiculed Chernyshevsky as a writer and condemned most venomously Chernyshevsky's utilitarian philosophy, Chernyshevsky the man was exonerated in Invitation: Nabokov admired many nobler movements of Chernyshevsky's life and passed them on to Invitation's main character Cincinnatus. There are certain resemblances between Chernyshevsky and Cincinnatus: a farcically unfaithful wife, imprisonment before a public execution (a mock one for Chernyshevsky), but, similarly to The Gift, there is a more significant thematic connection with Pushkin whose poetic voice guides Cincinnatus and helps him to abolish death.[66]

The major part of the novel takes place in a prison-fortress where Cincinnatus "«обвиненный в страшнейшем из преступлений, в гносеологической гнусности, столь редкой и неудобосказуемой, что приходится пользоваться обиняками вроде: непроницаемость, непрозрачность, препона" - "accused of the most terrible of crimes, gnostical turpitude, so rare and so unutterable that it was necessary to use circumlocutions like " impenetrability," "opacity," "occlusion;" awaits his imminent

[66] See Dolinin, Alexander. "Pushkinskie podteksty v romane Nabokova "Priglashenie na kazn'." Dolinin, Alexander. Istinnaia zhizn' pisatelia Sirina. Saint Petersburg: Academichesky Proekt, 2004; Davydov, S. «Nabokov and Pushkin.» Transactions of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in the USA 20 (1987): 190-204; Davydov, Sergej. «Nabokov and Pushkin.» The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov. Ed.Vladimir E. Alexandrov. New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1995. 482-495.

execution (Приглашение/Invitation 87/73[67]). The novel's first sentence immediately establishes a tight connection between the plot, the composition, and the language of the novel: it is a death sentence announced in a whisper. At the very beginning of the novel, the end of the protagonist's life is also presented as the end of the book: «итак – подбираемся к концу. Правая, еще не початая часть развернутого романа, которую мы посреди лакомого чтенья, легонько ощупывали, машинально проверяя, много ли еще…» - "so we are nearing the end. The right-hand, still untasted part of the novel, which during our delectable reading, we would lightly feel, mechanically testing whether there were still plenty left…" (47 /12). Each day spent in prison corresponds to a short chapter, the twentieth day culminating in the beheading,[68] but until the last day Cincinnatus was unaware of the date and the time of his death.

The prisoner is surrounded by puppets with interchangeable, sham identities. Not only did the defense counsel and the prosecutor look very similar («оба крашенные и очень похожие друг на друга (закон требовал, чтобы они были единоутробными братьями, но не всегда можно было подобрать, и тогда гримировались» - "both wearing makeup and looking very much alike (the law required that they be uterine brothers but such were not always available, and then makeup was used)" (95/21), but

---

[67] The page numbers refer to the Russian and to the English editions respectively. All the Russian quotes are from Nabokov, Vladimir. Priglashenie na kazn'. Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 4, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2000. 46-187;. all the quotes in English are from Nabokov, Vladimir. Invitation to a Beaheading. Trans. Dmitry Nabokov in collaboration with the author. New York: Vintage International, 1989

[68] In the Russian text, the interplay between chapters and decapitation remains explicit (glava, obezglavit'), but even in English, as Gennady Barabtarlo points out, "the pun on the Latin for "chapter" (caput) becomes extremely meaningful."Cincinnatus's last days are literally numbered by the chapters' increments, a day *per capita*, and his confinement in the novel ends, when in the final chapter, he climbs the block to be beheaded. The hero and the book are "decapitated" simultaneously" (391).

the jailer Rodion can transform into the prison director Rodrig or the lawyer Roman. Cincinnatus's executioner, Monsieur Pierre, is introduced as another prisoner, a fate-mate, whose abominable circus tricks are supposed to ensure the "atmosphere of warm camaraderie" during the act of execution. Monsieur Pierre is a perfect specimen from Nabokov's gallery of 'poshlyaki' – a smug philistine loving the commonplace and kitsch, and exhibiting « редкое сочетание внешней общительности и внутренней деликатности, разговорчивости и умения молчать» - "a rare combination of outward sociability and inward delicacy, the art of the causerie and the ability to keep silent […]" (95/85).

Yet, Cincinnatus is bound to this theatrical world; his fear and his attachment to his promiscuous wife bestow a sense of life and reality on the characters and the setting: «Цинциннат давал им право на жизнь, содержал их, питал их собой» - "Cincinnatus allowed them the right to exist, supported them, nourished them with himself" (142/156). There is a curious parallel in Russian literary history, which has never been lacking in theatricality: Dostoevsky's mock death sentence by a firing squad devised by Nicolas I in 1849 was followed by a similar mock execution of Chernyshevsky fifteen years later (Boyd NRY 19, 22).[69] The beheading that both did and did not happen is hardly implausible after Dostoevsky's legendary execution, staged and experienced as real.[70] What makes Cincinnatus's anguish so intolerable is the constant postponement of the event and the impossibility of knowing the exact hour of his death, "a great luxury " afforded as a compensation for a death sentence (Nabokov Invitation 16). He had expected the beheading to happen on day eighteen, but after the banquet with the city

[69] It should be noted that both executions were preceded by a long stay in the Peter and Paul Fortress, a famous prison for political prisoners.
[70] See Frank, Joseph. Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859, 49-69.

administration, «все были уставши» - “everybody was tired, ” as Marthe explained, unwittingly revealing the farcical nature of the brutality, and the performance was called off (168/196).

As the novel progresses, one realizes that Cincinnatus’s gift of speech and writing is paralyzed until he develops a double « делающий то, что в данное мгновение хотелось бы сделать, а нельзя» - “doing what we would like to do at that very moment, but cannot” (56/25). When the prison director deems it his duty to announce Cincinnatus’ fate personally, the prisoner first responds: «Любезность. Вы. Очень. - “Kind. You. Very” which is quickly arranged by an additional Cincinnatus into “Вы очень любезны” - “You are very kind” (50/13). Gradually, the distance between the two Cincinnatus’ increases, and while one of them remains confined, the other is free to move, to take walks, and to imagine a free and beautiful world. The final scene becomes an apotheosis of the character’s duality. On the block, « один Цинциннат считал, а другой Цинциннат уже перестал слушать удалявшийся звон ненужного счета – и с не испытанной дотоле ясностью, сперва даже болезненной по внезапности своего наплыва, но потом преисполневшей весельем все его естество, - подумал: Зачем я тут? Отчего так лежу?» - “one Cincinnatus was counting, but the other Cincinnatus had already stopped heeding the sound of the unnecessary count which was fading away in the distance; and, with a clarity he had never experienced before – at first, almost painful, so suddenly it came, but then suffusing him with joy, he reflected: why am I here? Why am I lying like this?” (186/222).

He answered the questions by getting up and observing the disarray around. As Cincinnatus was walking away, everything around was falling apart. A strong wind swept

all the sets away; the transparent spectators were vanishing; the jailors were quickly diminishing, and Cincinnatus headed in the direction « где, судя по голосам, стояли существа, подобные ему“ - where, to judge by the voices, stood beings akin to him' (187/223).

A Margin of Immortality

Cincinnatus's nondefinable crime - Гносеологическая гнусность (gnostical turpitude) – is repulsive semantically, phonologically, and esthetically: it is hard to imagine a more offensive combination of sounds for the Russian ear. It transgresses the accepted boundaries of common sense and sound, but there is nothing common about Cincinnatus: neither his mind that strives toward a free, boundless world, nor his small, thin body is impervious to the rays of other citizens. His desire to name things invisible and non-existent for people around him is contrasted with their refusal to see and marvel at new things since everything in their world had a name and appeared simple and transparent to his fellow-citizens. In order to survive, Cincinnatus has to learn how to disguise his condition of non-transparency.

The novel's setting in an unnamed country often suggestes a vision of the Soviet and the Nazi states. Although at the time of writing Nabokov certainly witnessed the ineluctable workings of both totalitarian regimes, Invitation also foreshadows another kind of cruelty and subjugation of consciousness: the danger of succumbing to a seemingly gentle regime of mental surveillance and conformism. Cincinnatus is invited to a beheading not by a dictatorship, but by a pseudodemocracy, notes Alexander Dolinin (Istinnaia 110). The transparency is achieved because there is nothing left to hide. Undoubtedly, Invitation to a Beheading, probably the most abstract and tightly- knit of

Nabokov's novels, lends itself to multiple interpretations, and sufficient evidence can be found for reading it as a political parable, as a manifestation of Gnosticism (Davydov, Eliade) , or as a "[meta]novel of a failed artist." But choosing any definitive framework is likely to push us back into Cincinnatus's cell. As Leona Toker has indicated, Nabokov deliberately created a high degree of indeterminacy in the novel, which precludes facile interpretations of the text (135-41).

Invitation to a Beheading celebrates loss of transparency of language. While this loss of transparency and of immanent connection of words and things might have caused consternation in Babel, it is salvation for Nabokov as it allows him a much greater control over his words and his worlds. A mirthful creator, he can playfully reattach signs to things at his whim. Although there is enough support for considering primacy of word and art in Nabokov's fiction - D. Barton Johnson aptly calls him an "anagrammist" – "The letters of a word […] are suddenly transposed and "reality" is reordered. The signifier is reshuffled and the signified transmuted" (47), a more important concern for Cincinnatus and perhaps, even for the writer is not language, but a margin of life accorded to him. Cincinnatus makes his creator confront unsettling questions: in the face of death, what is the value of writing and its presumed immortality?

Invitation to a Beheading seems to probe Emerson's dictum "Utterance is place enough," but to confirm the dictum's validity and to express his vision of immortality, Nabokov designs an intricate way of correlating signs from his fictional worlds. When Cincinnatus is reading Quercus, a famous novel –biography of an oak witnessing all the historic events, or "shadows of events" fa(122), he grows weary of the book that matters so little in the face of his own death or the physical death of the novel's author: «На что

мне это далекое, ложное, мертвое, мне, готовящемуся умереть?» - “What matters to me all this, distant, deceitful and dead- I, who am preparing to die?” (121/ 123). He would start imagining the physical death of the Quercus’s young author, which was «единственным тут настоящим, реально несомненным» - “the only real, genuinely unquestionable thing” (121/124).

After a brief conversation with a jailer, desperate Cincinnatus exclaims: «Неужели никто не спасет? - “Will no one save me?” and opens his empty hands in a gesture of desperation (122/124). After repeating the question, he receives a token of immortality from Quercus’s author, a rare moment of the two fictional worlds coming together and communicating with each other: «упал, подпрыгнул и покатился по одеялу сорвавшийся с дремучих теней, разросшихся наверху, крупный, вдвое крупнее, чем в натуре, на славу выкрашенный в блестящий желтоватый цвет, отполированный и плотно, как яйцо, сидевший в своей пробковой чашке бутафорский желудь» - “a large dummy acorn, twice as large as life, splendidly painted a glossy buff, and fitting its cork cup as snugly as an egg” fell from the shadows above (122/126). This offering sends us back to the epigraph of Invitation by an imaginary sage Delalande, who pronounces one’s belief in mortality as delusional as a megalomaniac’s fantasies “comme un fou se croit Dieu, nous nous croyons mortels” (I0). However, Delalande’s identity and his intertextual role in Invitation and in The Gift call his statements on immortality into question.

In his Foreword to the English edition, Nabokov claims that “the only author whom I must gratefully recognize as an influence upon me at the time of writing this book” [was] the melancholy, extravagant, wise, witty, magical, and altogether delightful

Pierre Delalande, whom I invented" (6). Thus, the belief central to Nabokov's cosmology is attributed to a fictional author, who embodies the dream of unity between the creator and his object. This attribution, on the other hand, is a tongue-in-cheek reminder of the status of Nabokov's pronouncements: immortality is inscribed in Nabokov's hierarchy of two fictional worlds, but crossing from one of them to the other is restricted to his literary creations. As P.M. Bitsilli notes, in this context immortality is merely "the endless continuation of what there was here, in this life"(114).

The physical borders of the real, although no less phantasmagorical world, at the time of the publication of the novel were much harder to cross, as the Nabokov family must have witnessed when they were struggling with arcane bureaucracy in order to obtain or renew their passports[71] and eventually to leave Europe. The eerie world of Invitation also evokes the fate of Osip Mandelshtam, Nabokov's schoolmate,[72] who joined a community of great poets after his death in 1938. By contrast, Mandelshtam's poetic immortality did not redeem the poet's physical death in a transit camp; tragic and senseless, his death is not an immolation to art, but a testimony to the impossibility of dismissing terror as somebody's "un-real[73]" fantasy. Beauty and uniqueness survive, escape or metamorphose in Nabokov's works. Nabokov's butterfly is always in flight, as David Bethea points out in his illuminating comparison of Nabokov's and Brodsky's butterflies, while for Brodsky, Mandelshtam's poetic successor, the poignancy of the

[71] Émigré Russians held the passports of a country that no longer existed. As stateless persons, they were issued temporary Nansen passports.

[72] Mandelshtam and Nabokov went to the prestigious Tenishevsky school in Saint-Petersburg, but Mandelshtam was eight years older than Nabokov.

[73] In Bend Sinister, Nabokov refuses to take tyrants seriously. Unable to appreciate unique individual consciousness, Paduk and the like are "un-real" for Nabokov. Discussing types of greatness shortly after his arrival to US, Nabokov contrasted Hitler with Leonardo da Vinci and found that Hitler's power is overestimated: "Take from da Vinci his freedom, his Italy, his sight, and he will still remain great; take from Hitler his cannon, and he will be nothing more than the author of a rabid brochure, a mere nonentity" (qtd. in Boyd NAY 99).

butterfly's beauty is in its mortality. Nabokov might be the last major author of his generation sharing the symbolist belief in art transcending death, but as he lets his best characters take wing, he never forgets that their liberation is a work of artifice.

Topography of Comment C'est/How It Is

Coetzee in 1971 essay "Nabokov's Pale Fire and the Primacy of Art" contrasts Nabokov's belief in redemptive possibilities of art with Beckett's denial of primacy of art. Beckett's famous quote " to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail" (Disjecta 145) is often construed as an indication that his art itself is a demonstration of failure and disintegration. On the contrary, Beckett's corpus of work suggests that murmuring about life never comes to an end even when the speaking subject disintegrates ("décomposer, c'est vivre aussi," reveals Molloy, "..c'est seulement depuis que je ne vis plus que je pense à ces choses-là et autres" (Molloy 36) or becomes immobile, replaceable… and , consequently life can be viewed as a "process that cannot end, that can never reach nothing (Amiran 5).

In 1956, Beckett was reported to have said that everything he wrote in French was reiterating the same point time and again. "In the last book – 'L'Innomable' – there's complete disintegration. No 'I,' no 'have,' no 'being.'…The very last thing I wrote - "Textes pour rien" – was an attempt to get out of the attitude of disintegration, but it failed" (Shenker 1,3). Writing himself out of the impasse of The Unnamable turned out to be a grueling task, and the new text imposed nearly impossible demands for sustained concentration and seclusion. An excerpt from Comment c'est printed separately as L'Image in 1959, preceded the publication of the whole novel (1961). Beckett devoted

himself exclusively to Comment c'est for more than eighteen months (Knowlson 413). Its self-translation that Beckett characterized in a letter to John Calder, "at the best, a most lamentable à peu près" (qtd. in Knowlson 442) became even a more painstaking task – once again it took more than a year to write and eight versions to choose from until, in 1964, it was published in English as How It Is.

Most critics agree that Comment'c'est marked the beginning of a new cycle in Beckett's work, an "atom-age prose, " as Kenner put it. After pursuing the task of reaching the end of the word and the world, exhausting "I" in the trilogy with a complete disintegration of cause and effect, Comment c'est announces a new order, insists on beginnings, and marks a transition from the first-person to third-person distancing of later works (Amiran 16). Judith Dearlove considers this shift as an acknowledgement of the artificiality of language without "lamenting its dissociation from material reality" (Accommodating the Chaos 87).

If The Unnamable seems to have exhausted all the means of "put[ing] an end to speech" (The Unnamable 15), there still remain characters and voices that keep spinning stories, and there is some room for humor: "this story is no good, I am beginning almost to believe it" (58). In no text before Comment c'est had Beckett radicalized his treatment of language to the same extent, getting closer to fulfillment of his ambition of "drill[ing] holes" in the surface of the language. Edouard O'Reilly describes Comment c'est as "a new way of writing narrative" using rhythmically organized fragments instead of sentences as basic units (Introduction x). Insisting on the fact that the work's stylistic innovations go against the French stylistic tradition while its twin, How It Is, can find its

predecessors in English, O'Reilly claims that Comment C'est "could probably only have been written by someone for whom French was a second language" (ix).

I second this observation - the unusual syntax of Comment c'est, or rather, disintegration of syntax, is more pronounced than that of How It Is; it also must have been easier for Beckett to start his assault against words in French, thus defying the conventional idea of *mastering* a foreign language. However, it should be remembered that by the end of the 1950s, French could no longer afford the luxury of writing "without style" for Beckett: he had been thoroughly immersed in its most formal and informal registers due to his combination of literary activities and odd jobs performed during the war, and if French was, perhaps, less poetically and emotionally allusive than English, it was, nonetheless, extremely loaded with its own cultural and poetic references. On the other hand, by the time of Worstward Ho, Beckett will achieve the same effect in English by consciously estranging his first language. The order of Beckett's language acquisition as well as his sensitivity to language and musicality play a significant role in evolution of his work, but Beckett's literary bilingualism is a complex phenomenon subtly permeating his choices of distancing strategies in both languages; therefore, it is reductive to explain his syntactic or semantic disruptions merely by his position vis-à-vis the French language.

Beckett's unique consistent doubling of his work – his self-translations at that time, unlike Nabokov's, are produced almost immediately after composing his work in French or in English - complicates the relationship between the original and translation even further since the presence of both texts modifies their respective reading. Although chronologically, Comment c'est appeared first, its primacy over How It Is can be

disputed, and the choice of the original, unless it is determined solely by convenience, already imposes a certain reading. For instance, Yves Thomas's analysis of translation[74] of the novel demonstrates that the choice of meliorative epithets (sedentary for immobile and weak for impuissant), makes the English text accentuate the physical limitations rather than a general moral impasse, which is more apparent in the French (141-42). Although rhythmic and stylistic innovations are more apparent in Comment c'est, I chose to quote from both versions to emphasize the dual nature of the work. The juxtaposition of the French and the English versions also make the procession toward or away from Pim appear as a meta-commentary on the nature of translation and self-translation as both a desirable encounter and a torture. Lori Chamberlain proposes that "the sadomasochism implied in the relationship between narrator and voice […], or between the narrator and Pim […] also characterize the relationship an original and a translated text" (19).

Despite the highly unusual type of narrative and its musicality, more characteristic of poetry, the work can still be presented as a novel driven by an encounter between the characters. The first fragment announces the intention of telling a story in three parts with a beginning, a middle, and an end, the way the narrator hears it, but the narrator emphatically denies authority for the story claiming that his narrative is merely an imperfect retelling, quoting of the story as he hears it: "Comment c'était je cite avant Pim avec Pim après Pim comment c'est trois parties je le dis comme je l'entends" - "how it was I quote before Pim with Pim after Pim how it is three parts I say it as I hear it

[74] Also see Hugh Kenner's comparative study of Comment c'est. "Beckett Translating Beckett: Comment c'est." Delos, A Journal of Translation 5 (1970): 194-211

(Beckett Comment/ How 2/3[75]). Like in Invitation, there is an intuition of a life in the light ("la vie l'autre dans la lumière"), but the fragments of this life are only imperfectly captured by a man crawling in the mud and in the dark.

The narrator seems to have four eyes or two different ways of seeing ("je me vois à plat ventre ferme les yeux pas les bleus les autres derrière" – "I see me on my face close my eyes not the blue the others at the back"(4/5), and develops a relationship with his sole possession, his sack:[76] « le sac encore d'autres rapports je le prends dans mes bras lui parle y fourre ma tête […] m'en détourne avec humeur m'y presse de nouveau lui dis toi toi » - « the sack again other connexions I take it in my arms talk to it put my head in it […] turn my back on it, turn to it again clasp it to me again say to it thou thou » (16/17). The life journey is impossible without the sack; it becomes a marker of motion and the invariant, if not the raison d'être, of human interaction:"[…]Pim est parti sans sac il m'a laissé son sac j'ai donc laissé mon sac à Bem je laisserai mon sac à Bom je quitterai Bom sans sac j'ai quitté Bem sans sac pour aller vers Pim c'est le sac" – « Pim left me without his sack he left his sack with me I left my sack with Bem I'll leave my sack with Bom I left Bem without my sack to go towards Pim it's the sack » (140/141).

Objects, usually used as a currency for human interaction in Comment c'est/How It Is, acquire a greater significance and operate, according to Dearlove "on a material level (sack as wet jute sack [..]), on a referential level (sack as penitential shirt […]), as

[75] All the quotes are from the bilingual critical-genetic edition of Comment c'est/How It Is. Beckett, Samuel. Comment c'est How It Is and/et L'Image. Ed. Edouard O'Reilly. New York& London: Routledge, 2001.

[76] The sack already appears in Mercier et Camier. Germaine Brée indicates that the source of the image is probably a reference to Rabelais: "You say in your world that 'sac' is a word common to all languages and naturally and rightly understandable to all nations, for according to Aesopus all humans are born, a sack around the neck, puny by nature, and perpetually begging one from another" (Rabelais qtd. in Brée 567)

container of the world's howls and laughter (…), on a symbolic level (sack as lover […], as body […]), and on metaphysical and mythic levels" (Dearlove "The Voice"). Tins of sardines, which are counted and thrown away, are not means of nourishment, but rather a method of calculating the approaching end.

The narrator hears an internal voice narrating his life, but his own panting muffles the voice. To hear the voice, the panting has to stop, but this cessation will also mean death: "[...] quand ça cesse de haleter pour en finir avec cette voix autant dire cette vie" - « […] when the panting stops and this voice to have done with this voice namely this life» (188/189). This recounting of events imperfectly captured and retold cannot help evoking the foundational text of Western Literature - The New Testament, but the divine source and the narrator are hardly distinguishable in Beckett's text. If Murphy proclaimed more than twenty years earlier "In the beginning was the pun. And so on," the pun on incessant beginnings in Comment c'est - comment c'est (how it is) is indistinguishable from the beginning of speaking (commencer) – emphasizes the circularity of the narrative and renders the question of the source of the voice irrelevant (Beckett Murphy 65). In How It Is, the pun is lost, but the never-ending murmur remains. Beckett himself described his new work to Donald McWhinnie as

> the fragmentary recollection of an extraneous voice once heard "quaqua on all sides." In the last pages he is obliged to take the onus of it on himself and of the lamentable tale of things it tells. The noise of his panting fills his ears and it is only when this abates that he can catch and murmur forth a fragment of what is being stated within. The work is in three parts, the first a solitary journey in the dark and mud terminating with discovery of a similar creature known as Pim, the second life with Pim both motionless in the dark and mud terminating with departure of Pim, the third solitude motionless in the dark and mud. It is in the third part that occur[s] the so-called voice "quaqua," its interiorisation and murmuring forth when the panting stops. That is to say the "I" is from the outset in the third part and the first and second, though stated as heard in the present, already over (qtd. in Knowlson 413).

After the trilogy's (Molloy, Malone meurt, L'Innomable) obsessive search for the sense of self is no longer of importance: the problem of who is 'I' and who is speaking becomes irrelevant (Abbott 39). Knowledge of the self for the narrator in Comment c'est/How It is can be achieved through generalization, stripping to the core, to the lowest common denominator and transposing into another being - Pim: "pas plus que moi à l'en croire ou alors mon idée il n'avait pas de nom c'est donc moi qui le lui ai donné Pim pour plus de commodité plus d'aisance ça repart au passé […] le pli pris je lui intime que moi aussi Pim je m'appelle Pim" - "no more than I by his own account or my imagination he had no name any more than I so I gave him one the name Pim for more commodity more convenience it's off again in the past […] when this has sunk in I let him know that I too Pim my name Pim (74/75). The additions in How It Is ("any more than I," "the name Pim") elucidate the movements of Comment c'est; if read together, How It Is, at times, seems to provide a helpful commentary on the French text.

While this work, like most Beckett's texts, is not concerned with bilingualism directly, the relationship between the narrator and the characters and their attempts to define their own voice by torturing the other into speech, resemble the bilingual's search for the location of her or his own voice, which may sound like the voice of the other or one's own voice reverberated in time. Rimbaud's "je est un autre" is pushed to its limit; identity in Comment c'est is divested from any characteristic details, and the alternation of roles is inseparable from bodily unity: "et qu'ainsi reliés directement les uns aux autres chacun d'entre nous est en même temps Bom et Pim bourreau victime pion cancre demandeur défendeur muet et théâtre d'une parole retrouvée dans le noir la boue là rien à corriger" – "and that linked this bodily together each one of us is at the same time Bom

and Pim tormentor and tormented pedant and dunce wooer and wooed speechless and readdlicted with speech in the dark the mud nothing to emend there" (184/185).

The tripartite structure of Comment c'est brings to mind Dante's Divine Comedy, but the topography of the three parts of the novel is nearly identical, and instead of love that would help ascend to heaven, there are good moments and a hope of paradise experienced as events happening between sessions of sleep: "paradis d'avant l'espoir je sors du sommeil et y retourne entre les deux il y a tout à faire à supporter à rater à bâcler à mener à bonne fin avant que la boue se rouvre" - « paradise before the hoping from sleep I come to sleep return between the two there is all all the doing suffering failing bungling achieving until the mud yawns again »(24/25). Interruption of endless sleep seems to mark every part, and awakening counts as a good moment, perhaps, an experience of paradise, which, however, includes "suffering failing bungling achieving" (25). This vision introduces an entirely different idea of an imaginary world.

The constant pressure of the otherworld, be it the world of the mud, a dark, oppressive world devoid of pity, an imaginary land conjured up by a deranged mind, or a transparent, beautiful spiritual realm, is crucial to Beckett's and Nabokov's art, and its role in the novels in question deserves special attention. An examination of the complex interaction between the two worlds in the novels provides important clues to the authors' striving to correlate the comic and the cosmic in the imagined worlds of their own.

Fictional Cosmology in Invitation to a Beheading and Comment c'est as a Space of Translation

Neoplatonism in Nabokov's and Beckett's Work

Nabokov's repeated twinning of fictional worlds and characters, epiphanies experienced by his favorite characters (Fyodor in The Gift, Krug in Bend Sinister, Shade in Pale Fire), as well as his elusive comments on the nature of his beliefs ("'I know more than I can express in words, and the little I can express would not have been expressed, had I not known more") has spawned serious studies of his metaphysics and neo-platonic sensibilities. Beckett's landscapes and voyages of the mind, his interest in how many particulars can constitute One, in particular in The Unnamable where ("one alone turned towards the all-impotent, all-nescient that haunts him, then others; "The one… crouches in their midst who see themselves in him") also caused scholars to examine Beckett's relation to neoplatonism (Amiran 346-7). Amiran discusses search for One, Unity of subject and object, as one of the key elements in Beckett's metaphysical narrative, and Comment c'est exemplifies this search.

The procession of life in the novel features a succession of roles of the tormentor and the victim (bourreau-victime) moving eastward: when a victim leaves a tormentor, he becomes a traveler while the tormentor becomes a victim. When the traveler meets another victim, he turns into a tormentor, but despite the most intricate quasi-mathematical order of their exchange, it is never clear if these encounters of the travelers are real, or if there is always one subject involved, " as one plodding twain" (Beckett Worstward Ho 20). Even though neoplatonic beliefs seem to inform both writers' work, they are manifested in novel ways.

Nabokov's works display a belief in the realm of transcendent beauty and heightened consciousness that constitutes superior reality, while his characters are caught up in a fictional, artificial world that only the privileged few can peel off. The sustained dichotomy between the two distinct worlds in Invitation - the prison of *mym* (here), "тупое «тут», подпертое и запертое четою «твердо», темная тюрьма» («the horrible 'here,' the dark dungeon, in which a relentlessly howling heart is incarcerated" and "alive….captivatingly majestic, free and ethereal" *там* (there)) is often regarded as one of the examples (101/92). Weary of the farcical world of the fortress, Cincinnatus exclaims: «Он есть, мой сонный мир, его не может не быть, ибо должен же существовать образец, если существует корявая копия» - "It exists, my dream world, it must exist, since, surely there must be an original of the clumsy copy" (101/93). Davydov shows that Cincinnatus' imprisonment in a fortress recreates a Gnostic topoi and echoes one of the central gnostic ideas of soul trapped in the prison of a body (112-114). The destruction of the physical world after the execution illustrates another Gnostic belief: the return of the spiritual essences to the divine source results in the destruction of the material cosmos (Davydov qtd. in Alexandrov 85).

Many intrusions of the otherworld in Nabokov's works can be seen as pranks of a bored creator: there is a different logic underlying the characters' reality; therefore, these intimations are often misread or misinterpreted. The combination of irony and faith is certainly not without precedent. It can be assumed that Nabokov draws on his immediate poetic predecessors - Symbolists such as Blok[77] and Bely, Baudelaire and Mallarmé, and the philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (7).

[77] Alexandre Dolinin connects the leitmotif of dark, imprisoned "here" and luminous "there" in Invitation to a Beheading to similar oppositions in Blok's poems «Сны раздумий небывалых,» «Влюбленность,»

However, Nabokov's fictional worlds do not necessarily reflect his own cosmological views. Cincinnatus is a victim caught in somebody else's fantasy, a world of *Нетки* (*Nonnons),* strangely shaped objects epitomizing the distorted nature of that universe. They come with completely distorted mirrors, and when reflected in the mirrors, the monstrous objects would acquire perfect sense and shape: «можно было - на заказ - даже собственный портрет, то есть вам давали какую-то кошмарную кашу, а это и были вы, но ключ от вас был только у зеркала» - "you could have your own portrait custom made, that is, you received some nightmarish jumble, and this thing was you, and the only key to you was held by the mirror" (129/136). Imaginary worlds of Nabokov's characters do not always lead to salvation; in fact, if they lose connection with reality, they may result in grotesque cruelty, tragedy, or farce (Luzhin, Kinbote, Humbert Humbert). Reality in this case should be understood as a fictional reality designed by Nabokov as distinct from fantasies of his imperfect narrators. In the theatrical world of Invitation to a Beheading, there are obvious flaws in the script: interchangeability of characters, disruptions in time, lack of cohesion. Even Cincinnatus, mortified with fear, cannot help noticing it and points out at incongruous details in his mother's makeup and clothes: «И почему у вас макинтош мокрый, а башмачки сухие – ведь это небрежность. Передайте бутафору» - "why is your raincoat wet when your shoes are dry – see, that's careless. Tell the prop man for me" (126/132).

D. Barton Johnson rightly describes Nabokov's cosmology as a very sophisticated phenomenon. "His novels […] often contain two fictional worlds," he writes, "one

---

«Там неба осветленный рай.» He also suggests that the finale of the novel with its dismantling of reality and disappearance of fake characters evokes Blok's «Балаганчик» («The Puppet Show») in which Pierrot remains alone on the empty stage (Istinnaia 332).

primary and one secondary. Although the two worlds are separated by some fundamental boundary, usually death or insanity, they interact in mysterious ways" (Johnson 156). The boundaries between the two fictional worlds are porous, and Nabokov's characters have to find ways of repeatedly crossing them. The only characters moving between the worlds with enviable ease are ghosts,[78] appearing more frequently in Nabokov's later works and exerting pressure on the narrative.

As Stephen Blackwell in "Reading and Rupture in Nabokov's Invitation to a Beheading," suggests the otherworld (*potustoronnost')* is not immutable, it depends on where one draws a boundary and how the transcendent realm is defined (39). If we are to treat the otherworld not only as a transcendent realm of the spiritual, but as a space where light and obscurity, language and matter, and mind and body constantly come into contact, we can observe that these traverses beyond language are activated by strategies that replicate linguistic operations: reading and interpreting signs of fate and verbal icons in earlier works (Defense, The Gift, Invitation to a Beheading) and constant switches to another language as signals of looking beyond the border in Pale Fire and especially in Ada, which features the most explicit presentation of two worlds. The events of the novel take place on Anti-Terra (Demonia), but awareness of Terra, its distorted double, makes one of its protagonists devote his lifetime to examination of its influence.

In Beckett's Comment c'est, similarly to Invitation, two worlds are constantly evoked: one - "la vie l'autre dans la lumière" (above in the light) is constantly shedding light on the life in the mud, a life ill-said, ill-heard, ill-recaptured (2). However, this vision is hardly an expression of Gnostic ideas. To the life above belongs all memory; to

[78] See W.W. Rowe's Nabokov's Spectral Dimension, Ann Arbor, 1981 and Brian Boyd's Nabokov's Pale Fire: The Magic of Artistic Discovery. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001.

the life in the mud- justice, perfect rules, and imagination: "fantasie on me donne une fantasie" - " a fancy I am given a fancy"(20). Besides, life in the light is less fair than life in the mud with Pim. Pim dreams up a possibility of yet another world in which there is no physical contact, no pain, and no abandonment:

> et si l'on peut encore a cette heure tardive concevoir d'autres mondes aussi justes que le nôtre mais moins exquisement organisés […] assez miséricordieux pour arbiter de tels ébats où personne n'abandonne jamais personne et personne n'attend jamais personne et jamais deux corps ne se touchent" (188).
>
> And if it I still possible at this late hour to conceive of other worlds as just as ours but less exquisitely organized […] merciful enough to shelter such frolics where no one ever abandons anyone and no one ever waits for anyone and never two bodies touch (189).

Down in the mud, there is a sense of justice: tormentors are still, and the victims are allowed motion: "si l'on veut bien considérer que si en tant que bourreaux notre intérêt est de rester tranquilles en tant que victimes il nous engage à partir […]car nous l'avons vu du temps des voyages et abandons et cela est même frappant quand on y pense seules voyageaient les victimes" - "if it will kindly be considered that while it is in our interest as tormentors to remain where we are as victims our urge is to move on […] for as we have seen in the days that word again f journeys and abandons a most remarkable thing when you think of it only the victims journeyed" (186/187). The narrator of Comment c'est is mired in eternity, the rules of which resemble the rules of human life, and he longs for images from "above," but life in the light is no more and no less than finite human existence. Raymond Federman contends that "this novel is not a projection of reality, but an experiment in willful artistic failure: the rejection of reality….Comment c'est is a world of abstractions and illusions which poses as fiction, just as conventional fiction pretends to pass for reality" ("How It Is with Beckett's Fiction" 461).

If the only way to ensure one's presence and livelihood is to keep spinning stories, Comment c'est is a glimpse into how these stories originate. Since language has room only when panting stops, panting, the real internal experience of suffering cannot be verbalized. Like Pim, words and stories are there just to keep company, to ensure the narrator's being. "[L]es mots sont là quelque part qu'avec quelqu'un pour me tenir compagnie j'aurais été un autre homme plus complet," - "I say as I hear it that with someone to keep me company I would have been a different man more universal," the narrator exclaims after driving the can-opener into Pim's buttocks as part of his language lesson(84/85). Imagination becomes a way of spending time and creating self and company, but it does not allow to break free from the images from above like an image of the narrator with his mother, his first love, or an attempted suicide of Pam Prim.

To paraphrase Blanchot, today's writer may easily mistake the descent into the underworld with a stroll in the street (Blanchot 366). This is not to say that everyday life now is more infernal than ever, but representing the stroll in its entirety is as onerous as representing the underworld. There is a certain symmetry between the two worlds: both contain a mixture of horror, prophetic visions, and boredom, which can be found here and now, in the same boundless world where the narrator resides : "c'est le même royaume que toujours que tantôt et toujours je n'en suis jamais sorti il est sans confins" – "it's the same kingdom as before a moment before the same it always was I have never left it it is boundless" (54/55). When the narrator realizes he can say something to himself to provide some sort of consolation, his choice, something in between joy and sorrow "divided by two," is quite limited. He compares this lukewarm state of being to "le vestibule" in the French version. However, a curious discrepancy between the English

and the French texts results in likening "le vestibule" (hallway) to a more explicit "outer hell" in English (52).

The boundary between the imaginary and the real is blurred; and pain is the only constant in both worlds: "la part d'invention énorme assurément une part énorme une chose qu'on ignore la menace le cul à sang les nerfs à vif on invente mais comment savoir imaginaire réel on ne peut pas on ne dit pas quelle importance c'est important…" - "the proportion vast assuredly vast proportion a thing you don't know the threat the bleeding arse the cracking nerves you invent but real or imaginary no knowing it 's impossible it's not said it doesn't matter it does…(92/93). What I find more important is the space that is created as a result of constant redrawing of the 'otherworld' by both writers. This space becomes a sort of heterotopia, suspension of conventional temporality and disruption between physical and psychical, imaginary and real, literary and literal.

Federman extends Foucault's notion of heterotopia, originally introduced as a spatial concept, a neutral zone between real and utopian spaces, to describe the disjunction between things and words, a linguistic disruption or displacement (127). "Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things […] to 'hold together'" (Foucault Preface to the Order of Things xviii). The liminal setting of both novels constitutes and reinforces the sense of heterotopia, but what really sustains it is a loose connection of things to words characteristic of these bilingual authors. This connection is never taken for granted; it can be destroyed and reassembled at will. If for Nabokov this Limbo is a

space of communication between his fictional worlds and reality of human life, for Beckett, it is a place where mind and matter, insignificant per se, become part of a bigger translation project. "The most potent human action, in Beckett's fiction," Amiran writes, "is translation or reconstitution, restating *physis* as *psyche*…" (10). Figurative language, images or mental pictures for Beckett do not seem to differ from physical images (Rabinovitz "The Development of Samuel Beckett's Fiction 27-31).

Language and the Body

The process of restating *physis* as *psyche* is reversible: the textual world can be easily literalized; body becomes the main site of communication, and language is often experienced as pain (the language lesson is taught by thumps on the skull and engraving of the Roman alphabet and Arabic numerals on Pim's body). What is incomprehensible can be forced open with an appropriate tool – the tormentors try to open their victims with a can-opener, and a body in pain becomes a vehicle for the voice striving to become both the source and the recipient of speech.

Moreover, the distinction between the processes of body and mind is completely obliterated, and speaking one's mind is similar to farting:

> échappement ballon c'est de l'air du peu qui reste du peu à quoi on doit d'être encore debout en riant pleurant et disant ce qu'on pense rien de physique la santé n'est pas menacée un mot de moi et je re-suis je pousse bouche ouverte pour ne pas perdre une seconde une vesse qui ait un sens qui s'envole par la bouche aucun son dans la boue (30) – escape hiss it's air of the little that's left of the little whereby man continues standing laughing weeping and speaking his mind nothing physical the health is not in jeopardy a word from me and I am again I strain with open mouth so as not to lose a second fart fraught with meaning issuing through the mouth no sound in the mud (31).

The endless murmur - « quaqua » that accompanies the procession is a homophone of « caca,» especially obvious in the French text. Dearlove notes that

principles of human understanding and knowledge can be easily applied to the world of Comment c'est to the effect that "perception becomes foreign input, thought becomes processing, and ideas become mere waste products equivalent to the less inspiring and more earthy pant or fart. The voice, the pant, and the fart are the basic life process, are the hiss of air which bestows existence on the little that's left of the narrator" (Dearlove "The Voice").

Escapes from the Prison House of Language

Language and Image in the Mud of Comment c'est/How It Is

The setting in both novels (prison-fortress in Invitation; mud in Comment-c'est) serves as an important connection between literal and metaphorical visions, matter and mind, motion and immobility. Mud is not such an unusual locale for Beckett. In Beckett's essay on Proust, mud as the world figures in the epigraph by Leopardi: "E fango è il mondo." Ruby Cohn points to possible connections with Dante's fifth circle, but rightly notes that unlike Dante's mud "swiftly negotiated by the visitors, […], Beckett's mud is eternal and ubiquitous" (255-56 A Beckett Canon).

Beckett is reported to have said that "if there were only darkness, all would be clear. It is because there is not only darkness but also light that our situation becomes inexplicable" (qtd. in Abbott 41). Staying in the dark shielded from the intrusions of light may finally enable us to reach a greater clarity. The fictional space allows for such an experiment, but images from the life in the light destroy the precision and justice of life in the mud. Some of these intrusions (images of childhood, visiting a sick friend at the hospital) are autobiographical (Knowlson 413), and most of them – the narrator's mother,

a boy, a long image of a crocus held with a string, an old man in tears - appear in part I. Even if it were possible to relegate memory, emotion, and mind to the realm of light and probe into the functioning of mud, matter, and dimness, the reality of language prevents the narrator and the reader from accomplishing the task. The witty title of Ruby Cohn's article, "'Comment c'est' par le bout" underscores this tension (89). Movement in the boue (mud), cannot be dissociated from the purely linguistic suggestion at circularity and at impossibility of ever reaching an end, (boue –mud and bout-end being homophones).

Moreover, the delineation of the worlds in the dark and in the light are further complicated by the existence of the English version (How It Is), which points in a slightly different direction. If the eternal mud (la boue with no 'bout' in sight) in Comment C'est implies a never-ending narrative, the mud in How it is, perhaps, by a mere phonetic proximity, invites the intervention of mind, which strives for structure and linearity, but, paradoxically, undoes the attempted distinction between the world of darkness and light.

Images from the life above in the light do not seem to be memories, dreams, or representations. In fact, the generation of images coincides with the discharging of waste: "je pissais et chiais autre image mon moïse jamais aussi propre depuis» - I pissed and shat another image in my crib never so clean then,» states the narrator (4/5). In a similar fashion, words may come as a result of straining with his mouth open not to lose «a fart fraught with meaning»: «je pousse bouche ouverte pour ne pas perdre une seconde une vesse qui ait un sens qui s'envole par la bouche aucun son dans la boue il vient le mot» - « I strain with open mouth so as not to lose a second fart fraught with meaning issuing through the mouth no sound in the mud it comes the word(30/31). Beckettian fusion of the sacred and the profane is best exemplified in the only semblance of a narrative from

«the above, » an image of the narrator's wife Pam Prim who fell or jumped from the window and broke her back: “Pam Prim on s’aimait tous les jours tous les trois puis le samedi puis comme ça par-ci par-là pour se débarrasser essaya de relancer par le cul trop tard elle tomba de la fenêtre ou se jeta colonne brisée” - « Pam Prim we made love every day then every third then the Saturday then just the odd time to get rid of it tried to revive it through the arse too late she fell from the window or jumped broken column »(98/99). Pity is displaced and translated into a fascination with an image of her blue mound (“le mont bleui “) still growing on a deathbed.

As the narrator is still crawling in the mud, his mind conjures up extremely moving scenes at the hospital involving fragments of memory, guilt, and forgiveness. Before dying, Pam Prim forgives him everything, but there is a metonymic shift of the idea of total forgiveness : the most poignant, memorable point the narrator recalls is Pam Prim’s forgiving marguerites as a replacement for the holly she begged for :

> les fleurs sur la table de nuit elle ne pouvait tourner la tête je vois les fleurs je les tenais devant ses yeux à bout de bras les choses qu’on voit main droite main gauche devant ses yeux c’était ma visite pendant ce temps elle pardonnait des marguerites du latin perle c’est tout ce que j’avais pu trouver (98).
>
> The flowers on the night-table she couldn’t turn her head I see the flowers I held them at arm’s length before her eyes the things you see right hand before her eyes that was my visit and she forgiving marguerites from the latin pearl they were all I could find (99)

This particular image creates a rupture in the narrator’s life in the mud and calls into question the reliability of his fragmented reports. Could it be that the perfectly regulated universe is an attempt to comprehend pain and cope with guilt? Perhaps, this is the central event of Comment c'est, not meeting with Pim, Bom, or even self. Yet, pain resists verbalization or sharing. Elaine Scarry writes: “[…] pain does not simply resist

language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned" (4).

Unmediated pain remains in the blank spaces between the versets until the narrator can imagine a possibility of death. It is then resolved into silence and scream «le silence pas de réponse crever pas de réponse JE POURRAIS CREVER hurlements bon» - «the silence no answer die no answer DIE screams I MAY DIE screams I SHALL DIE screams good» (192/193).

Language as an Icon in Invitation to a Beheading

In Invitation to a Beheading, Cincinnatus's cell alone encapsulates the ambivalence of his situation: it signifies confinement, limits, and an imminent end as well as a capability of life, growth, and development since the cell is also the smallest unit of a living body. Traditional escapes in Invitation (Cincinnatus's night walk to his house (20), a semblance of a window displaying a fake landscape (76), the tunnel dug by his tormentors (158-59)) end up in the same prison cell.[79] Mind and consciousness can point a way to freedom, but they are also confined by words , and the fantasies of escape are part of the imprisonment.

D. Barton Johnson argues that the novel tackles the problem of the "prison-house of language" (Worlds in Regression 34-42). His detailed demonstration of the mediating role of alphabetic icons in the novel, especially the use of Old Church Slavonic letters

[79] Albright phrases his curious, although arguable, observation about the readers' expectations from novelists in similar terms. He believes that unlike the detective story, the serious novel "offers the reader an escape into the place where he already is; it is as if a prisoner dug a tunnel from the exercise yard into his own cell" (55).

(izhitsa, glagol) that "mime as well as mean" suggests that in order to escape from the imprisonment of everyday language, writers have to use the prison's very building blocks. Letters used as visual images may show ways of attaining the world where "there is no gap between sound and sense" (42).

Considering the language of art as one of the central themes of the novel, Johnson admits that 'the iconic letters, a device of indisputable ingenuity but necessarily of limited application, represent a vain attempt to loosen the fetters of the prison-house of language for in their visual aspect they reach beyond conventional lexical level of language toward a mystical ideal tongue in which words mime as well as mean, an artistic language of perfect clarity in which the correspondence between perception and percept and between percept and word is absolute" (42). This conclusion confirms that the escape from the prison-house of language is inscribed in language and can be carried out through language read as a visual image, but it also emphasizes the futility of such efforts. By contrast, Yuri Lotman's idea of iconicism as a syntagmatic code suggests that the attempt is not vain. The presence of two or more codes imposes different narrative and reading modes that, in turn, implode the unity of the novelistic space. Names, letters, numbers, and images may not reveal the intention of the whole, but they write their own story.

Iconicism and Autocommunication

Both Comment c'est and Invitation to a Beheading, to use Lotman's term, display a higher level of autocommunication. Autocommunication in this case should not be confused with a hopelessly solipsistic exercise. Although I view autocommunication in a more specific sense and prefer to focus on iconicism as a more relevant concept for

my argument, Lotman's original definition should be briefly introduced as it seems pertinent to literary bilingualism and, possibly, to self-translation. Lotman develops the concept in order to introduce a new typology of fictional texts and by extension, a new typology of cultures, that would partially reconcile Saussure's and Jakobson's visions of an act of communication.[80]

Terminologically, Lotman equates Saussure's langue with a Code and Parole - with a Text. He argues that any poetic text works along two channels simultaneously (I-s/he, I-I) unless it is written in an experimental or a machine language, and contrasts the model of autocommunication (I-I) with the classical model, which he calls I –s/he: a message is known to the subject, but unknown to the other. In the classic act, the addresser is to transmit a message to another person, but s/he remains the same in the course of the act.[81] In the second case (I-I), the addresser's essence can be considered as an "individual set of socially significant codes, " and this set changes during the act of communication (22). Such transmission is affected by the intrusion of supplementary codes or by external stimuli changing the contextual situation.

To actuate the system I-I, there should be a confrontation between a message in some semantic language and a syntagmatic code (be it a printed page, rhythmical cadences, visual ornaments). In other words, the addressor and addressee remain the same, but the message acquires a new meaning during the communication process. Producing difference and constituting identity in such cases are not opposed; on the

[80] Saussure tends to prioritize informational function of the message – its adequate transmission, while Jakobson argues that the creative function – generating new messages – is equally important in almost any act. It seems to me that what Lotman defines as autocommunication, is an integral part of Shklovsky's and Jakobson's function of literariness.

[81] I doubt if this proposition is true. Language is by definition relational, and the addresser cannot possibly convey any message without undergoing any change, but I will keep Lotman's formulation for the sake of distinction between the two models of communication.

contrary, self can be restructured as a result of such interventions. Lotman lists iconicity and re-readability as important features of autocommunication.

I find Lotman's idea of iconicity particularly productive for discussing texts with a high degree of indeterminacy such as Invitation and Comment C'est, and I am going to demonstrate how it can be used as a strategy to break free from dictates of language. The authors cannot stop playing language games, but they subvert old rules or invent new ones. However, in my analysis I would like to prioritize the writers' use of verbal and numerical icons, and rhythmical sequences as deliberate syntagmatic disruptions, and to distinguish them from autocommunication which I take to be primarily a function of the reader's experience.[82]

By drawing this distinction, I do not mean to diminish the role of the reader; in Invitation to a Beheading's diegesis, reading itself becomes a strategy pointing to freedom. Stephen Blackwell notes that Cincinnatus exercises two modes of reading: narrative (when reading a realistic novel Quercus) and iconic when trying to decipher a pattern in an old book written in an unknown language looking like Arabic script (43-44): « мелкий, густой, узорчатый набор, с какими-то точками и живчиками внутри серпчатых букв, был, пожалуй, восточный – напоминал чем-то надписи на музейных кинжалах» - "the small, crowded, ornate type, with dots and squiggles within the sickle-shaped letters, seemed to be oriental – it was somehow reminiscent of the inscriptions on museum daggers" (121-22/125).

[82] Lotman seems to emphasize the reader's exegesis of a text: if a reader after receiving the message that Anna Karenina threw herself under a train, comes to the conclusion that she is Karenina, she is using the novel as a code of self-communication. (30)

Nabokov's attention to different modes of reading and writing is not accidental: he draws on the tradition of resorting to iconic and phonetic symbolism favored by his immediate literary predecessors.[83] For instance, one of the central relationships of the novel – a repeated encounter between the victim and the executioner, is encoded in several ways. If the narrative reading shows the impossibility of escaping the clutches of the pathetic tormentor, the iconic image indicates a potential escape. A surprise was awaiting Cincinnatus by the end of the party preceding the execution: an engineered illumination of the Gardens by millions of colorful light bulbs with the centerpiece of the arrangement converging into a gigantic monogram of *П* and *Ц* (P and C). The contrast between Pierre, a paragon of physicality, complacency, and philistinism, and Cincinnatus, all spirit and lightness, (Пьер и Цинцинат) is underscored by theatrical pairing of their initials; in Russian, the letters are mirror-images of each other because the small 'tail' of Ц is not visible. «В течение трех минут горел разноцветным цветом добрый миллион лампочек, искуссно рассаженых в траве, на ветках, на скалах и в общем размещенных таким образом, чтобы составить по всему ночному ландшафту растянутый грандиозный вензель из П и Ц, не совсем, однако, вышедшый» - "For three minutes a good million light bulbs of diverse colors burned, artfully planted in the grass, in branches, on cliffs, and all arranged in such a way as to embrace the whole nocturnal landscape with a grandiose monogram of 'P' and 'C,' which, however, had not quite come off (165/189). D. Johnson remarks that 'П' of Pierre, the executioner imitates the gallows while 'Ц' of Cincinnatus presupposes a possibility of opening into a different world because it is not barred on top (33).

[83] Russian symbolist writers resorted to this device; Andrei Bely's Petersburg is probably the best known example. For more on iconic and phonetic symbolism in Bely and Nabokov, see Dr. Johnson's "Belyj and Nabokov: A Comparative Overview," Russian Literature 9 (1981).

Other letters point to exits from the prison-house of language, allowing words to take wing. Everything was transparent and comprehensible to Cincinnatus's countrymen «ибо не было у них таких слов, которые бы кончались как-нибудь неожиданно, на ижицу, что ли, обращаясь в пращу или птицу, с удивительными последствиями» - "since they had no words that would end in an unexpected way, perhaps in some archaic letter, an *upsilamda*, becoming a bird or a catapult with wondrous consequences (26). Izhitsa used in the Russian text, [84] a letter from the Old Church Slavonic alphabet derived from Greek upsilon, indeed, looks like a bird or a slingshot (V), and promises physical freedom and liberation from the tethers of language.

When Cincinnatus senses the presence of a miraculous world inaccessible to others (ch. 8), but cannot find ways to communicate his knowledge, he writes in his prison-journal: « или ничего не получится из того, что хочу рассказать, а лишь останутся черные трупы удавленных слов, как висельники…вечерние очерки глаголей, воронье» - "nothing will come of what I am trying to tell, its only vestiges being the corpses of strangled words, like hanged men…evening silhouettes of gammas and gerunds (vechernie ocherki glagolei), gallow crows…"(99/90). Glagol (Г) stands for "word" in the Old Church Slavonic and encompasses the image of gallows as well as Cincinnatus's efforts to create a different self with defective, moribund words. Had Cincinnatus known that his stay in the fortress would be so long, he would have begun writing « с азов» ("from the beginning") и, постепенно, столбовой дорогой связных понятий, дошел бы, довершил бы, душа бы обстроилась словами…» - "and gradually, along a high road of logically connected ideas, would have attained, would

[84] D. Johnson discusses the translation problem that Nabokov solved ingeniously by coining a hybrid neologism upsilamda (35-36).

have completed, my soul would have surrounded itself with a structure of words" (175/205).

The translation into English prepared by Dmitry Nabokov and revised by the author himself adheres to the Russian original very closely despite Nabokov's professed desire in his Foreword to the English edition to create a new word, a "cherished entry" in a dictionary of definitions: "[…] To abridge, expand, or otherwise alter or cause to be altered, for the sake of belated improvement, one's own writings in translation" (Foreword 7). However, even in this incredibly faithful translation with "no devil of creative emendation for [Nabokov] to fight," the alphabetic play is almost entirely lost. In chapter XIX, the last one before the execution, Cincinnatus wants to begin "с азов" (A) (175/205); A is the first letter of the Old Church Slavonic alphabet signifying 'I', inner self' while izhitsa (V) mentioned at the beginning of the novel (chapter 2) is the last one. The reversed order of the beginning and the end is hardly coincidental. The struggling writer arrives at the beginning of his world only at the moment of his death (Johnson 41). Before the execution, Cincinnatus fails to finish his writing in the prison journal. Looking for a more precise word, he crosses out the only word on a new sheet of paper – 'death,' but, distracted by the moth, Nabokov's messenger from the eternal world of beauty, he never gets back to his sentence. Pierre followed by the now identically looking lawyer and the director interrupts Cincinnatus's meditations. The prisoner's last wish was « кое-что дописать» - "to finish writing something," but he suddenly realized that everything had already been written (177/209). D. Johnson concludes that this realization is the key to Cincinnatus's understanding of the "truth of this world: he cannot escape the prison-house of language" until "the world of "here disintegrates"(41).

In fact, numerous critical interpretations of Invitation view Cincinnatus's struggle as a metaphorical rendering of any writer's experience,[85] a problem of translating the visions coming from the dream world into language, which is further complicated by the tension between the fake world created by an imperfect narrator and the existence of higher consciousness responsible for the 'real' narrative to be transcribed. If Fyodor's mission was to correlate his experience of reality and memory with his writing, Cincinnatus, in constructing his world, senses «как складываются слова, как должно поступить, чтобы слово обыкновенное оживало, чтобы оно заимствовало у своего соседа его блеск, жар, тень, само отражаясь в нем и его тоже обновляя эти отражением, - так что вся строка – живой перелив» - "what one must do for a commonplace word to come alive and to share its neighbor and renewing the neighboring word in process, so that the whole line is live iridescence," but he cannot translate the vision and writes «темно и вяло, как у Пушкина поэтический дуэлянт» - "obscurely and limply, like Pushkin's lyrical duelist" (101, 100/93, 92).

Reading as Art of Survival

If Invitation to a Beheading is to be considered a novel about art, art should be interpreted in a wider sense. Cincinnatus's predicament is quite literal; his non-transparency, his very being becomes problematic. Unlike Newspeak in Orwell's 1984 that was supposed to prevent people from thinking about freedom and revolution, heresy

[85] See Khodasevich, V.F. "On Sirin." Ed. Simon Karlinsky and Robert P. Hughes. Trans. Michael H. Walker. Nabokov: Criticism, Reminiscences, Translations and Tributes. Ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1970. 96-101; Johnson, D. Barton. Worlds in Regression: Some Novels of Vladimir Nabokov. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1985; Toker, Leona. Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989

becomes embodied in Invitation: Cincinnatus is struggling to find words and thoughts that would liberate him, but it is not merely his thinking, it is his very being that is criminal. Becoming an artist of one's life for the sake of existence and discerning exits from the bogus prison becomes at least as important, and writing is not the only possible strategy for doing so. Blackwell suggests that the protagonist's efforts to name and embody the extraordinary make Cincinnatus turn to reading for an answer: "The value of his choice rests in the *linguistic* nature of his problem: reading produces a position transcendent to language, in that during reading, language is not only used but contemplated" (40).

Contrary to D. Johnson, Blackwell argues that "language is a prison with many possible exits, which reading helps Cincinnatus to find" (40). Among the prison puppets and specters, the taciturn librarian bringing books to Cincinnatus is the only human capable of compassion who will not disintegrate after the execution scene: «скрюченный на ступеньке, блевал бледный библиотекарь» - "on the steps the pale librarian sat doubled up, vomiting" (186/222). Cincinnatus may be a failed writer, but he still believes in the power of words to convey the reality of different worlds. He writes to Marthe hoping that if he succeeds in the task, she will be able to share his vision. However, he realizes that there are no humans sharing his language in this world (102/95). Thus, "[g]nosis is carried by language," asserts Alexandrov, and Cincinnatus's eventual reunion with the creatures akin to him is a return to the spiritual homeland (99, 87). This homeland for Alexandrov may be formed by a community of readers" into whose imagination Cincinnatus enters via the act of reading," and who are placed "into the position of otherwordly witness[es] to Cincinnatus's crossing over in a new form of

being" (99). While one Cincinnatus is running into the wall, the other remains seated and keeps writing: «Сохраните эти листы […]. Мне необходима хотя бы теоретическая возможность иметь читателя, а то, право, лучше разорвать» - "Save these jottings[…]. I must have at least the theoretical possibility of having a reader, otherwise, really, I might as well tear it all up" (167/194). Readers might be the kindred spirits that Cincinnatus joins after his death.

Although Nabokov rebukes the attempts to find similarities between lives of his characters and his own, certain analogies are difficult to ignore: Nabokov, unlike Cincinnatus, exercised supreme control over his words, but at that time, the author himself struggled to establish if the theoretical possibility of having a reader in a distant future was a vehicle powerful enough to redeem his linguistic and cultural isolation and to sustain his creativity. While condemning a Nabokov-Sirin to a fictional death soon afterwards, he was developing another Nabokov, who would keep writing in a different language and addressing a new audience alongside his ever-present hypothetical reader. The change of names - discarding his pseudonym Sirin and embracing Nabokov (his real family name) can be telling, but the relationship between the two is as poetically ambiguous as between Cincinnatus and his double, and herein lies the strength of Nabokov's bilingual poetics: the questions whether the transformation implies the death of the Russian Nabokov or a return to his true self, whether there is one Nabokov or two - one personality anchoring his writing across languages or two identities generated within each linguistic and literary space - are never resolved. There is enough evidence for maintaining both positions, but it is the indeterminacy that makes Invitation a work of art, not a smart formalist play juggling a collection of different codes, and it is the

indeterminacy and the impossibility of cataloguing losses and findings that mark the practice of bilingual creative writing and distinguish it from an exercise in linguistic dexterity and adaptability to literary markets.

Names of the Unnamable

Readers are compelled to emulate Cincinnatus' search for new ways of reading and establishing connections between names, letters, and numbers. Proper names themselves are significant in both novels. It should be noted that names of characters in the original Invitation to a Beheading and in Comment c'est are conspicuously foreign. Nabokov's names in most of his works are referential; they are based on synesthetic associations, alliterations, and are often doubled to emphasize the characters' double existence or obsession with self (Cincinnatus C, Van Veen, Humbert Humbert). Cincinnatus, derived from the Latin for "curly," seems to be one of poetic alias of Pushkin (Dolinin Istinnaya 216). The histrionics of Monsieur Pierre remind us of the Russian Pulcinello, Petrushka, whom M. Pierre calls "my namesake" in the Russian original («ну, сиди прямо, тезка» - «sit up there, chum»). The interplay between tautology and difference is demonstrated by the interchangeable director of prison, the lawyer, and the jailer, Rodrig, Roman Vissarionovich, and Rodion, (Rod, Rom and Rod). Although Roman Vissarionovich most likely alludes to the realist critic Belinsky, it is hard to dissociate it from a more recent figure in the Soviet history sporting the same patronymic.

In Comment c'est, naming is an act of violence and a source of confusion: instead of bestowing an identity on a subject, it erases it. The narrator imposes his own name on

his victim and discovers that they are all the same and exchangeable – as long as their names are monosyllabics ending in M: "pas plus que moi à l'en croire ou alors mon idée il n'avait pas de nom c'est donc moi qui le lui ai donné Pim pour plus de commodité plus d'aisance ça repart au passé […] le pli pris je lui intime que moi aussi Pim je m'appelle Pim" - "no more than I by his own account or my imagination he had no name any more than I so I gave him one the name Pim for more commodity more convenience it's off again in the past […] when this has sunk in I let him know that I too Pim my name Pim (74/75). Bom's name is engraved on a buttock by a fingernail, and shortly afterwards, the narrator, hoping to mark the difference between himself and the other, becomes Bom "qu'il m'appelle Bom pour plus de commodité ça me sourirait m à la fin et une syllable le reste égal" – "he can call me Bom for more commodity that would appeal to me m at the end and one syllable the rest indifferent"(74/75).

Even though the initials of Pierre and Cincinnatus are inversions of the same letter, the little tail of Ц makes a major difference, and the possibility of discerning this difference endows Cincinnatus with a creative sensibility. In Comment c'est, Pim is easily replaced by Bom or Bem parodying the struggle between the voiced (B) and the voiceless (P). Pim, Bim, Bom, Kram, Krim are all monosyllabic names that resist any meaning, but they are obviously foreign in French, and if pronounced according to the rules of French phonology, they acquire different signification. Once again, an exercise in subjugating language fails, and the spillage complicates the experience of the failing narrator and the reader. "Des mots pas les miens" (words not mine) (22) take on a life of their own with Pim[86] evoking "pain" (bread), Bom - "bon" (good), and the important

[86] Ruby Cohn traces a history of Pim and Bom in earlier Beckett's works. Cohn, Ruby. A Beckett Canon. University of Muchigan Press, 2001

couple Krim and Kram[87], a scribe and a witness, sound like "crin," (horsehair) "craint," (frightened) and "cran" (courage, guts)[88] or little things without value or junk in German (Krimskram[89])

The scribe Krim introduced by the end of part two (104) soon becomes indistinguishable from Kram, and at the end of part three, they replicate the job of Pim – listening, observing, and finding words within himself, "Kram qui écoute Krim qui note ou Kram seul un seul suffit Kram seul témoin et scribe " - "Kram who listens Krim who notes or Kram alone one is enough Kram alone witness and scribe" (174/175).

Language as a Math Problem

If Nabokov uses letters as iconic images, Beckett in his later work resorts to numbers and sequences as a way to establish relationships and to attain knowledge. Abbott claims that in contrast with The Unnamble, Comment c'est parts ways with disintegration: in the new world, the narrator is "a given integer in a perfect mathematical system, or, […], part of a machine and easily defined in terms of his relationships to all the moving parts" (39). The journey toward the other and the separation are described as an endless permutation of integers: "A l'instant où je quitte Bem un autre quitte Pim si nous sommes vingt mille à cet instant précis cinquante mille départs cinquante mille abandonnés pas de soleil pas de terre rien qui tourne le même instant toujours partout" - « at the instant I leave Bem another leaves Pim and let us be at that instant one hundred thousand strong then fifty thousand departures fifty thousand abandoned no sun no earth

[87] In Beckett's notes, one can see the transformation of Marc into Kram and Manuel into Krim. See Beckett, Samuel, Comment c'est. How It Is and l'Image. A Critical Genetic Edition. Ed. Edouard Magessa O'Reilly, New York: Routledge, 2001

[88] These transformations of the scribe's and the witness's names were noted by Robert Harvey.

[89] This pun was pointed by Ruby Cohn in A Beckett Canon.

nothing turning the same instant always everywhere » (143/144). There is a chilling comfort in consciousness of the absolute equality; the moment the narrator reaches Pim, another reaches Bem "c'est mathématique c'est notre justice dans cette fange où tout est pareil […]" - "it's mathematical it's our justice in this muck where all is identical" (142/143).

Beckett has often played with the idea of applying rigorous methods to absurdly unimportant practices (Murphy's system of distributing cookies (79) or Molloy's algorithm of sucking stones (104). The sign system that the narrator develops in order to train Pim displays a clear cause and effect relationship: digging nails in the armpit produces singing, driving a can-opener in the buttocks is crying, and thumps on the skull mean silence (84-88). One day Pim dares to rebel and sings instead of crying when he is stabbed ("jusqu'au jour ce mot encore où piqué au cul au lieu de crier il chante quel con ce Pim tout de même confondre cul et aisselle" – "till the day that word again when stabbed in the arse instead of crying he sings his song what a cunt this Pim damn it all confuse arse and armpit"), but a heavy thump followed by continuous torture make him internalize the new language rules (84,86/85, 87).

Beckett expounds a neat scheme of a life journey assigning numbers to everyone from one to one million[90] and observing all the possible permutations of victims and tormentors. However, modeling this situation even with four actors who will experience two abandons and two journeys proves flawed. The narrator number one can only relate to number three by analogy or by transmission of rumor: "Il suffit que cet épisode soit annoncé" - "it is sufficient for this episode to be announced"(170/171). He can only

[90] The numbers could have been a reminder of the numbers assigned to prisoners in concentration camps.

imagine how number three can be tormented by number two, number one's victim, and how in his turn he will torture number four, "je cite qu'au numéro trois je ne sois pas totalement inconnu sans que nous ayons jamais eu l'occasion de nous rencontrer" - « I quote in principle that to number 3 I am not a total stranger without our ever having occasion to meet » (152/153).

At first, the narrator imagines a possibility of knowing somebody's joy and pain solely "by repute" (152-52), but then rejects such knowledge as bogus in his world:

> qu' à tourner en rond nous soyons donc quatre ou un million nous sommes quatre à nous ignorer un million à nous ignorer les uns les autres et chacun soi mais ici je cite toujours nous ne tournons pas en rond ça c'est là-haut dans la lumière où l'espace leur est compté ici la ligne droite vers l'est (158).
>
> Whether four then revolving or a million four strangers a million strangers to themselves to one another but here I quote on we do not revolve that is above in the light where their space is measured here the straigh line the straight lin eastward (159).

Even before trauma studies made expressibility of pain an object of serious inquiry, Wittgenstein contemplated the difficulty of imagining somebody else's pain and expressing it in language. Picturing pain, Wittgenstein claims, seems hardly possible without a subject experiencing it. "If someone has a pain in his hand [...]," he writes, "one does not comfort the hand but the sufferer: one looks into his face" (Proposition 286). Secondly, Wittgenstein proposes, it is possible to gain access to grammars of pain, not to the pain itself, especially pain of the other, which resists representation and language. "Suppose everyone does say about himself that he knows what pain is only from his own pain (Proposition 295). If one has to imagine someone else's pain on the model of one's own, this is none too easy a thing to do: for I have to imagine pain which I do not feel on the model of the pain which I do feel" (Proposition 302). However, the

narrator of Comment c'est is dissatisfied with empathy, imagination, and pity as traditional ways of knowing the other.

He erases them as fictions that have failed him in his life "in the light." Instead, he constructs an alternative grammar of pain in purely mathematical terms, but his new epistemology is equally deficient because he cannot establish the number of characters involved. Developing a relationship to others within a span of one's limited life and with a finite number of participants in this journey poses another problem: "ou bien je suis seul et plus de problème ou bien nous sommes en nombre infini et plus de problème non plus" – "either I am alone and no further problem or else we are innumerable and no further problem either" (160). Therefore, numbers, which are infinite by definition, fail to become a measure of the relationship.

In his later works, Beckett will continue exploring the language of mathematics, which will tend toward, in Kenner's words, "geometrical visualizations." Imagination Morte Imaginez (Imagination Dead Imagine) urges the reader to perform an inconceivable task: to imagine imagination dead and to do away with all the familiar representations of the world "omit islands, waters, azure, verdure, one glimpse and vanished, endlessly, omit" (Beckett 182). When everything dissolves into whiteness, a mathematical discourse takes over and introduces a rotunda: "Diameter three feet, three feet from ground to summit of the vault. Two diameters at right angles AB CD divide the white ground into two semicircles ACB BDA" (182). In Assez (Enough), obsessive calculations become a distraction from loneliness. A woman recollecting her past with a man says:

> We took flight in arithmetic. What mental calculations bent double hand in hand! Whole ternary numbers we raised in this way to the third power sometimes in

> downpours of rain. Graving themselves in his memory as best they could the ensuing cubes accumulated. In view of the converse operation at a later stage. When time would have done its work. We did not keep tally of the days. If I arrive at ten years it is thanks to the pedometer. Total mileage divided by average daily mileage. So many days. Divide. Such a figure the night before the sacrum (191).

Beckett's attempt to abolish the reign of language in establishing temporal and spatial connections and to conjure up a universe based entirely on a formal structuring principle (permutations) culminates in Sans/Lessness. Since this short text demonstrates arguably the most radical literary expression of mathematical permutations in Beckett and can serve as an important point of reference, let me dwell on the relevant elements of Sans/Lessness before returning to Comment c'est/How It Is.

Sans, published in 1969, is composed of sixty sentences (a number of minutes in an hour or seconds in a minute), each of them repeated twice, the second time in a different order, twenty-four paragraphs (the number of hours in a day). The text introduces a little body with pale blue eyes, grey light, and ruins, described as the real refuge. In the French text, *sans* is repeated fifty two times, a number of weeks in a year. Surprisingly, Beckett offers a key to this text and explains his method: the composition consists of six groups of images: collapse of refuge, outer world (expressed in a binary earth-sky), little body, refuge forgotten ("all gone from mind"), past and future denied (repetition of never), and past and future affirmed (Beckett qtd. in Ackerley and Gontarski 318).

Following the idea of combining randomness with choice and control, Beckett wrote each of the sixty sentences on a piece of paper, placed the papers in a box, and picked them out one by one. This procedure was then repeated for the second sequence. To determine a number of sentences in each paragraph, Beckett wrote the numbers 3, 5

and 7 on four pieces of paper each (3 x 4), and the numbers 4 and 6 on six pieces of paper each (2 x 6), which he picked again at random.[91] When translating Sans into English, instead of translating the resulting text, Beckett chose the original 60 sentences and repeated the same game putting the paragraphs together according to the same scheme as in French. However, the infinitely rich English title alone (Lessness) introduces a new dimension to this work. Whereas the compact, verse-like French text punctuated with *sans*, strives to deny memories (while reinforcing the idea of it through repetition of "aucun souvenir") and escapes of the body from the implacable grip of time (sans issue, sans temps, sans trace), the English Lessness makes the oscillation between collapse of time, denial of past and future and their affirmation much more nuanced. By repeating a number of epithets containing *less* (timeless, issueless, endless) and introducing nouns containing *–lessness* (changelessness, endlessness), the English text seems to reinforce the presence of the fleeting without ever making it static.[92] Compare, for instance, the eleventh paragraph in Sans and Lessness:

> Il ira sur le dos face au ciel rouvert sur lui les ruines les sables les lointains. Air gris sans temps terre ciel confondus même gris que les ruines lointains sans fin. Il refera jour et nuit sur lui les lointains l'air cœur rebattra. Vrai refuge enfin ruines répandues même gris que les sables (9).
>
> He will go on his back face to the sky open again over him the ruins the sand the endlessness. Grey air timeless earth sky as one same grey as the ruins flatness endless. It will be day and night again over him the endlessness the air heart will beat again. True refuge long last scattered ruines same grey as the sand (49).

---

[91] For the montage scheme of the French text, see van Hulle, Dirk. "Sans [Lessness]". *The Literary Encyclopedia*. 1 March 2004. [http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=2307, accessed 12 November 2009.]

[92] For more on "lessness" and its ethical implications in Beckett's oeuvre. See Harvey, Robert. "'On' dans *Worstward Ho* (*Cap au pire*): fonction et valeur." In Lourdes Carriedo, Ma Luisa Guerrero, Carmen Méndez, Fabio Vericat, eds. *A Vueltas con Beckett*. Alpedrete (Madrid): Ediciones de la Discreta (Colección Bártulos, 7), 2009.

Based on the comparative form, Lessness, never completely attains its end, and strikes me as more imaginative and « endless » than Sans. Thus, even a most mathematically formalized experiment at disorder sans narrative fails as soon as it is conducted in a language.

By contrast, in Comment c'est, the deceptive precision of digits tells about the impossibility to comprehend the entire human condition; a game of numbers, devoid of the burden of connotation, can appear more universal, but it says little about 'How it is.' However, it provides a valuable key to reading all other permutations of sacks, images, scribes, and witnesses. If they are to be read in the same way as numbers, then all these principles should not be taken seriously: "ces histoires de sacs déposés oui au bout d'une corde sans doute oui d'une oreille qui m'écoute oui d'un souci de moi d'une faculté de noter oui tout ça de la foutaise oui Krim et Kram oui de la foutaise oui" – « all this business of sacks deposited yes at the end of a cord no doubt yes of an ear listening to me yes a care for me yes an ability to note yes all that all balls yes Krim and Kram yes all balls yes » (190/191).

Forming an Impossible Community - ImagiNation

Panting and Voice

In a way, panting, besides its other functions in the text, serves as another syntagmatic code exploding the unity of narrative and language in Comment c'est. However, in the third part, it becomes inseparable from the voice: "pour en finir donc avec tout ça enfin dernières bribes tout à fait quand ça cesse de haleter pour en finir avec cette voix autant dire cette vie" – "to have done then at last with all that last scraps very

last when the panting stops and this voice to have done with this voice namely this life" (188/189). A more radical decision that the narrator makes is to do away with 'him' and to assume responsibility for the murmur and the voice. He realizes that he is alone in the mud, no one hears him, and nobody accompanies him. Everything else was invented; there was no procession, no journey, never any Pim or Bom « jamais eu personne non que moi pas de réponse que moi oui ça alors c'était vrai oui » - « never anyone no only me no answer only me yes so that was true about me yes» (190/191).

After a series of dialogue-like sequences - each statement is followed by a refrain of "oui" or "non" - the penultimate verset provides no response other than the echo of the narrator's own screaming: "alors ça peut changer pas de réponse finir pas de réponse je pourrais suffoquer pas de réponse […] le silence pas de réponse crever pas de réponse CREVER hurlements JE POURRAIS CREVER hurlement JE VAIS CREVER hurlement bon" - « so things may change no answer end no answer I may choke no answer […] the silence no answer die now answer DIE screams I MAY DIE screams I SHALL DIE screams good » (192/193).

The relation between the source of the voice and the utterances, between an event and experience becomes more important than the origin of the voice, and the complexity of this relation is expressed by quoting. Quoting is one of the strongest markers of disruption of identity and temporality erasing the difference between the third and the first person: "une formulation qui en meme temps qu'elle le supprimerait tout à fait et lui ouvrirait la voie de ce repos-là au moins me rendrait moi seul responsable de cet inqualifiable murmure" - "a formulation that would eliminate him completely and so admit him to that peace at least while rendering me in the same breath sole responsible

for this unqualifiable murmur" (188/189). Not only does it presuppose the existence of the other voice, but the voice itself, as Ewa Ziarek notes, signifies a constant temporal vacillation between comment c'est ("how it is) and comment c'était (how it was) because the moment of quoting is, in a sense, repetition, a futile attempt to recuperate the past. In the mud of Comment c'est, it is possible to imagine the past, the present, and the future as simultaneously unfolding. Emmanuel Levinas has best expressed the temporal dimension of the otherness as "irreduciable diachrony, " the withdrawal of "how it was" that always betrays the presence of the other (Levinas qtd. in Ziarek 175).

The role of internal voice is one of the salient features of bilingual writing both on a thematic and on a personal level. It is reductive to attribute it to direct interference of the first language although certain frames rather than individual lexical or syntactic patterns tend to be carried over to another active language. A beginning writer in a foreign language often starts off by accumulating and cataloguing "words of others" which might have caused Friedrich Schleiermacher, one of the early theorists of translation, to conclude that "every writer can produce original work only in his mother tongue" (50). No border control is tight enough for journeys of words, and appropriated verbal structures also smuggle in ideas 'from the dark.' While there is often a lapse between generation of ideas and their expression, neither the language of composition, nor extra-linguistic consciousness can be identified as an autonomous source of meaning or speech. In his preliminary notes for Comment c'est, Beckett writes: "les mots vous font voir du pays avec eux d'étranges voyages" (202).

For Nabokov's Cincinnatus, the capacity to communicate the pulsations of the real world can be fully realized only when he develops an internal voice that connects

him to his mysterious, poetic father who was, according to Cincinnatus's mother, "only voice" (133). It is impossible to claim knowledge or the origin of the internal voice in Comment c'est. Memory is a joke in this procession, and cannot be its source. Marjorie Perloff calls Comment c'est a "Proustian parody," as it clearly caricatures the modernist piety towards workings of memory" (Perloff Poetics 229). The presence of internal voice does not reveal an autobiographical impulse of reconstituting self; it shatters the distinction between syntax and semantics and replaces spatial relations with temporal markers (before and after, comment c'est and comment c'était).

By creating syntactic disruptions, Beckett introduces a temporal alterity, the fusion of the telling and the told. Ziarek posits that even

> invention, which merely allows for the withdrawal of alterity from the present order of discourse, can hardly be equated with the subject's initiative, its power to begin, its freedom to signify or represent. Rather, the narrator's inability to claim language as one's own, or to posit consciousness as the origin of voice, situates every initiative of the self as already a response to the other. The very act of speaking, of inventing and originating, puts into question the freedom and agency of self (177).

Invention is accorded a much humbler role as it cannot be celebrated as a manifestation of individual creativity, and expectations from the divine in Comment c'est do not differ much from those of an editor: "donc deux rédactions possibles la présente et l'autre qui commencerait là où celle-ci finit[…] à condition que par un effort d'imagination l'épisode du couple demeure central soit rectifié comme il convient" - "two possible formulations therefore the present and that other beginning where the present ends […] on condition that by an effort of the imagination the still central episode of the couple be duly adjusted" (172/173).

The internal voice in Comment c'est can be attributed neither to an essential, individual consciousness, nor to some surrogate of divinity completely removed from any relations, and yet, it exists. Ziarek observes that the narrator's last invention of the Divine resembles "a solitary monadological being who listens only to himself, to his own story[…]." If the divinity can speak, she adds, then "even the absolute cannot escape linguistic vacillations between hearing and quoting, between the same and the other" (191).

The internal voice reflecting itself in time denies any certainty of self, but it creates an impossible community in which there is always an attentive listener. Since language misleads Beckett's characters, it becomes an obstacle for communication and understanding, but, in Ben-Zvi's words, the characters cannot find words to stop talking (192). Similarly to Nabokov, Beckett's narrator longs for a community that is bigger than 'I,' but that would resist an identity as 'we.' Jacques Derrida expressed this yearning as a promise of a community no longer identifiable as a community of human subjects: "It is another "we" that is offered to this inventiveness[…], a "we" that does not find itself anywhere, does not invent itself: it can be invented only by the other who says 'come' (Psyche: Inventions of the Other 61). The juxtaposition of Comment c'est and How It Is makes this tendency even more apparent: the two texts, both presented as originals, also form a complex interrelation, but they do not constitute a third Ur-text, a sum total of the two, as they occupy different positions in Francophone and Anglophone literatures.

Attaining a community of kindred spirits is possible in Invitation to a Beheading if Cincinnatus imagines, develops and liberates his second self. One can be dragged into abject logic of things, but Nabokov's few sympathetic characters can actively resist it by

avoiding emotional and intellectual commonplace. In a sense, Nabokov maintains a modernist belief in art as redemptive. I have already expressed the idea that I share with D. Barton Johnson that Nabokov has a hierarchy of fictional and real worlds. Although he reiterates that imagination is a means of discovering and understanding reality - "whatever the mind grasps," he claims, "it does so with the assistance of creative fancy" (SO 154), most of his characters become enmeshed in solipsistic fictions of their own making, and their inability to distinguish and maneuver between the two worlds hurts or kills them.

However, the author himself is certainly aware that escapes from death and clutches of tyrants in the 'real' world of fiction are pitted against the limits of a human life. What makes his position so unique is the illusion of ease with which he translates his fictional crossing of boundaries and his belief into immortality of beauty into his own life as an émigré, a successful bilingual writer, and a happy family-man while warning his readers against such transposition. Nabokov creates an illusion of being the only one capable of the double crossing and keeping his sanity. It is this illusion that might have caused Eva Hoffman to envy Nabokov his unsentimental affection and an "Olympian freedom of sensibility" denied to most émigrés (Hoffman 197-98).

In Comment c'est, imperfect couples are temporally formed, but their progress in the mud is hampered by the constraints of the world in the light: language, matter, mortality, loneliness, and the impossibility of crying out to the other. The overworked distinction between the voice of others and your own (langue-parole, authoritative versus internally persuasive discourse) is gradually annihilated, and a world of startling symmetry and beauty emerges. Imagination in the eternal world in the mud becomes an

obligation to cognize self as other, and this is a narrow, but invaluable margin of freedom.

These authors' attempts to break free from the prison-house of language predictably fail because the spillages and cracks in language that allow escapes from its dictates also lead back to it. As Beckett is reported to have said, language is what gets us where we want to go and prevents us from getting there (Federman "Company:The Voice of Language" 15). Imagination allows its prisoners to walk out in the light or in the mud, but they are always brought back to the cell, and escape from one language into another does not fully resolve the paradox. This failure is, however, in a Beckettian sense, truly felicitous.

Chapter 3: Polyphony and Scordatura in Nancy Huston's Writing

Introduction

Historically, the phenomenon of literary bilingualism has been related to shifts in understanding of identity, nation and the world,[93] and bilingual writing of such contemporary authors as Raymond Federman, Vasilis Alexakis, Ariel Dorfman, and Nancy Huston, reflects this situation. These authors refuse to sever their attachments to either language and instead, they oscillate between two tongues and two cultures, and translate their own work. Their trajectories, statures, and their degree of literary bilingualism vary, and these authors do not seek to liken themselves to Nabokov or Beckett, yet, in my view, Nabokov's and Beckett's unique bilingual writing, which by now constitutes a part of the world literary canon, sets an important precedent for proliferation of this practice.

The work of contemporary bilingual authors, or as Nancy Huston calls them, "divided writers," is informed not solely by their respective national literatures, but also by the history of the twentieth century bilingual writing. As paragons of literary bilingualism, Beckett and Nabokov are not so much major sources of anxiety of influence as models against which other bilinguals attempt to write. Nancy Huston's fiction and critical essays contain numerous references to Samuel Beckett and his characters, and she forms her corpus of work in a conversation with, or rather in contrast to Beckett. Huston proclaims in the opening lines of Limbes=Limbo : Hommage to Samuel Beckett, a text that strives to tell a story of bilingual writing and to enact it at the same time, that she is

[93] See examples in chapter one and in Forster's The Poet's Tongues.

”feeling (rotten word, feeling) so close to old Sam Beckett these days. Close the way Miss Muffet is close to the spider.” (8). The simile evoking a nursery rhyme known to any English speaker, but not necessarily to a French one, indicates that their spiritual and linguistic proximity is not very certain, and the variation in the twin-text in French (replacing Miss Muffet and the spider by the Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf) only reinforces this impression: “Me sens (sale mot, sentir) si proche du vieux Sam ces jours-ci. Proche…comme le Petit Chaperon rouge est proche du loup” (9).

Samuel Beckett, unlike Huston, wrote prose and poetry in English before choosing French as a language of his novels and dramatic works, but in other respects, their professional lives appear somewhat similar: neither of them was forced to leave their country or change language for political or economic reasons; both authors were fascinated with foreign languages and cultures - Beckett studied French, Italian, and German before his move to France, and Huston realized at the age of six that linguistic and geographical distances could be a salvation when she adopted her step-mother’s tongue, German: "A l'âge de 6 ans, j'ai suivi mon père en Allemagne. Mes parents venaient de divorcer, et je me suis accrochée à l'allemand comme une bouée de sauvetage” - “When I was six, I followed my father to Germany. My parents had just divorced, and I clung to German as if it were a life jacket” ("Français dans le texte" 43). Tzvetan Todorov in Nous et les autres describes this type of an exile as “celui qui interprète sa vie à l’étranger comme une expérience de non-appartenance à son milieu et qui la chérit pour cette raison même” –“ one who interprets one’s life abroad as an experience of non-belonging to one’s environiment and who values it for this very reason” (Todorov “Nous et les autres” 450).

At the beginning of her career as a fiction writer (early 1980s), Huston gives up her native English, which at the time appeared to her as the language of dry reports and exam papers, and starts writing fiction directly in French: "C'est en français aussi, à Paris, que j'ai osé mes premiers pas dans l'écriture: j'éprouvais un sentiment d'impunité ; mes parents ne liraient pas mes livres. Mais je prenais plus de risques car, hors de sa langue maternelle, on ne sait jamais quand on est au bord du cliché" – "It was also in French that I first had the nerve to start writing, in Paris: I had a feeling of impunity; my parents wouldn't read my books. But I took more risks since, out of your mother tongue, you never know when you are about to slide into a cliché" (qtd. in Gazier 43). She is also one of the few authors, who, following Beckett's example, ended up self-translating nearly all her work, and who currently writes in English and French interchangeably.

However, this is where similarities end. "It is as if women needed to affirm a different language," suggests Julia Kristeva in an interview on women and art, " in order to defy their mothers who are a threat to them in their rivalry for identity" (qtd. in Huston A Tongue 56). Huston inquires if her own and Kristeva's relation with language puts them in "the same position – the same linguistic displacement as Kafka, Conrad or Beckett?" (56). She concludes that their positions are different, "whereas men try to turn their mothers into language, " she hypothesizes, "women do everything in their power to turn their language into a mother" (56). Although Huston's writing is unmistakably feminine, and even the narrator of Limbes=Limbo seems to be a teasing female counterpart of Beckett's voice, I am not proposing here that there should be a separate category of bilingual *écriture féminine*. Women writers may indeed structure their

relation with language and approach painful personal experiences in a different way,[94] but I would like to refrain from overusing gendered and especially the psychoanalytical perspective, which, in my view, is helpful, but not entirely satisfying in examining bilingual work. All the unconscious impulses driving linguistic displacements are relatively few, uninteresting, and, like Tolstoy's proverbial happy families, - alike. What makes them fascinating is an infinite variety of responses that a creative consciousness[95] designs in order to transform those internal experiences into a new language.

Surprisingly, Huston's immersion into Beckett's privileged territory in Limbes=Limbo - a pastiche[96] of and homage to Beckett, helps her hone an individual style, encourages her to rediscover English, and makes Huston realize that her own strength also lies in writing bilingually. She situates Beckett's gradual departure from traditional plots, characters, locali, and temporality in his bilingualism:

> J'ai pensé tout d'un coup qu'à partir du moment où il était dans le bilinguisme, Beckett ne pouvait plus inventer des histoires et des personnages. Quand il a commencé à écrire en français, son écriture est devenue quelque chose d'inhumain. Il n'y a chez lui que des gens enfermés dans des espaces délimités, des gens qui ne savent pas qui ils sont, ou ils sont, pourquoi ils sont là, qui se créent à travers la parole. Si on lit Beckett attentivement, on voit que ce sont des textes de langage. Il joue avec les formules toutes bêtes, les expressions, les clichés, d'une manière qui serait impensable pour un Français (Huston qtd. in Kroh 97).

---

[94] In Professeurs de désespoir, Huston herself makes it clear in her imaginary polemics with several male and female philosophers and writers that she calls « néantistes »: Arthur Schopenhauer, Emil Cioran, Thomas Bernhard, Samuel Beckett, Milan Kundera, Michel Houellebecq, Elfriede Jelinek, Christine Angot, Sarah Kane.

[95] Noteworthy is the term *surconscience* (sur-conciousness) that Lise Gauvine uses vis-à-vis multilingual Francophone authors. She finds that heightened linguistic consciousness, a desire to interrogate the nature of language, and to overcome ethnographic distinctions is a common denominator for them (14). See, Gauvine, Lise. "Écriture, surconscience et plurilinguisme: une poétique de l'errance." Ed. Christiane Albert. Paris : Karthala, 1999. 13-29.

[96] I am inclined to think that contrary to Jameson's reading of pastiche as "blank parody" or "dead language" (Postmodernism 16), for Huston, pastiche can be a constitutive element of bilingual writing and a generative experience.

> I suddenly realized that when Beckett reached bilingualism, he could no longer make up stories and characters. When he started writing in French, his writing became something inhuman. In his works there are only people in closed spaces, people who don't know who they are, where they are, [people] who create themselves through speech. If we read Beckett carefully, it is obvious that these are language texts. He plays with silly formulas, expressions, clichés in a way that would be unthinkable for a Frenchman.

In a different essay, she claims that if Beckett had not *learned*[97] French, "it would probably never have occurred to him to turn the expression *savoir-vivre* into *savoir-crever* or to complain of being "condemned to life." […] his entire oeuvre is a rejection of the gregarity implied by the existence of language per se" (Huston 64 "The Mask"). I concur with the observation, but what I find intriguing is that after a humbling passage through extremely self-reflexive and "inhuman" bilingual language games that Nancy Huston flaunts in Limbes=Limbo, she regains the ability to tell stories and to create characters.[98] I intend to examine how Huston makes peace with inauthenticity, how she moves from ignorance of identity, from the place where "there is no world no reality no country, all signifiers are indifferent but equal, nothing matters, no *mater* even *dolorosa*" (Huston Limbes=Limbo 8) to double *impatriation,* to novels with plots and characters who forcefully reinstate their "I,"[99] and to the idea that everything that matters is translatable. "Voilà à ce jour ce que j'ai trouvé de mieux: est important ce qui est traduisible," Huston concludes in Nord Perdu - "That's the best I've found so far: the important things are what can be translated" (90).

---

[97] Italics are mine. The fact of learning, acquiring a language in contrast to growing up with it, in my view, is significant.

[98] Not all Huston's characters are viewed as believable. Some of them are probably too formalized, presented as parts and voices to be choreographed rather than realist characters. Gregg Betts' review in The National Post claims that the book has "prodigious problems" as neither its monologues nor dialogue are "credible as thought or speech" (qtd in Davey 11).

[99] First-person narration is rarely straightforward in Huston: 'I' can be said on behalf of a musician and thirty other people listening to Goldberg Variations or come from the Almighty in Dolce Agonia. 'I' is willfully erased and regained by Nad(i)a in Instruments des ténèbres/Instruments of Darkness.

Unlike Beckett who remained reticent about his linguistic and artistic choices, and insisted that everything there was to know about his writing was already in his fiction, Huston reflects on her own situation in numerous essays and interviews and recognizes that circumstances of her life, important encounters, and especially motherhood are inseparable from her work: "[…] un travail sur l'exil a libéré en moi la nostalgie," ("The work on exile released nostalgia in me"), admits the author. "En ne parlant, en ne chantant jamais en anglais à ma fille, j'ai compris que je perdais une partie de mon enfance. Que je me privais non seulement d'une musique mais aussi d'une émotion" - "I realized that never speaking English, never singing in English to my daughter, I was losing a part of my childhood. I was depriving myself not only of [its] music, but also of a feeling" (Huston qtd. in Gazier 43).

Although I prioritize fictional texts[100] as more representative of workings of bilingual imagination, I will also turn to Huston's essays and will try to emulate her strategy of interconnecting fictional and formal moves with personal transformations. Huston's essays complement the author's novels, illuminate formation of her identity, and, written both in English and in French, constitute part of her bilingual oeuvre. This doubling, however, becomes a methodological issue. Which text should be quoted first? Should chronological precedence always determine the choice? I decided to make these decisions case by case generally attempting to re-create the texture of bilingual work by presenting both versions if necessary and by quoting from English and French essays

[100] It should be admitted that so far I have been reluctant to make a personality of a bilingual author a unifying force for various texts s/he creates; therefore, I introduced minimum biographical or autobiographical information focusing instead on style and language of their bilingual work and the interaction between the text(s), the author, and the implied readers. However, I have come to realize that leaving no room for the authors' human dimension is equally misleading because bilingual writing, perhaps more than any other type of writing, is an idiosyncratic response to vicissitudes of writers' lives, and, therefore, this practice is inseparable from these circumstances.

interchangeably. I will provide my own translation for the few interviews and essays for which no authorial translation is available.

From the mid-nineties,[101] the reader of Huston's fiction faces the same typological difficulty: there is a difference between the text conceived in one language as original, finalized, and potentially open to translation into other languages, and the text, which from the very beginning is being created with its twin in view. If most Nabokov's texts can be treated as originals[102] even if he subsequently revised them in his own translation, that is no longer the case with later Beckett and Huston works. To elucidate this new relationship in writing and translation, I first review the applicability of the much used concept of polyphony and then borrow Khatibi's notion of bi-langue and elaborate on it in the final section of the chapter. I argue that role of bi-langue, a new entity, a dialogue, a latent translation between the languages occurring even within one language becomes increasingly important in such texts. Any utterance in these works is molded by the presence of multiple discourses and languages derived from interaction of two or more codes at different levels: phonological resemblances, semantic superimpositions, locali, and proper names, but such texts resist total dissolution and remain intelligible within each language.

[101] Huston's earlier novels would fit these conventional categories.

[102] There are few exceptions that resist the category of *original-translation*. For instance, Nabokov's Kamera Obscura is significantly changed in translation (Laughter in the Dark); for the five-volume Russian edition of his American works, Laughter in the Dark was translated into Russian as a separate novel. Otchayanie (Despair) was translated by Nabokov himself twice. It was first translated and published in London in 1937; in 1966, Nabokov subjected the first translation to considerable revisions based primarily on the first English text.

Stranger to Authenticity

The genre of several of Huston's works is not clearly defined either. Mary Gallagher in "Nancy Huston ou la relation proliférante" notes that Huston's choice of hybrid genres (essay-novel-biography-dialogue Tombeau de Romain Gary,[103] correspondance with Leila Sebbar Lettres Parisiennes: Autopsie de l'exil) testifies to her desire to proliferate, to push the limits of the self, and to write herself into a roman-fleuve (28). It is not surprising that the words "mask," "imposture," "inauthenticity," and "disclosure" frequently appear in Huston's fiction and in her musings on identity, and theatricality is posited as a predominant mode of being for her characters and for herself. Huston identifies with the compulsive transformations of Romain Gary, a "corps étranger dans la literature française" who managed to pass for "an authentic Frenchman," and retells one of Romain Gary's favorite jokes about the chameleon: you put it on blue cloth and it turns blue, you put it on red cloth and it turns red...you put it on Scottish plaid, it goes crazy. "[S]i je n'ai pas été schizophréné par cette expérience," she quotes Gary, "c'est grace à la creation littéraire" - "If this experience didn't make me crazy, it was thanks to literary creation" (Gary qtd. in Huston TRG 39, 23). Unwittingly, Gary teaches a lesson that will become crucial for Huston in her later work: creative writing in several languages and under various names may actually lead to consolidation of identity, not its dispersal.

In her own writing, Huston is eager to subject her characters to the chameleon test - they change nations, religion, their history, and names (Lignes de faille and Tombeau de Romain Gary); in a burlesque Shakespearian twist, swap clothes to confuse their

[103] The entire text is a second-person narrative

identity (twins Barbe and Barnabé in Instruments des ténèbres), or disperse themselves in order to embody hundreds of identities in the course of one evening like the actor Cosmo in Adoration, "a stranger to authenticity […], a mirror inside a kaleidoscope...reflecting motley glints of other people's stories" (Huston Adoration 208). "It might be said that he aspired to illustrate Terence's motto *Nothing human is foreign to me,*" claims a psychiatric expert, one of the numerous witnesses during a hearing of Cosmo's presumed murder (174). In her autobiographical writings, Huston describes her own efforts in similar terms of disguise, imitation, and cross-dressing: "se travestir en Français."

The willful choice of a country and a language means "c'est accepter de s'installer à tout jamais dans l'imitation, le faire-semblant, le theater ("face the fact that for the rest of your life, you will be involved in theatre, imitation, make-believe"), she observes in Nord Perdu" (30). In one of her letters to Leila Sebbar, Nancy Huston reveals her misgivings about her choice of language and describes a recurrent nightmare in which her loss of French leads to the ultimate disclosure of her real identity. With the loss of her French vocabulary and a thick accent, her real self transpires more and more through the French mask, and she is forced to go back to Alberta. "Il s'agit d'une condamnation. Rentrez chez vous, vous n'avez rien à faire ici, vous ne parlez même pas la langue. Toutes ces années n'ont été qu'une immense duperie. Maintenant c'est terminé. On vous a découverte" - « It is a verdict. Go back home, you have nothing to do here, you don't even speak the language. All those years, you have been tricking us. It is over now. You have been caught…" (Huston qtd. in Davey 16). The fear of disclosure is unbearable, but so is the realization of its origin. Huston concedes that she is ashamed of that dream "parce qu'il trahit ma honte de mes origines; et quel mépris à l'égard de mes parents, de

mes concitoyens, tout un milieu, tout un monde" - " because it reveals my shame at my origins, and what contempt for my parents, my fellow-countrymen, an entire community, A whole world" (16).

Yet, inauthenticity is not a derogatory term for Huston, and her writing seeks to accommodate its ambivalence. Part of the imposture, judging by my own experience, comes from the initial feeling of liberation that another tongue gives, an infatuation with the instrument that is already tamed and familiar, yet it is only an extension, a sophisticated prosthesis, rather than a part of one's body. The use of such an instrument can turn into a game of a clever child showing off her dexterity in playing complex pieces or doing acrobatics: I can play it like this, and then accelerate to a maddening pace, and play it blind-folded too, and it never hurts! But absence of pain is exactly what eventually becomes a distressing indicator of non-belonging and of artificiality.

Sylvia Molloy, another contemporary bilingual writer, provides a very pertinent, truthful description of her writing apprenticeship in English, French, and Spanish. Studying literature in France, she was used to writing book reports in French. "I felt I could say one thing just as well as its opposite, provided it sounded good. I was an impostor desperate not to be caught," Molloy admits (75). The looser connection between things and words allowed her to go with the flow, to be led or misled by sheer eloquence. This false comfort, however, over time becomes a source of torments. On one hand, collecting and cataloguing expressions, clever, sonorous turns of phrases is not different from exercises of monolingual writers. But it is much harder for bilingual authors to see where imposture, plagiarizing, and imitation end, and where one's voice begins unless, similarly to Beckett, they subject language itself, any language, to violence that destroys

all the protective walls of the familiar and takes the reader to a completely unknown territory.

Even after many years of writing in French, Nancy Huston keeps questioning her style: “Can you make love with a language through conscious imitation? And if not, how should one go about using it? Whether I take François Rabelais, Marguerite Yourcenar or Michel Tremblay as my model, the problem remains the same: none of these French languages is mine by birthright” (Huston “The Mask” 63). She finds that using expressions like “Parbleu!” or “Tabarnak” or even slightly archaic “je ne veux point,” or “il ne me plaît guère” would be grotesque and too contrived for her. Even perfectly mastered passé simple seems too unnatural, “too refined for a gal from the Prairies” (63). To her dismay, she had to discover that the same personal and stylistic dilemmas exist in English: “I was free to imitate the aristocratic accents of Henry James or to mimic the crude, violent monosyllables of Thomas Sanchez – but no melody came “naturally” to my lips” (“The Mask” 66).

As I have attempted to show in Nabokov’s and Beckett’s case, literary bilingualism may eventually lead to a distinct linguistic identity formed as a result of imitation, imposture, play, and living on the cusp of two linguistic and cultural poles. However, if these examples can be models in the sense of encouraging other authors to experience a vertiginous experience of bilingual writing, they are in no way models or recipes for finding one’s own bilingual voice, style(s), and a path from being in-between the languages to living in and with two languages and world view(s). Nobody can define the moment when the mask or prosthesis metamorphoses into a living being, and for many bilinguals, this moment may never come. Paradoxically, formal and stylistic

innovations marking the authors' bilingual idiolect tend to become essential to gaining a sense of authenticity, a sense of being true to the new self created as a result of multiple crossings, comparisons, and displacements.

Perhaps, it is the desire to communicate the theatricality, the inevitable imposture of bilinguals' everyday and literary life coupled with an awareness of insufficiency of any given language that urges them to seek another sign system or of another media as a complement. For Huston, music seems to be an important signifying practice that she attempts to integrate into her writing.

Bilingual Writing and Music

Increasingly, the logic of musical composition and performance underlies the texts of bilingual writers keen on the aural[104] aspect of the language: Kundera reflects on the idea of theme and variations as a way of connecting the private and the public in The Book of Laughter and Forgetting; Huston questions the opposition between authorship, composition of a work of art, and participation in it (performance and listening) in Variations Goldberg, introduces her own vision of polyphony in Prodige, and makes a character in Lignes de faille sing without words as a way of disengaging from issues of national identity. Music has been an important subject matter for Huston, who herself is a devoted music lover, pianist, and harpsichordist. Her major characters are often professional musicians (a flutist Raphael in L'Empreinte de l'ange, Elsa and Stella in Instruments des ténèbres, Sofia, Lara, and Maya in Prodige), but her use of music is not

[104] These authors seem acutely aware of alliterative sequences, rhythm, and musicality in verse and prose. They may develop complex synesthetic connections and often engage in interlingual puns based on homophones, false cognates, and intentional mistranslations. In the previous chapter, I have already noted the importance of music for Samuel Beckett.

limited solely to thematics and to preoccupation with rhythm and sound combinations;[105] it is rather posited as an important structural technique in her writing and translation, and as a key to reading transformations of self related to the other.

In addition, music in Huston's texts works as a reminder of the latent element of communication that always exerts pressure on the text. She utilizes musical terms and pieces as metaphors that simultaneously reveal and bridge the gap between the two media and as a structural device that allows her to explore issues of temporality and to shed light on the identity of divided characters and narrators as if introducing another medium into linguistically and culturally doubled texts facilitated their reconciliation.

I will begin by reviewing the main notions of musico-literary critical vocabulary and the issues arising from applying them to a literary analysis, then I will examine Huston's changing vision of self and her practice of literary bilingualism through the prism of musical terms *polyphony* and *scordatura* that she introduces in her writing. The notion of polyphony in literary texts became nearly unthinkable without Bakhtin's development of this capacious term. Moreover, the musical metaphor became extremely loaded; it is almost impossible to dissociate polyphony from ethical implications, if not demands, that Bakhtinian reading introduced - correlating diverse, but equal discourses and consciousnesses within one text. I will compare it with Huston's use of polyphony as a genre and will analyze its applicability to her literary narratives, bilingual writing and translation by doing a close reading of her novella Prodige (Prodigy) and then focusing

[105] It is one of the guiding principles of Huston's self-translation. Her translation choices, she claims in an interview with Christine Klein-Lataud, are based on "la « musique » des phrases: le rythme, la phonétique, c'est-à dire la musique en général, pour moi, sont primordiales. Donc souvent, j'ai été prête à sacrifier le sens précis des mots pour préserver un certain nombre de syllabes, ou pour préserver une allitération" (Huston qtd. in Klein-Lataud "Les voix" 224)

on a novel Instruments des ténèbres (Instruments of Darkness), and a bilingual text Limbes=Limbo : hommage to Samuel Beckett. It is my contention that literary bilingualism hinges not only on bilingualism of the writer and the text, but also on a possibility of bilingual reading. I would like to see if the musico-literary narrative can introduce new modalities for polyphonic bilingual reading.

Musicality in Literature

> The most ambitious effort the world knows
> Within this maniac field – narrative prose
> Made to behave like music – we can hear
> When Joyce's Sirens captivate the ear,
> Comic-pedantic fugal, in Ulysses,
> Most brilliant, most ingenious. But this is
> Really a piece of elephantine fun
> Designated to show the thing cannot be done.
>
> Anthony Burgess. Napoleon Symphony.

The non-mimetic, mostly self-referential quality of music, equality of sense and sound, form and content, and simultaneous unfolding of several parts made music a fascinating Other for literature, an enviable medium toward which, according to Pater's famous dictum all art is "constantly aspir[ing]" (95). However, neither domination of certain musical forms (polyphony versus monophony) nor the interrelation between literature and music are ahistorical[106]. Music was not always valued for its pure

[106] Werner Wolf in his study of interaction of music and literature The Musicalization of Fiction summarizes the development of Western musico-literary aesthetics and distinguishes three main stages: 1) "the verbal domination of music" (Neubauer qtd. In Wolf 99) due to music's presumably inferior mimetic characteristics (until the eighteenth century), 2) A growing recognition of music as independent from language (the eighteenth century, particularly its second half); 3) relegation of music to the status of a supreme art, "*the* art of the [nineteenth] century, in Friedrich Schlegel's words (Schlegel qtd. in Wolf 100) with a subsequent development of this idea by the French Parnassiens, Symbolists, and English

expressive, non-mimetic qualities; an appreciation of these particular qualities and writers' desire to imitate them in narrative prose started developing within a wider context of departure from the view of art as a mimetic work in the eighteenth century.

Musicalization of fiction, according to Werner Wolf, is more likely to be expected in "texts in which traditional hetero-referentiality or even conceptual meaning have lost their old predominance and are no longer the (only) organizing principles" (109). The reasons for musicalization in such texts, Wolf explains, is a higher degree of self-referentiality or even metafictional uncertainty or a subject matter that "does not harmonize well with traditional mimetic techniques" (109). The paradox that I see in such a move is that authors who strive to tap into something unmediated, to make language non-mimetic, devoid of content, still have to resort to imitation of either acoustic impressions or a structure characteristic of another medium – music - that has its own complex system of signification. It is easier to locate and compare acoustic effects in music with similar effects achieved in literature, particularly in poetry –onomatopoetic, alliterative, rhythmic sequences. I concede, nonetheless, that musicalization of literary texts can occur at several levels, and while established musical metaphors (polyphony, voice, leitmotif, counterpoint) can help conceptualize textual composition and dynamic interrelations among the author, the text, and the reader, they do not preclude other readings of musical terms or integration of musical devices into narratives.

---

aestheticists. For more on history of musico-literary aesthetics, see Winn, James Anderson. Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music. New Haven: Yale UP, 1981; Neubauer, John. The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics. New Haven: Yale UP, 1988 Barry, Kevin. Language, Music and the Sign: A Study in Aesthetics, Poetics and Poetic Practice from Collins to Coleridge, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987; Lippman, Edward. Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader. Aesthetics in Music, iv, 3 vols, New York: Pendragon Press, 1986.

Wolf's definition is pertinent to Huston's texts, in which reference to music and its "intermedial imitation" presents new ways for "meta-fictional or meta-aethetic reflections on the [..] possibilities of verbal art" (Wolf 109). For instance, in Huston's Plainsong/Cantique des plaines, religious hymns and popular songs make voices and lives of several generations cohere and add credibility to the narrator's reconstruction of her grandfather's life. As Nancy Senior has shown in "Whose song, whose land? Translation and appropriation in Nancy Huston's Plainsong /Cantique des plaines," the songs became an organizing schema of the novel, "a temporal marker, and a a commentary on the action; in addition, some of them are part of the action itself" (675). However, doubling of texts poses an additional problem. In the French text, the songs mostly preserve the cultural references and the tone, but, for the French reader, according to Senior, Paddon's song is no longer *heard*:[107] "[…] the impression given by a song quotation and by its translation may differ greatly from the impression given by the song itself" (681).

The reading experience, of musicalized fiction even in one language appears to be structured by attempts to translate, to overcome emphatic differences between the two media; therefore, transference of terms from one discipline to another remains problematic. Werner Wolf acknowledges that a greater independence of music from linear time is due to polyphony. Many literary texts seek to replicate this effect of simultaneity through various typographical experiments (columns), constant switching of points of view or contexts; however, most of the experiments are conducted at the level of signifiers, not at the level of signified, and only the reader's mind can constitute the polyphonic whole out of the succession of elements (Wolf 21). The most important

[107] Italics are mine

difference for Wolf is that the juxtaposition of various voices inevitably hinges upon linearity of the reading process whereas in music polyphony[108] and simultaneous sounds are "an acoustic reality" (21). Despite all the attempts for literature, especially poetry to attain the quality of music, there are differences that cannot be ignored, claims Steven Paul Scher:

> Literary texts cannot transcend the confines of literary texture and become musical texture. Literature lacks the unique acoustic quality of music; only through ingenious linguistic means or special literary techniques can it imply, evoke, imitate, or otherwise indirectly approximate actual music and thus create what amounts at best to a verbal semblance of music (229).

In its evasiveness, musicality can probably compete with the notoriously indefinable *literariness*, and other definitions of musicality eschew the acoustic quality associated with music altogether. Schopenhauer, for instance, articulates musicality differently - as the closest coming to the experience of willing (in The World as Will and Representation), and Nietzsche follows up on his theory in The Birth of Tragedy. When Nietzsche introduces the Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy, he does not draw a clear distinction between music, literature, and other arts, but rather endows the Dionysian mode, "the spirit of music" with some primordial force that precedes linguistic expression.

My own understanding of musicality in literature and interaction between the two media is closer to that of Theodor Adorno. Adorno accentuates the bi-directionality of this exchange and claims that "music is similar to language," in its production of

[108] Even in music, polyphony may be a reality of the mind rather than an acoustic reality. For instance, if a piece is written for an instrument that can usually play one part at a time (such as a violin, a cello, or a flute), one melody can be perceived as several voices due to its rapid changes of pitch, and the "complete melodies are only formed in [listeners's] minds" (Wolf 21). I.S. Bach resorts to such "fragmented polyphony" in his partitas for cello solo. For a more detailed discussion of such examples, see Wolf's The Musicalization of Fiction and Winn's Unsuspected Eloquence.

meaning. He points to the existence of musical grammar and syntax (sentences, phrases, punctuation), which coincide with musical content (113-17). In his seminal essay "Music, Language, and Composition,"[109] he historicizes tonality and points out that it is also predicated on social and historical contexts and meanings attached to it. However, Adorno is very careful about delineating the idea of potential signification in music (always partially concealed) from signifying language. He regards music as a language "shot with intentions", yet "intentionless" at the same time and maintains that the moment it acquires absolute signification, music ceases to be music and turns into language (114). To be musical, Adorno writes, "means to innervate the intentions that flash forth without losing oneself to them in the process, but taming them instead" (115).

Polyphony in Bakhtin and Huston

However, in literary studies, it is more customary to treat musical terms metaphorically. After Bakhtin's use of musical terms (most notably, polyphony) in his major work on Dostoevsky, musico-literary tropes became an important part of theoretical discourse, but Bakhtin himself insisted that that the comparison between Dostoevsky's writing and polyphony is limited to a graphic analogy, and it does not point to musicality of Dostoevsky's novels.

> The image of polyphony and counterpoint only point out those new problems which arise when a novel is constructed beyond the boundaries of ordinary monologic unity, just as in music new problems arose when the boundaries of a single voice were exceeded. But the material of music and of the novel are too dissimilar for there to be anything more between them than a graphic analogy, a simple metaphor. We are transforming this metaphor into the term "polyphonic novel," since we have not found a more appropriate label. It should not be forgotten, however, that the term has its origins in metaphor (Bakhtin 22).

[109] The essay focuses on the role of language in music rather than music in language, and its second half addresses the relation of musical work to history. Language here can also be synonymous with expression.

The connecting work of a metaphor is one of Huston's central concerns, and it should not be underestimated. "God is literal-minded. He hates metaphors because they get you places," claims one of Huston's major characters, Nad(i)a in Instruments of Darkness. "The devil [diaballein meaning to throw across] throws us across, gets us from here to there" (Huston ID 23). Lawrence Kramer in his interdisciplinary study Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge suggests that as "a communicative act, metaphor opens the possibility of two-way transfers of meaning between its constituent terms, each of which appropriates elements from the other's characteristic spheres of discourse" (70)

By superimposing associations derived from two different fields, Huston introduces a textual strategy that underscores incompleteness of both verbal and non-verbal experiences without denying their respective signification. I am aware of the danger of creating yet another unnecessary meta-language to address the texts that are already doubled due to their bilingual production. Yet, music or another sign system can be used as a complement, as a third[110] language that foregrounds tension between lack of linguistic means or absence of a twin-text and excess, overflowing of meanings and connotations. "One always writes from an absence," confirms Sylvia Molloy in "Bilingualism, Writing, and Not Quite Being There," "the choice of language automatically signifying the postponement of another. What at first would seem an

[110] It is no accident that *thirdness* became such a promising concept for important theories in several fields pertaining to literary studies, namely: semiotics, (Barthes' "The Third Meaning," and Peirce's "Thirdness"), Cultural Studies (Bhabha's "Third space"), foreign language education (Kramsch's "Third Culture"), and literacy pedagogy (Gutierrez and Kostogriz). Peirce's theory informed further important studies in cross-cultural communication and language acquisition. Its emphasis on relationality of signs and meanings (a sign brings to the mind of its receiver not just an object it is supposed to relate to, but also another sign which Peirce calls 'the interpretant'. Signs acquire meaning primarily through interpretants) makes it cognate with Bakhtin's dialogism. See Holquist's further elaboration on Bakhtin's dialogism in Holquist, Michael. Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World. London: Routledge, 1990.

imposition – why does one have to choose – quickly turns into an advantage. The absence of what is postponed continues to work, obscurely, on the chosen language, suffusing it, even better, contaminating it, with an autrement dit that brings it unexpected eloquence" (73-4).

If a musical term is introduced into a literary narrative, then even within one language the reading practice is also doubled. In a study about the relation of musicology and literary studies, Frederique Arroya writes about complexity of reading procedures involved in decoding such texts. Similarly to bilingual reading, they call for double interpretation: first, according to norms of literary criticism, then distinguishing qualities characteristic of music, finding a meaningful connection, and maneuvering between the two codes (408).

Before turning our attention to Huston's texts, it is important to review the main tenets of Bakhtin's critical vocabulary because many of the salient characteristics of Huston's style emerge as a result of this comparison. For Bakhtin, polyphony hinges on co-existence of independent, free voices of characters, narrators, consciousnesses, and the worlds they represent (6-8). Novel in general is a more appropriate receptacle for such a multiplicity than other genres, and Dostoevsky's polyphonic novels, according to Bakhtin, represent a fundamentally new genre, in which the usual connections at the level of plot are disrupted; plot and dramatic dialogue become secondary, and the narration is oriented toward and shaped by worlds of autonomous subjects, not by the unified authorial consciousness that projects its vision of an objectified world (6-9, 17). Bakhtin concedes that the relation of various parts to each other may seem loose and chaotic in a polyphonic novel if it is treated in a monological context, but when understood as the

dynamic, dialogic inter-relation within a polyphonic world, parts and voices do cohere in a "wholeness of [the author's] poetics" (8).

Bakhtin, however, does not equate "wholeness of poetics" and co-existence of heterogeneous discourses with the unity of the text; "the unity of the polyphonic novel – a unity standing above the word, above the voice, above the accent – has yet to be discovered" (43). Nor does he find a formally multi-leveled and multi-voiced texts a good example of polyphony;[111] for him, they are too pre-determined and subjugated to the authorial intention (17-8). As I hope to show in my discussion of Huston's Prodige, this is an important point that will distinguish Huston's formal use of polyphony, in which multi-voicedness never completely escapes the author's controlling grip. Bakhtin explains that Doestoevsky's polyphonic novel is dialogic not because it follows conventions of a dialogue (especially in drama):

> it is constructed not as a whole of a single consciousness absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses , none of which entirely becomes an object for the other; this interaction provides no support for the viewer who would objectify an entire event according to some ordinary monologic category (thematically, lyrically or cognitively) – and this consequently makes the viewer also a participant. Not only does the novel give no firm support outside the rupture-prone world of dialogue for a third, monologically all-encompassing consciousness – but on the contrary, everything in the novel is structured to make dialogic opposition inescapable." (18).

[111] Bakhtinian metaphors were not immutable; on the contrary, they were also shaped in a conversation with his contemporaries. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist observe that, by the early 1930s, "Bakhtin had apparently dropped 'polyphony' from his vocabulary," as a possible reaction against imposition of Gorky's metaphor for "socialist realism as an orchestra in which all the instruments are in harmony" (qtd. in Benson 296). At that time, the image of the orchestra was constantly evoked by the authorities in literature. In the glossary appended to The Dialogic Imagination, Holquist proposes that Bakhtin himself was using the idea of orchestration, but as a means of achieving the polyphonic novel (430).

Polyphony is not restricted to a certain category of the novel's structure. Bakhtin reiterates that "dialogic relationships exist among all elements of novelistic structure; [..]they are juxtaposed contrapuntally" (40).

Furthermore, Bakhtin contends that dialogic relationships permeate all human speech and all manifestation of human life and recalls Glinka's idea that everything in life is a counterpoint: "From the point of view of philosophical aesthetics, contrapuntal relationships in music are only a musical variety of the more broadly understood conceptof *dialogic relationships*" (42). Even though this statement is most likely to be understood in the light of Bakhtin's idea of multi-voicedness, a constant engagement with the other, the term becomes unproductive for analysis of Huston's novels unless we single out elements of her texts involved in contrapuntal exchange. What elements can be read as couterpoint in Huston: double narratives, characters, temporal planes, or a presence of a twin text in the other language? Heterogeneity of the material makes this selection difficult and inevitably reductive, but I will try to examine all of the above-mentioned elements as sites of encounters and new articulations of polyphonic relationships. My hypothesis is that for Huston, dialogic relationships at every level are possible only if each voice first gains sufficient autonomy. Only then can it open up to a real dialogue and communication and acknowledge its inter-dependence.

Prodige: polyphonie

One of the Huston's recurrent strategies is to introduce several formally separated narrative voices and to present the story from multiple points of view. Although this

technique is deployed in most of her texts, she explicitly defines the genre of one of her French texts, Prodige, as polyphonie.[112] Curiously, Huston translates it into English as Prodigy: novella; thus, polyphony is absent from the English text. It is hard to explain this discrepancy in an otherwise faithful translation. The self-conscious designation in French puts more emphasis on the reading technique: the reader is forced to incorporate the notion of polyphony into the reading experience and look for the development of parts or voices. At first sight, Huston's attempts to display the artificiality of linear narrative in Prodige, to inhabit several consciousnesses, and to approximate subjective duration with narrative time, do not contradict Bakhtin's vision of polyphony. Polyphony in Huston celebrates indeterminacy, absence of fixity and certainty (a quality emphasized by bilingual writing) and irreducibility to any conviction or group. I am wary of the attraction of the term that can be indiscriminately applied to all bilingual writers who always incorporate several cognitive models, intertexts, and consciousnesses in their work, but Huston, in my opinion, makes its operation quite explicit.

In Prodige, the use of polyphony as a genre mobilizes the interaction between speech and music and serves to underscore the difference between a musical polyphony

---

[112] It is interesting to note that the title of her first English novel is Plainsong (translated into French as Cantique des plaines). The French title keeps the idea of religious music, but loses some of the resonances of a richer English title that evokes the idea of monophony (a Gregorian chant), a song of vast Canadian plains, a simple, plain song. "…just the two straight parallel lines and the hundreds of perpendicular ties striping their way across the flats to infinity […] just the perfect emptiness of the plain […] until there was not even a you left to revel in your aloneness but only the song, the single singing line of notes, the one long lonely modulated plaintive melody, the endless rippling golden unadulterated plainsong" (154).

Using fragments of her late grandfather's diaries, Paula Sterling attempts to re-create and redeem Paddon's life and his failed philosophical treaty on nature of time. Exceptionally for Huston's work, not classical music, but hymns and folks songs are used to structure the narrative flow. The integration of hymns and popular songs poses a particular problem in translation. For a detailed analysis of translation of songs into French, see Senior, Nancy. "Whose song, whose land? Translation and appropriation in Nancy Huston's Plainsong /Cantique des plaines." Meta : journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal 46.4 (2001): 675-686.

with its independent voices and the desire of polyphony as an experience of being with others and yet keeping one's voice. The genre of polyphony seems verbally and structurally imposed not only to emphasize multi-voicedness, but also in order to create boundaries between voices that may fully dissolve into each other, and to prevent disintegration of words and music into unbridled avalanche of signs. ("plein de petits trous qui dansent. Ou des notes qui chantent…mais ça commence à être désordonné, les notes s'égaillent de haut en bas de la portée[…] Chacune a son mot à dire mais ça ne fait pas de sens" (Huston Prodige 138). "Lots of little dancing, singing hole notes… [that] are getting out of hand, the notes are falling all over each other, spilling off the staff[…] They're all trying to say something but it doesn't make sense at all" (Prodigy 89).

There are few characters in Prodige: three generations of women-pianists, Sofia, Lara, and Maya, Lara's husband Robert, who leaves shortly after Maya's birth, and their new widower-neighbor Lucien, an atheist making saints and stained-glass windows with his nephew Benjamin. The fourteen-year old Benjamin, whose only passion seemed to be entomology, and Maya become close friends. Lara's student Alexis and an eminent piano professor Dianescu appear only twice to mark important turning points in the narration and to provide a rare outsiders' view on the otherwise fused relation of mothers, daughters, and art.

It can be argued that in Prodige as well as in other Huston's books (Lignes de faille, Dolce agonia, L'Empreinte de l'ange), counterpoint can be defined not so much as a relation between voices, languages, and discourses of characters as the characters' peculiar experience of time. Her major characters are always strangers to themselves trying to metamorphose, to extricate themselves from their past, and to re-create

themselves. What they tend to ignore is that their past reverberates with the present; they are immersed in both, and as they are struggling to forget their painful past, present historical events, history with a big H ("une autre histoire, la Grande, l'Histoire avec sa grande hache (13),[113] as Perec called it, keeps mauling them with the same inexorable force. For instance, apathetic Saffie from L'Empreinte de l'ange attempts to dissociate herself from the shame and trauma of her German childhood during World War II and to turn into somebody else, in her enemy in some sense. She becomes French by marrying a brilliant French flutist Raphael. Neither her marriage nor the birth of her son Emile, succeeds in reviving her from her zombie-like state and rooting her in the present until she meets another foreigner, a Hungarian Jewish refugee Andras. Saffie's affair unfolds during the time of the Algerian war and uprisings in Paris, but sealed in her own world, she is impervious to anything outside. Saffie fails to see fatal repetitions of tragedies because she has no room for sympathy and no capacity for understanding others' pain. The contraction of time in the experience of several generations is even more pronounced in Lignes de faille and in Prodige.

Prodige, in contrast to other novels, is deliberately stripped off any external events, except an oblique mention of Sofia's and Lara's father's Soviet past. This absence, like silence in music, becomes significant,"Les vrais musiciens savent déchiffrer le silence," ("real musicians know how to decipher silence"), Lara and Sofia teach Maya (168). With its tight focus on the interior connection between mothers and daughters, language and music, Prodige is probably Huston's most private text.

[113] a pun on un grand H – une grande hache (axe)

The book is almost entirely set either in a Parisian apartment or in a hospital room, where Lara, struggling to keep her prematurely born daughter Maya alive, imagines her as a child-prodigy. Lara's speech acquires a quality of incantation, and her stories project Maya into life. Apparently, Maya survives (Lara promises her not just a life, but life with an excess of powers and miracles, sur-vie, survival (23), and the rest of the story unfolds when Maya is ten. However, until the very end, there remains a sense of unresolved temporal ambiguity: is everything indeed happening ten years later, or is it part of Lara's story that she tells Maya at the hospital? Similarly to most Huston's novels, all characters are narrators of their own parts. They are deliberately devoid of omniscience, and their fragmented stories intend to provide a multiplicity of perspectives irreducible to a single, pre-determined reading. However, the conspicuous presentation of distinct voices and pieces of polyphonic music, especially Bethoven's sonata 29 opus 106, which seems to be on a par with characters and even to determine their development, further modifies the reading experience.

The opening scene features Sofia listening to Lara's struggle with Beethoven's fugue from opus 106.[114] Lara is striving to turn the wall of notes into a meaningful wave, "[f]ailing, [f]alling," claiming that it is "the end of all movement. The end of beauty and truth" - "Echoue. Achoppe. Le mouvement qui s'arrête. La vérité, la beauté qui s'arrêtent" (10). She supplements her own signs to the sheet music scribbling fingering on it, yet she knows she will transgress her own inscription as well as Beethoven's, and

[114] The last movement of the sonata is *fuga a tre voci con alcune licenze (a fugue in three voices with some deviations)*. In fact, there are more than three voices in the fugue (cf with the characters' voices). This spectacular fugue builds up on Bach's legacy, but it also reinvents it exhausting the possibilities of the genre. Lewis Lockwood remarks that "[h]is aim in this movement is to rival Bach's capacity to expand and rejoice in displays of rigorous formal logic and contrapuntal skill while infusing them with that "poetic" element (as Beethoven himself called it) which is fully his own" (382-383). Andras Schiff, one of the best performers of Beethoven's sonatas, notes in his lectures that this occasional liberty with rule makes the entire sonata more human.

the wall of signs and sounds will not be transformed into music. Sofia, an old Russian pianist, acknowledges that this fugue is truly daunting ("d'une difficulté diabolique,") but she disapproves of Lara's ambition to say something with music. She attributes most of Lara's torments to her atheist sense of unlimited responsibility and her desire for self-expression. Sofia mutters that Lara should not be trying to express herself, she should let music and Beethoven speak: "Je sais ce qu'elle se dit, ma dotchenka. Le piano, se dit-elle, est à la fois ce qui me permet et ce qui m'empêche de m'exprimer. Ah ! Si seulement elle songeait à exprimer Beethoven au lieu d'elle-même! - "The piano," Sofia reads Lara's mind," is both what lets me and what keeps me from expressing myself" (10).

Music and Speech in Prodige

Maya's and Lara's Fugue

Whereas music freed from fear and desire for self-expression eludes Lara, Lara's speech attains a quality of music in its creative function. She conjures up Maya, an embodiment of a prodigious musical gift, and makes Maya's human existence possible by performing her to life: "respire! Vis!" (56) - "Breathe! Live!" (19) and giving her what Lara herself does not possess – joy of music: "je t'aurai fait ce don, ce don de la musique comme jeu" (56) - "I will have given you the gift of all gifts, music as a game" (38); "tu joueras comme tu respires – *respire, ma petite! Respire, je t'en supplie!"* (57). "playing will come as easily to you as breathing. – oh, breathe, my little one! breathe, I beseech you!" (39). After her premature birth, Maya has to stay at the hospital, and during these two months, Lara and Maya develop a disturbingly strong symbiotic

relationship. Their bond is forged outside time and space "enfermées dans la chambre blanche, lovées dans notre bulle de chaleur au coeur du froid hivernal…espace hors de l'espace, …temps hors du temps" (70) - " Tucked away together in the white room, curled up in our bubble of warmth in the depth of an icy winter, a space outside of space, […] a time outside time" (47). Talking to premature Maya at the hospital, Lara is not only creating Maya and helping her to hold on to life, she is creating a new self through her, yet Lara's project is about to fail.

Exploring an incessant act of creation of self through other in speech and in art, Prodige presents an artistic elaboration of Huston's reflections in "A Tongue Called Mother" and "The Foreign Mother." Pitting creation against procreation is hardly original;[115] however, in Prodige, motherhood and speech are inseparable from artistic and self-creation. Motherhood in Nancy Huston's works is fraught with complications, and the idea of mother tongue, as I will show later, is no exception. Motherhood becomes fragmented: in almost a fairy-tale fashion, biological mothers disappear (choreographer Lyn[116] in Virevolte or Erra's mother in Lignes de faille), lose their mind (Instruments des ténèbres), and make room for step-mothers, spiritual mothers or other surrogates, who either totally replace them or assume some of their roles. "All mothers are foreigners, " writes Huston, […] "our first encounter with the incontrovertible reality of the other ("The Foreign Mothers" 354-5).

Huston sets up an opposition between music as play, music coming naturally to Maya and all the diabolic labor of repetitions (meaning both rehearsal, practicing, and

[115] Another hybrid text (a diary-literary analysis) undoing this dichotomy is Journal de la création.

[116] The choice of names in Slow Emergencies is significant (Lyn, daughter of Marilyn, an absent mother, has two daughters Angela and Marina.

repetition in French) for her mother, Lara: "Mon ange, tu domines – regarde, tu conquiers, cet instrument qui m'a toujours dominée," (62) - "oh, my angel – you dominate – yes, look, you conquer the instrument that's always conquered me," exclaims Lara listening to or imagining Maya's interpretation of Bach's Chromatic Fantasy (42). Repetition producing difference is also one of the key concepts bridging the divide between the musical and the literary.[117]

If for Lara, it is all effort and pain, for Maya, repetition is never an exact imitation, but a new creation. Lara's desperation is contrasted with Maya's enchantment: "Où est la musique? Où est la musique? Où est la musique?" Lara keeps inquiring (108). "Tout ce que je sais c'est que moi je suis ailleurs, jamais au même endroit qu'elle, pas dans la musique mais dans l'effort, tant d'années d'efforts, "répéter, répéter, répéter et rerépéter[…] me sachant dotée de *beaucoup de talent* […] –et sentant à chaque instant, derrière ce talent, la peur nue et crue. Alors que ce dont il s'agit, c'est la joie!...A jamais hors de ma portée. Je mourrai avant d'atteindre la musique" (109). In English, the focus is slightly displaced from the location of music to its essence: "What is music? What is music? What is music? All I know I is that I am somewhere else, never in the same place it is …all I am all that she knows is effort good at is making efforts, years and years of efforts, practicing practicing practicing " behind that talent, raw naked fear…Whereas it's supposed to be about joy!...Forever beyond my reach. I'll die before I am allowed to catch up with music" (70-1).

Maya sees every day, every piece of music as unique: "impossible qu'il y ait deux journées pareilles. Aussi impossible que de jouer cette fugue comme je l'ai jouée hier

[117] For instance, Proust's famous reflections on the involuntary memory's ability to create and transform through repetition of past impressions.

soir. C'est un nouveau morceau, tout nouveau, ça vient juste de naître, c'est jamais une répétition…la fugue est toujours là en train de naître" (146). "Two days can never be the same. Any more than the fugue can be the same today as it was yesterday. It's a new piece of music every time you play it, never a repetition – it was born this very minute" (94).

The movements of the characters' voices, primarily those of the three women, also resemble a polyphonic composition, not unlike the opus 106 fugue: one part states the subject, then let another voice restate it, invert, or augment it while it temporarily withdraws, "runs away", as the etymology of fugue suggests, to culminate in a coda. For instance, Lara tells stories to baby-Maya to bring her to life, then Maya tells stories to silent Lara when she is in the hospital. Maya restates Lara's promise to teach her everything she knows and she doesn't know about music: "tu m'as appris tout ce que je sais et tout ce que je ne sais pas au sujet de la musique, les quatre-vingt-huit notes du clavier et puis les cent millions de constellations dans l'univers, chaque note une étoile" (168) - "you taught me everything *I know and everything I don't know about music*...the eighty-eight notes of the keyboard and the hundred million constellations in the sky – every note is a star" (108). Their voices are completely interwoven, and it is impossible to know where *you* becomes *I*. Maya remembers how Lara's voice and her singing kept her alive from the day Maya was born: "c'est elle qui m'a donné la vie et la musique en meme temps" (136) - "It gave me life and music at the same time" (88).

Significantly, Maya brings a dictionary to the hospital to help Lara find her words and invent new ones, but the words that link them cannot be found in a dictionary. Playful Maya invites Lara to a warm, distant place "aux Antilles…ou aux Antilles-podes.

Les Antilles-podes et les arthro-podes s'en vont en bateau…"(171). - "We could go all the way to the antipodes…! Antipode and Arthropode went out on the deep blue sea…"(109). She invents words and baptizes herself as a *moulipa* (a crossing of moustique, libellule, and Papillion, *dramosilk* in the English edition). She does not know that this nickname is not original; it had already been given to her by Lara by the end of their stay at the hospital ten years earlier.

The fugue figures in the text as an ultimate example of a polyphonic form, but it also actuates another meaning of a fugue, particularly pronounced in the French version of the novella – escape, flight, a mental condition of dissociation from one's identity.[118] The French *fugue* evinces both a contrapuntal composition based on fairly rigid rules and a flight whereas in English, the latter dimension is almost non-existent or is reduced to a narrower sense of a mental pathology. David Powell notes the importance of this movement in "L'expression contrapuntique: la fugue prodigieuse de Nancy Huston": first, Robert leaves shortly after Maya's birth, because despite his poignant, impossible love, he feels that there is no room for him in the new tandem. Shortly after Maya's successful audition with illustrious Dianescu, Sofia dies, and finally, Lara herself abandons music and literally flees (Powell 120).[119] Unable to thwart her feeling of worthlessness, she leaves the house, checks in at the first hotel she sees, and overcome with lassitude, releases all control over her life and retreats into silence.

---

[118] Throughout the entire text, I see a better integration of formal musical structures in the narrative in the French text which might have even caused the change of polyphonie into novella. Admittedly, it is only a conjecture, and it is impossible to make an objective assessment.

[119] Powell does not consider both texts, only the French Prodige and he connects the figure of *fugue* with evasiveness of the author herself.

Yet, the use of the future tense in Lara's own account of her flight ("au café je commanderai un ballon de rouge et je le boirai […], subitement la fatigue me tombera dessus" (134-5) with a sudden switch into present, undermines the tragic effect and situates the events between two temporal planes - in the same oneiric realm in which Maya was born.

Characters' Musico-literary Exchanges

Words in Prodige do not try to pass for music; music and speech can co-exist and complement each other as Maya's and Sofia's exchanges show. Every night Maya plays a piece of music for her grandmother, and Sofia tells her a story related to this piece.

"chaque soir après le repas, babouchka montera dans ta chambre pour que tu lui joues quelque chose; en échange, elle te racontera une histoire ayant un lien avec ce que tu viens de jouer" (70). - "Every evening after supper, Babushka will go up to your room so that you can play her something on the piano – and afterwards, she'll tell you a story to go with what you've just played" (47). The relationship between the grandmother and Maya, as Lara imagines it, is not nearly as intense as that of mothers and daughters. Maya, Lara believes, is what Sofia had always wanted Lara to be. She wonders how her mother came up with this ritual - all she did with Lara was pressing a key and allowing little Lara to approach by one step if she guessed it right and take a step back if Lara did not. However, even though this musico-narrative exchange is conjured up by Lara (the use of the future tense again is telling), she excludes herself from it: she will be cleaning up in the kitchen "en vous écoutant de loin" (70).) "I'll hear you from afar…" (47).

Words and music acquired the status of religion for Sofia. When Lucien asks her why Russian icons were not preserved the way they were in France during the

Occupation, she retorts that it is an unfair comparison. Very briefly the political and the familial come together in this explanation. Sofia talks about destruction of Churches by Bolsheviks and stresses the impossibility of hiding, of separating the most intimate from the pervasion of the external: "ils étaient parmi nous," she explains, "après, vous comprenez, il a fallu qu'on apprenne à se tourner vers l'intérieur, à mettre notre foi en des choses invisibles. Les mots: poèmes appris par coeur, prières silencieuses. La musique. Les mathématiques. Les échecs" (103-4). The answer sounds more implacable in English "they were our own children. So, you see, we had to learn to turn inwards, and put our faith in invisible things. Words – poems learned by heart, silent prayers. Music. Mathematics. Chess" (67).

The same destruction from inside happens in her family, and Lara, who is, in my view, the only realistic, fully-formed character, cannot be insulated from it. Sofia, Lara, and Maya appear almost as a mocking female holy Trinity, and Lara's mediation between her mother and Maya, a pure spirit of music, is a prodigious sacrifice. Paradoxically, after merging with impossible expectations of her mother on one hand and with the dream of her daughter on the other hand, Lara plunges too far into depths of herself. When Robert, conscious of inadequacy of any words, tried to console her, Lara explained that only she herself could resolve this crisis. Instead of using the common expression *s'en sortir* or *sortir par moi-même*, she distorts it and by doing so, points to the problem: she has to "sortir d['elle]-même, "literally get out of herself (116). Her solution in the English Prodigy does sound not nearly as radical; it is not her sense of *self* that is subject to evacuation: "No, I've got to work it out of myself" (75).

Although Bakhtin considered that all elements of the novels could be polyphonic, he primarily addressed characters of Dostoevsky's novels as carriers of polyphonic consciousnesses. The Dostoevskian character for him has "his own ideological authenticity and, meanwhile, has an independent nature; he might be regarded as a creator who possessed his own complete ideology" (Bakhtin PD 28). Dostoevsky, according to Bakhtin, exercises less control over his characters, releasing them into the world not as objects, but as equal consciousnesses without subsuming them under the authorial position. In my view, this is a crucial distinction between Bakhtin's and Huston's use of polyphony. Huston's characters in Prodige are not free; they are reflected in each other, but they are also calculated and controlled by the author and by the very architecture of the novella.

In fact, only Lara appears as an authentic character with a will of her own; Sofia provides the necessary historical anchoring to the story of the creative triad,[120] and Maya possesses neither an independent consciousness nor a logic of a human character - even her name derived from Sanskrit means illusion, enchantment. Lara explains Maya's love of polyphony and pre-Romantic music (Bach, Gesualdo, Gibbons) by her proximity to angels when she spent so much time between life and death "les compositeurs qui, comme toi, ont été frôlés par une aile céleste" - "all the composers who, like yourself were once touched by the gods"(70/47). For Sofia, Maya is a divine gift to be preserved, for Lara, she is an accomplished, perfect Lara, a combined dream of her mother and her own efforts. "Mais en même temps, chérie, tu es moi, n'est-ce pas? puisque c'est moi qui t'ai faite, moi qui t'ai faite vivre en t'aimant, te parlant, te caressant chaque jour" - "And

[120] On the other hand, introducing three major characters/voices instead of couples and doppelgangers favored by bilingual writers may allow Huston to attenuate the tension created by contrasting two characters and start devising ways of mediation.

yet…in a way…*you are me*, aren't you darling?.. since I am the one who made you, brought you to life by stroking you with my hands and voice, talking to you, day after day" (69, 46).

Lara's memories of her early years and her childhood become increasingly confounded with dreams and desires of Maya's future, and it is impossible to distinguish between Lara and Maya anymore. Little Lara used to hide under the piano when her mother was practicing, and she imagines her daughter doing the same: "tu es si petite, je suis si petite mon ange, le piano est ma maison" (93-4) "you are so tiny, I'm so tiny, little angel, and the piano is my house" (61). Lara feels that Maya will no longer need her, but the most terrible thing that she has to admit is that music does not need her either. Far from being a unifying, universal force, music becomes "un champ de bataille" (92), a battlefield for Lara. It becomes obvious as after a good dinner, Maya suggests playing something together and Lara cannot refuse. Sofia feels that her daughter will be confronting her demons. The sentences become shorter as if Lara were struggling to breathe, and each step takes her closer to an abyss. "Mais elle y va. Comme à l'abbatage. D'un pas lourd" (105). Lara's voice is completely smothered, and it is Sofia who reads her part: "Le problème, se dit-elle, c'est que la musique avance, et que moi je ne veux pas aller avec elle: j'ai envie de la retenir, la garder pour moi, la serrer contre moi, la transformer en boule dure et me cramponner autour, me baillonner avec" (105).

Intolerable Polyphony

Thus, polyphony in Prodige signifies both an acceptance of multiple voices and identities within and without, and a desire for form, for limits, for containment enabling communication. The distinct voices in Huston's Prodige never quite come together in a

Bakhtinian dialogue. Prodige suggests that unbounded musical and textual polyphony in which "all languages are foreign, and distinct languages do not exist" (Scarpetta qtd. in Todorov 204) can lead to cacophony and impede communication. For a dialogue to take place, there should be a way to prevent full fusion of self with the other, signs with sounds, and future with present, or, in Todorov's words, a way to create a hierarchy. Instead of widening the reader's horizons, Huston remarks in her Longings and Belongings, "the role of today's intellectuals and writers is the opposite of what it used to be: to narrow down, to isolate. To build walls…To hold at bay the dizzying dazzling rush of sounds and images, choices, information and influences. To create a void. A silence" (38).

Neither motherhood nor art becomes a salvation in itself. The fear of abandonment, fear of not being good enough for music, for Sofia and, consequently, for herself, plunges Lara into silence and pathology. Merging with Maya, on the other hand, needing her, feeling needed destroys the protective walls of selfhood. Lara's flight becomes an enactment of the battle between the semiotic and the symbolic (Kristeva), and the semiotic takes over. In black holes made by Lara's cigarettes she sees emptiness signs, myriads of notes overloaded with meaning singing their own parts, but these signs are incomprehensible, and their singing means insanity - disintegration of identity, music, and speech: "plein de petits trous qui dansent. Ou des notes qui chantent…chacune a son mot à dire mais ça ne fait pas sens" (138) - "Lots of little dancing, singing hole notes[…]. They're all trying to say something but it doesn't make sense at all" (89).

The holes and notes cause frightening associations. As Lara is smoking, an ember falling from a cigarrete makes a little black hole – "comme le trou que laisse une balle dans le front d'un homme assassiné […] elles sont partout les notes, elles s'éparpillent au hazard à travers le cosmos, je n'ai pas voulu ça" (138) - "like the bullet hole in the forehead of a man who's just been shot […] The notes are everywhere, randomly scattered across the cosmos – oh, I never wanted this!" (89). There is an irresolvable tension between the need to separate in order to make sense and the need for the voices to be bound together, and Huston's narrative technique mimics this tension that refuses to lead to any synthesis[121] or unity.

For a polyphonic vision, there should be an ability to grasp and work out connections and patterns between the two worlds, two temporalities, or two voices, and that is where Huston's characters often fail. Keeping several voices together without their total fusion, pulverization, or subordination by the dominant one is an enormous task, yet finding a way to do it is critical for the author. Maya embodies completeness, harmony, and art as a divine gift that transcends all limitations, but she does not really possess a full, consciousness independent of Lara. Maya's joy of music is unthinkable without Lara's struggle and without the power of Lara's words to perform and create.

Without Lara's human suffering, Maya's music turns into intolerable polyphony that kills. Her music is sober, unencumbered by human emotions. When Sofia hears her interpretation of Chopin's Ballade 2 that goes against Lara's,[122] "et de jouer le même

[121] Her avoidance of the dialectical approach is not surprising - Bakhtin was also striving to conceptualize the dialogical impulse outside the dialectical.

[122] The ballad is very representative of Chopin's romantic music. There is an emphatic contrast between two subjects: the first subject in F major is serene and subtle, and the second one in A minor is truly tumultuous; therefore, it is particularly difficult to imagine a non-expressive interpretation of the ballad.

passage platement, sobrement, en laissant les notes dire seules ce qu'elles ont à dire, sans que l'âme béante les bouscule, sans que des torrents de larmes les charrient, sans que la pédale le grossisse le sentiment" (93). – "flatly, soberly, allowing the notes to say what they've got to say, without being coerced by the suffering soul, swept along by torrents of tears, underscored by the pedal" (61), Sofia admires it, but defines Maya's interpretation as implacable. Music is emanating from Maya without any effort, and exasperated Lara is imploring for interruption of those cascades of sounds. She realizes that Maya's music is not really human. Its beauty is absolute, independent of human experiences, simple and transparent: "beauté intolérante, intolérable, temps pur, mortalité pure. Ses voix ne chantent pas ensemble, ne tendent pas la main les unes aux autres, ne consolent le coeur, ne caressent le tympan. Elles sont souveraines et impitoyables, insolentes dans leur perfection séparée" (115). - "intolerant, intolerable beauty[…] Pure time. Pure mortality. Her melodic lines don't sing together; don't reach out to each other; they neither console the heart nor caress the eardrum. Each of them is sovereign and pitiless – insolent in their individual perfection" (74).

Maya is a pure dream, and so is *polyphony* in the title: a dream of non-contemporary music, universal, implacable in its perfection, yet unattainable as a human experience. The multiplicity of voices, identities, and roles in this dream is to be resolved harmoniously according to the rules of musical composition; nonetheless, the structure of the novella only emphasizes the impossibility of such reconciliation for the characters. The disjunction is foregrounded and better elucidated by another musical term that Huston introduced in her narrative – *Scordatura.* Although *scordatura,* unlike *polyphony,*

Lara's execution is probably more conventional. She wants Maya to think of Chopin's intentions, of what he wants to express and what Maya wants to share with others (Prodige 92).

is used only metaphorically, it becomes the central motif of her Instruments des ténèbres/Instruments of Darkness and informs theoretical moves that Huston undertakes as she gradually develops as a bilingual, rather than a francophone writer.

Scordatura and The Divided Writer

Instruments des ténèbres/Instruments of Darkness

"Moi aussi j'ai besoin du dédoublement, de la duplicité. Pas de vision sans division. Je ne cesse de comparer, combiner, séduire, traduire, trahir. J'ai le coeur et le cerveau fendus, comme les sabots du Malin. Anglais, français, "declares the narrator of Huston's Instruments des ténèbres (30) - "I too need to be double, duplicitous, two-timing. I thrive on division and derision, I never cease to compare, contrive, betray, translate. My heart and brain are cloven like the devil's hoof. English, French (Instruments of Darkness 25).[123] In a way, the entire novel is an exercise in division, doubling, and double entendre, in which language switching triggers the creation of a new part. Huston acknowledges that when she was writing it, she wrote all the Berry episodes in French and the New York ones in English and then translated them: "J'ai composé l'histoire alternée des deux femmes d'Instruments des ténèbres, en passant de l'anglais (pour Nadia) au français (pour Barbe), chapître après chapiître. Tous les trois jours, je me reposais d'une langue sur l'autre et y puisais un regain d'énergie" (Huston

[123] The translation of this central statement also introduces a subtle division: rhymed, forceful, motto-like "pas de vision sans division" does not contain vision in English, which is compensated by an addition of derision and two-timing.

qtd. in Gazier 43).[124] Instruments des ténèbres was published in 1996 immediately followed by Instruments of Darkness in 1997.

The genesis of the novel(s) complicates its status and obliterates the distinction between primordial creation and repetition, reworking, or re-creation: both texts are original, and the originals are results of translation. Similarly to the protagonists of the novel, twins Barbe and Barnabé, English and French texts reach for each other and gain strength from the other's presence, but they never achieve any unity. Morever, the division is further reinforced by introducing two narratives. Instruments des ténèbres/ Instruments of Darkness, alternates between the *Scordatura notebook*, a journal of a mid-aged American writer Nad(i)a, and the *Resurrection Sonata*, the story of Barbe and Barnabé unfolding in the French Berry in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The book the narrator is researching and writing, a story of a young French maidservant sentenced to death for concealing her pregnancy and getting rid of the child, helps her come to terms with herself and to be released from self-imposed nothingness and oblivion.

At the beginning of the Scordatura notebook, Nad(i)a explains her own renaming and re-birth. She awards herself a PhD in hatred, proclaims her interest in falsehoods and lying, appoints *daimon* as her muse, and expresses a disbelief in names of plants, flowers, and objects. Her own power is a travesty of the divine: she is both nameless and the namer, "Myself also I have named, or renamed. My parents called me Nadia and when it

[124] Christine Klein-Lataud reproduces a fascinating page from Nancy Huston's manuscript of the novel in "Les voix parallèles de Nancy Huston." The passages in English and in French are juxtaposed or, at times, superimposed in such a way that the reader herself is forced to turn her head or to turn the page upside-down several times.

became clear to me that "I" did not exist, I cut it out.[125] Now my name, pen name, pet name, only remaining name, is Nada. Nothingness" (12). Nad(i)a's dreams of her perfect witness, her dead twin-brother Nathan-nothing get entangled with her memories of botched motherhood, her own mother's decline, and her pact with the devil.[126] Nad(i)a approaches the darkest corners of her memories and manages to harness her longing for the non-existent twin-brother by imagining an incredibly vital connection between Barbe and her twin-brother Barnabé. Resurrection of self and hope (meaning of her original name, Nadia) becomes inextricable from artistic creation, and the increasing interdependence of the two narratives produces an effect of a musical composition, in which the intervals are deliberately abolished in a diabolical scordatura.

Stella, Nad(i)a's spiritual mother, a cellist who used to play in the same baroque ensemble with Nad(i)a's mother Elisa, was the first one to explain the meaning of *scordatura* to her. Scordatura, literally meaning mistuning, adjusted tuning or cross-tuning, was often used by Baroque composers who would alter the standard tuning to be able to play unwieldy intervals. Nad(i)a realized that it was a very accurate description of who she was, a "mistuned instrument," "twisted-strings soul" (27). Moreover, she finds the verb's polysemy striking: *scordare* means to mistune, to adjust tuning, or to get out of tune, but it also means to forget. In *Scordatura Notebook*, Nad(i)a struggles to forget or harmonize all the dissonances of her life, but as her fiction writing (The Resurrection Sonata) progresses, she slowly realizes that those dissonances are the very fabric of her life.

---

[125] The pun is less obvious in French; it had to be supplemented by a brief explanation:"[…] et quand il m'est devenu clair que *I*, le je, n'existait pas, je l'ai éliminé" (13).

[126] His role and his voice are rather ambiguous ranging from a spirit resembling Socrates's daimon to Mephistopheles

Stella initiates Nad(i)a into the secrets of "the most unearthly, the most inhuman scordatura in the history of the violin," used by Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber in his Resurrection Sonata demonstrating how the middle strings are switched behind the bridge and inside the pegbox and then the third string (A) is tuned down to G. Scordatura results in erasing the connection between the notation and the sound: "your eyes can be following a series of ascending notes on the stave while your ear hears them descending. Or you can read a major chord and produce a minor one…" (28-9). The gap between sight and sound, between expectation and the resulting effect results in a rupture of a habitual system of signification and reveals a new harmony. The performance of Biber's Sonatas on the Mysteries of the Rosary, Stella said, was a transporting experience for Nad(i)a's mother, Elisa; it is "as if this weird discrepancy between the visual and the audible had given her a glimpse into the very essence of the divine" (29). It should be noted that scordatura as a musical term, does not refer to the acoustic experience of chaos and dissonance; rather; it involves an intentional manipulation, a controlled adjustment of tuning, and like many devices of the baroque period, this manipulation is playful or even occasionally ostentatious. The idea of adjustment and deliberation, in my view, makes the metaphorical transfer more operative and allows us to extend the experience of scordatura to verbal and psychic changes.

Dissatisfied with restrictions that her body imposes on her – a prisoner of her own epoch, capable of being present only at one place at a time – and the linearity of writing ("having to write the story a sentence at a time") (49), Nad(i)a appeals to her new ally, the two-faced devil, "Prince of Lies, Father of Lies" (24), to "throw her across," and to allow her to revel in a pure ecstasy of simultaneous sensations and creation of everything

at the same time. However, Nad(i)a's demon reminds her that unlike God, he is inseparable from death and passage of time, so she herself has to devise a way to reflect in writing her desire to proliferate, to show and at the same time to expunge the interval between her own life and the lives of Barbe and Barnabé; to resurrect her 'I' while sentencing her characters to death. Nad(i)a's narrative imitates in language the uncanny discrepancy between the visual and the acoustic experience that scordatura produces.

Words, images and situations get confused in the characters' minds. Barbe, for instance, was introduced to the notion of sin (péché) during a catechism lesson in the company of her torturer, the son of the peasant family that had taken her in. Since then, the images of fishermen (pêcheurs) and of sinners (pécheurs)[127] were forever conflated in her mind: playing fisherman, the sadistic boy had once sent a fishing rod down her throat through her nostril. She could never quite grasp why "Jesus should have chosen his disciples among sinners, declaring, "I am the sinner of men" (Je suis pêcheur des hommes) (41).

There is a similar superimposition of senses on a compositional level: Nad(i)a's salvation comes from dividing herself between Barbe and herself, Nad(i)a and Nathan, herself and devil, who is relegated from the privileged position of her muse and witness at the beginning of the novel to merely one of her characters by the end. The narrator's constant appeal to another voice, to someone outside, to her devil is somewhat hackneyed and tiresome, yet until the end of the novel, she feels the need to displace the burden of authorship: "L'Autre inhabits us. We swarm with disembodied voices and invisible presences" (77). She senses that her books originate elsewhere: "books are transcriptions

[127] The translation strategy that Huston resorts to is worthy of note. Although the pun is meaningful only in French, the same examples are used in the English and in the French text. The homophones pécheur-pêcheur are introduced in parenthesis.

of what my demon has revealed me" (133), but she cannot yet find a substitute for the idea of the original source or transcription.

Nad(i)a eventually parts with the Romantic idea of inspiration, and exorcizes her quasi-Mephistopheles when she acknowledges that it is the presence of two parts, two narratives, two languages that constitutes the original, and the real search consists in establishing a connection between those parts, "striking sharp chords of memory and imagination from its own depths…" (314). She challenges her daimon and finds a new source of creativity: "*Diabolus in musica* is nothing – wait till you hear my new intervals!...lapsing from harmony into dissonance and back again…Listen, seriously. I intend to stop the nevers and forevers, the alls and nothings. I intend to embrace mixtures and mitigations, content myself with pieces of perfection (as in: pieces of music)" (Huston ID 314).

Only through a constant game of doubling can Nad(i)a define herself as a writer. Moreover, her self-identification is predicated on a necessary distance between the voices. Nad(i)a willfully turns tragedy based on a real chronicle into a farce as Barbe and Barnabé, similar yet different, swap places. Barbe is saved because of her uncanny resemblance to Barnabé, but she lives on precisely because she knows that it was a moment of role-playing, of theatre, of imposture. Despite their incredible bond and understanding, she will never really turn into Barnabé.

Huston's characters and compositions follow evolution of her own situation as a bilingual writer, and the gradually developing connections between the two narratives are analogous to Huston's own experience of polyphony and scordatura. "All of us are dual, at the least, " she writes. "We are complex and multi-layered, filled with our secret

memories; why do we often ignore or pretend to forget this fact? Even within the same language, communication is a miracle" ("The Mask" 59).

Cultivating Strangeness

> I went to Europe to look for myself,
> but I wasn't there either.
> - American adage.
>
> Huston (from epigraph to "Reassuring Strangeness")

Nancy Huston avows that her voluntary exile began not so much as a quest for identity, as quest for intensity and history, a quest that unlike immigrant workers, political and war refugees, she could afford ("RS" 224). She cultivates a constant split between the surrounding cultural and linguistic environment and her sense of self. "I am a foreigner," Huston insists, "and I intend to remain one forever, preserving a certain distance between myself and the world around me, taking nothing about it for granted – neither its language, its values, nor its history" ("RS" 226). Born in Alberta, Canada, raised in Germany and the US, Huston went to France for her junior year abroad, eventually turning it, in her own words, into "a senior year abroad," married a Bulgarian theorist Tzvetan Todorov, and ended up residing most of the time in a historical district Marais, home to French aristocracy in the seventeenth century and a diverse Jewish community in the twentieth. Besides, the sense of divided loyalties was caused not only by the perpetual need to choose her country and the language of writing, but also by having to choose between fiction and theory - Huston's earlier studies with Roland Barthes, she argues, in a sense, deprived her from "theoretical innocence" and faith necessary for believing in fictional characters ("Knowledge Uprooted" 335).

This split, nonetheless, helps her form a distinct identity as hybrid and malleable as it may be. In her essays, Huston emphasizes the importance of friction between self and the surroundings, but she articulates it even more clearly through her portrait of Romain Gary with whose spectacular "inidentité" and self-inflicted feeling of uneasiness ("tu tiens à être mal dans ta peau[128]") the she used to identify (Huston Tombeau de Romain Gary 38-9). Living abroad for Gary, she writes, satisfied his need to "éprouver et raviver ce malaise, cette friction entre [s]oi et le monde, [s]oi et la langue que [l'on] parle, [s]oi et la vie" - "experience and revive this unease, this friction between him and the world, him and the language around him, him and life" (Huston Tombeau de Romain Gary 38). Under the pseudonym of Emile Ajar, the ever elusive writer playfully literalizes the same expression (être mal dans sa peau):" J'ai des problèmes avec ma peau, parce que ce n'est pas la mienne" – "I feel ill at ease (in my skin), because this skin is not mine" (Ajar qtd. In Huston 38).[129] However, what Ajar-Gary adds as his explanation, "Je me découvrais planétaire, d'une responsabilité illimitée," ("I realized I was global, with an unlimited responsibility") makes Huston mindful of the ramifications of such planetary ambitions and the dangers of turning an author's life itself into continuation of his fiction.

Over time, Huston's attitude toward home and exile changes. In her earlier interviews, she describes her move to France and the choice of French as an experience of "incredible lightness of being," liberation from the burden of her interior life, and from

[128] Literally, to make a point of being (feeling) ill in his skin

[129] Romain Gary's notoriously unstable biography is virtually inseparable from his own fabulation. Born in Moscow, according to his biographers or in Wilno, according to him, as Roman Kacew, he later chose Romain Gary as his pen-name, but also wrote as Emile Ajar, Fosco Sinibaldi, and Shatan Bogat. Apparently, none of his "skins" – that of a Jewish boy with an unknown father, a French diplomat and a recipient of the Goncourt Prize (twice), a brave pilot during the war and a chevalier of Légion d'honneur – felt as his own.

all the constraints of the family: "C'était comme si toute ma vie antérieure tombait, je volais, je me sentais légère, j'avais l'impression de m'inventer moi-même" - "It was as if all my previous life were falling away, I was flying, I felt light, I felt I was inventing myself" (qtd. in Kroh 34). However, after erecting "barrage contre l'Atlantique" and after fifteen years of living in France and writing in French, the euphoria of foreigness gives way to a more nuanced understanding of home and abroad. After escaping from what she calls "des drames intimes, intérieurs" (35), she later realizes the limits of the idea of self-engendering by a free subject, and concludes that "freedom is a part of human identity, but so are constraints...It is just as dangerous […] to neglect the limitations of the real world as it is to renounce the vertiginous flights of our imagination."(Losing North 51-53, 57).

Face Behind the Mask

The fear of being "doublement mi-langue" causes Huston to attempt to revitalize English, which she considers her real face behind the mask. She discovers that "when a human face has spent a number of years beneath a mask, deprived of light and oxygen, it changes. Not only does it age, as all faces do, but it tends to get a bit pallid, flaccid, puffy" (Huston "The Mask" 60). I believe that the problem with this gesture is more serious than that. A mask, a face and a person are conflated not only etymologically (in classical Latin *persona* is a "mask used by a player, character in a play, dramatic role, the part played by a person in life, character, role, position, individual personality, juridical person, important person, personage, human being in general" OED), after many years, the mask grows into the face, and it is impossible to rip it away without damaging

the face. It would be equally faulty, however, to settle with the idea of a face, which is nothing, but an accumulation of masks, and the onerous task of the writer and perhaps, any human being in a similar situation is to work around this contradiction without denying it.

The reconciliation is slow, and it can only proceed by trial and error. After writing "L'Autopsie d'exil" in 1986, Nancy Huston developed an acute myelitis, manifested in numbness of the legs and felt that it was a somatic manifestation of "freezing" her roots. Trois fois septembre, written in 1987, revealed other symptoms of the author's impasse through unrestrained linguistic acrobatics: written in French, it consisted of diaries and letters of a young American, whose best French friend reads them to her mother and simultaneously translates them from English into French. Such contortions echoing the quest for Sebastian Knight's identity (Nabokov), were indicative of a serious crisis that pushed Huston to the point of a nervous breakdown. The first draft proved to be a failure, and it was rejected by her publisher (Seuil).

Plainsong that Huston began writing in 1989, becomes a turning point; Huston becomes a fully bilingual writer by rediscovering the sonority of English, early memories, and the cultural landscape of Canada. The book projected an entirely different Huston, and it was more difficult to publish than her previous work. Finally, Actes Sud accepted it as Cantique des plaines, and both texts in English and in French were published the same week. Re-inscribing herself in Canadian history, does not signify a return to the primordial origin, and to English, then sufficiently estranged, as a new redemptive language of writing. It is the switch to bilingual writing, rather than writing

solely in the first or second language, that becomes the remedy and a way of *impatriation*[130] for Huston.

There is nothing glorious in the distance or estrangement per se. The distance from the language of writing (due to its foreigness or geographical dislocation) acts as catalyst and brings forth the dormant potentialities of a language currently used. Even if a text infused with bilingualism at phonetic, syntactic, or more likely, cognitive level draws on the first language of the author, it does not turn to it as an essential, pure, ideal language, a repository of the real. What creates the pressure, a simultaneous feeling of insufficiency and overflowing, is not the first language, which is often mistakenly treated as synonymous with the ideal language bursting through a mere pale copy, but an awareness of the need for appropriation and the process of learning how to grow roots, as Nancy Huston put it in Désirs et réalités, "habiter un autre sol, laisser pousser d'autres racines, réinventer son histoire en rendant étrange le familier et étranger le familial" - "to live in a different place, to grow other roots, to reinvent one's history by making the familiar strange and the family - foreign" (76). Every time filiation and rooting happens with the means of a given language and within it.

Such a move is consistent with my vision of cosmopolitanism as a practice of constant adjustment, re-evaluation, and cultivation of psychic and linguistic attachments. Contrary to the nostalgic search for the essential 'I' behind the curtain or the mask, this practice calls for active memory that is often created in an act of doubling and re-writing. Nonetheless, embracing the division, and double impatriation does not completely eliminate the feeling of malaise and *scordatura*. To the tired question often asked of a

[130] Huston herself uses the term s'impatrier (qtd. in Klein-Lataud "Langue" 40).

bilingual “are you equally comfortable in English and French?” Huston quips: “No, equally uncomfortable” (“The Decline” 326). The answer is far from posing, as she explains later “if you are comfortable, you don’t write,” the literary machine is fueled by at least a minimum dissonance, anxiety, discomfort, even if the source of the discomfort is comic. In fact, the most important realizations for Huston and probably for all bilingual authors are inseparable from embarrassingly comic situations. A self-deprecating anecdote from her first feminist meetings in 1974 serves as a good illustration:

> Le soir en question, elles discutaient avec fureur de la meilleure manière de riposter à je ne sais quel penseur mâle qui avait écrit (si mes souvenirs sont exacts) que l'homosexualité féminine était en passe de devenir un fléau social. Indignations, sarcasmes, répliques cinglantes volaient dans tous les sens, je tournais la tête d'une femme à l'autre, et peu à peu j'ai commencé à partager leur outrage, à sentir monter en moi le scandale... Et quand, fort tard, la réunion s'est terminée et que je suis rentrée chez moi, j'ai pris le dictionnaire pour y chercher le mot « fléau ». Je n'avais pas la moindre idée de ce qu'il voulait dire. En fait, toute la discussion m'avait été incompréhensible. (...) C'est ainsi que, dès le début, j'ai su qu'il y aurait toujours un écart entre moi et les Français, ou plutôt entre mes énoncés en français et les leurs. J'ai su que pas une seule locution, si galvaudée fût-elle, n'irait pour moi jamais complètement de soi. » (LP 168-169)
>
> That evening, they were furiously discussing the best way to respond to I don’t know what male thinker, who had written (if my memory serves me right) that feminine homosexuality was about to become a “fléau social” (social scourge). The air was filled with outbursts of indignation, sarcasm, scathing remarks; I kept turning my head from one woman to another, and little by little, I started to share their outrage and FELT a growing indignation…Very late, when the meeting was over, and I got home, I took a dictionary to look up the word “fléau” (scourge plague, pain). I didn’t have the slightest idea of what it meant. In fact, the entire discussion went over my head. (…). That’s how, right at the very beginning, I realized that there would always be a gap between the French and me or, rather, between my way of expressing myself in French and theirs. I realized that not a single phrase, no matter how wrong it was, would ever go without saying for me.

She makes two observations here that are worth discussing. First, sadly, words do not have to be understood in order to circulate. They dissolve into an emotional drive, which is later compressed into a more transportable casing of an idea again. Nancy

Huston contracted the intensity of the outrage without understanding *fléau*, the key word of the discussion. Secondly, there will always be a distance between the French and herself, between their language and hers; no utterance will ever be natural, no meaning will be taken for granted, and, nothing will ever go without saying.

The mistuning and discomfort, however, do not equate a complete "pulverization of identity" ("The Decline" 320). In fact, Huston grows increasingly conscious of the perils of multiplicity of attachments and of untrammeled empathy, which makes one of her characters, Cosmo, "borrow […] thousands of colored threads and [weave] them into an enormous tapestry which he called his personality" (An Adoration 174). Cosmo and the semi-fictional enigmatic figure of Gary, whose life and work continue to fascinate Huston, are the most accomplished embodiments of such pulverization. It precludes chauvinism, nationalism, and xenophobia, but Gary's ambition to pulverize himself and to embrace "every particular human being," not humanity as a whole (322) may lead to schizophrenia. In order to illustrate how the precarious balance between division and total dissolution can be achieved, I would like to turn to the bilingual text I have mentioned at the beginning, Limbes=Limbo , and to single out the strategies Huston recurs to in order to bridle the centirifugal forces of the text.

Polyphony: Poetics of Bi-langue

If other texts are difficult to categorize as originals or translations, Limbes=Limbo : un hommage à Samuel Beckett,[131] a true polyphony of cultural references, literary allusions, and meanings derived from the untranslatable, is a true experiment in writing

[131] Many of Beckett's texts, characters, and landscapes can be located in Limbo.

and reading a bilingual text. The book was not originally intended for publication; started in English, it was a single text of about twelve pages punctuated by thirty-nine language switches.[132] So far, establishing units of bilingual texts seemed highly implausible; therefore, whenever I mentioned bilingual writing, I was referring to an ensemble of techniques and practices constituting a bilingual oeuvre rather than to any smaller units of bilingual texts.

Limbes=Limbo, by contrast, allows us a glimpse into the forbidden territory between the languages, *distierro* or "no-man's land," as Claude Esteban calls it, and exemplifies the generative force of bi-langue (Khatibi) or inter-language (a mode of poetic signification derived from the interaction of two natural languages). It can be argued that nothing happens between languages, and demonstrating workings of an interlanguage or an intermediary language relies excessively on introspective methods of investigation[133]. Nonetheless, I will attempt to show that it is Limbes=Limbo 's sliding into that in-between space that alters the final texts in English and French. It also seems to suggest that the hybrid text with all its hidden potentialities should eventually bifurcate into two texts addressed to two different readerships. "If there are two languages, there are any number of languages and - worse – the gaping gaps between the

[132] Nicola Danby provides the original non-published version in her thesis The Space Between: Self-Translators Nancy Huston and Samuel Beckett. It is also available as an appendix to Elizabeth Wilhelm's article "Autour de Limbes/Limbo."

[133] Karaulov ascertains that interlanguage is rarely fixated, and there are no texts written in this intermediary language, but this does not mean that it should be dismissed (186-189). Suggests studying elements of inter-langue: images (of real objects, gestalts, schemes, frames and propositions.
Zhinkin distinguishes 4 stages in speech recognition and production: language- speech production – internal speech – intellect. He posits internal speech as a mixed, universal code mediating between mind and language and any languages " the antinomy/juxtaposition of two discreet language codes versus languages of the mind resulted in a mixed code – an internal speech, which is to be considered as a universal code mediating not only between language and mind, speaking and writing, but also between national languages" (Zhinkin qtd. in Karaulov 186).

words" - "S'il y a deux langues, il y a une infinité de langues, et, bien pire, mal pire, les béates béances entre les mots" (Limbes=Limbo 26-27).

This gaping gap, Huston goes on to show is not between words, but between worlds. That is why wordplay is a serious business, she asserts (26). Limbes=Limbo is a testimony to the ambivalence of bilingualism experienced both as a handicap (mi-langue rather than bilingue[134]), as absence of primordial connection between names and thing and as an experience of incredible richness, polyphony, and multiplicity. Raymond Federman, a theorist and a bilingual writer himself, stresses the need for a comprehensive study of bilingualism and self-translation that would go beyond comparison of lines in the two versions. Such a study will serve "not merely to compare passages in the twin-texts, not merely to note differences or variants, but to arrive at an *aesthetics* of bilingualism and self-translating, or better yet to arrive at a *poetics* of such activities" (9).

In published Limbes=Limbo, the simultaneous presentation of two texts (the English on the left and the French on the right) defies conventional reading strategies: should the texts be read alongside each other as a scholarly analysis, first in English or then in French, or just in one language? It foregrounds the difficulty of establishing primacy of the original and displays the artifice of the exercise. The bilingual edition of Limbes=Limbo temporarily brings the separate voices and, perhaps, parts of the author's life together. What kind of intended readership do such projects envisage? The sign of equation in the title is quite provocative: it posits the equality of the two parts, while the epigraph already announces the programmed failure to provide a symmetrical

[134] Echoing Elsa Triolet's complaint about living half-destiny (mi-destin) between Russian and French, Huston writes to Leila Sebbar that instead of becoming fully bilingual, she often feels "doubly half-lingual (doublement mi-lingue) (LP 76).

bilingual text; the French text is not so much a translation as the acceptance of the other voice and its untranslatability:

Get it in Ing-lish. Shoved.Wedged.Lodged in the language like a bullet in the brain. Undelodgeable.Untranslatable (6)	¡Caramba! Encore raté! (7)

The question whether the text can be treated as a translation or as an original bilingual text is never resolved. Although translation procedures that could have been chosen by any translator are not my primary concern here, it should be noted that Huston certainly resorts to modes of regular, non-authorial translation, and her solutions are often felicitous. To cite just a few examples, there are virtuoso translation of puns:

More lies. Here lies (36)	Il ne s'agit pas de ça. Il s'agit de ci -gît (37)
Released at last from the vicious circle of births and deaths. If only I had my druthers. Where have my druthers gotten to, anyway? (48).	Libérés enfin du cercle vicieux des naissances et des morts. C'est du moins mon intime conviction, une de celles que je stocke dans mon for intérieur. Au fait – ou il est passé, mon for? (49)

When she tackles a series of alliterative and onomatopoeic sequences, she attempts to produce phonetic, rhythmic, and musical equivalences. Unlike Nabokov, Huston has never written about synesthetic connections between sounds and colors that would change depending on the language, but she has repeatedly pointed out that music is the guiding principle for her translations: "le rythme, la phonétique, c'est-à-dire la musique en général, pour moi, sont primordiales. Donc souvent, j'ai été prête à sacrifier le sens précis des mots pour préserver un certain nombre de syllabes, ou pour préserver une alliteration" - "rhythm, phonetics, i.e, music in general are of utmost importance to me.

Therefore, I am often ready to sacrifice the exact meaning of the words in order to preserve a certain number of syllables or an alliteration" (qtd. in Klein-Lataud "Les voix" 224).

The narrator is trapped in darkness and looks for a shadow, any hint of a character. The alternation between **b** and **d** in English "blam, black. Doom. Done" is replaced by equally alliterative "Niet, noir. Fini. Foutu" (14-15). Onomatopoieic succession of monosyllabics "blood, black, thump, whump. Shut. Clot" is translated as "sang, pan, vlan. Clos. Caillot(14-15) with "black" most likely omitted to preserve the rhythm. Such omissions are compensated for by additions later in the French (étranglé):

"Stopped.Stilled. Stunned.Stone." – "Stoppé.Sonné.Stupefié. Ligoté. Etranglé" (18-19). Overall, the French text in many instances strikes me as more colloquial: "no matter" as "c'est kifkif" (8-9); "people rush about blathering and dithering, spouting words that spark off this or that, love and anger and the whole gamut" is translated as "les gens sont en train de blablater et de déblablater, éjaculant de la jactance qui germe et fait pousser ceci ou alors cela, l'amour, la colère et tout le bataclan" (10-11).

Translation of allusions and cultural references always presents particular challenges. Many examples in Limbes=Limbo do not contradict translators' choice of striving for dynamic equivalence (Nida) – equivalence of effect or impact on the reader. Huston adapts the text to the reader translating, for example, Andrew Marvell's "Had we but world enough and time, this coyness, lady, were no crime" familiar to the English-speaking reader by Rimbaud's "Voyelles, je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes" (Limbes=Limbo 32-33). However, I feel uneasy about applying the notion of equivalence of effects to this text: after all, the asymmetry of twin-texts coupled with

their potential translatability seems to be at heart of Huston's project. Whereas the English and the French voices mirror each other in their effects of juggling high and low, reason and rhyme, they inevitably tend to diverge:

Perhaps rhyme could save us? She died of a fever and no one could save her-bad rhyme, that one – and that was the end of sweet Molly Malone (24).	Peut-être la rime pourrait-elle nous venir en aide? Une souris verte courait dans l'herbe – mauvaise rime, celle-là – on l'attrape par la queue (25).
'Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gymbol in the wabe (32).	A la bonne heure. Ah les beaux jours! Nous voilà dans de beaux draps! (33).

No translator other than the author would have made such choices – foregoing all the possibilities of establishing formal correspondences at the level of smaller units and stiriving to create the effect of words, notions, and cultural references running amok within both languages. Molly Malone, a popular Irish song is juxtaposed with a children rhyme, and a line from Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" is rendered by a mixture of idiomatic French with the title of Beckett's play Happy Days in French. Even the challenging "Jabberwocky" consisting of nonce-words is usually translated by inventing other nonce words evoking the existing ones in the target language, not by imitating impressions of nonsense.

Limbes=Limbo reaches its climax as the narrator's search for language and for the 'beyond language" lead to a parade of references from both languages and literatures,

out, out brief candle! Bye-bye birdie! Farewell cruel world! The time has come, the walrus said (11).	Adieu, monde cruel! Salut les mecs! La marquise sortit à cinq heures (12).

Shakespeare's Macbeth, Lewis Carroll's "the Walrus and the Carpenter" from Through the Looking Glass and probably a title of the musical (Bye-bye Birdie) face the

French title of Calvin and Hobbes comic strips and an implicit critique of the traditional novel - "La marquise sortit à cinq heures"[135] is attributed to Paul Valéry who claimed that he would never write a novel begining with this line (Valéry qtd. in « Manifeste Surréaliste»). I argue that while in many passages Huston is faithful to Schleiremarcher's[136] methods of translation: "either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader" (Schleiremarcher 42), the writer who is herself a translator is far from following Schleiremarcher's didactic conclusion. Schleiremarcher ascertains that only one of the two methods should be adhered; he warns against mixing them and insists that "there could be, besides these two methods, no third one that would have a definite goal in mind. Actually, no other methods are possible," he reiterates (43). Huston transgresses this principle and by mixing the two, develops a third method. The fact that she consciously engages in a dialogue with different readerships and with different selves embedded in two cultures confers a unique status to the text and emphasizes the search for creative ways of reconciling several voices and multiple identities. The double orientation becomes both a tool of poesis and of translation.

Both English and French are in turns affected by the intrusion of another code, the other language in this case. Sufficiently simplified and abstracted, this relation could be compared to Lotman's concept of autocommunication that I introduced in the previous chapter (a confrontation between a message in a semantic language and intrusion of supplementary codes such as a printed page, rhythmical cadences, visual ornaments that

[135] Inspired by Valéry's interrogation, Claude Mauriac wrote a novel with the eponymous title.

[136] Following up on Schleiremarcher's methods, modern theorists like Lawrence Venuti develop the notions of foreignizing and domesticating strategies.

become purely syntagmatic and change the subject of the enunciation in the course of interaction rather than the message itself), but the presence of two equal languages, which switch their functions, but resist codification and never become purely supplementary, complicates any theoretical model.

Limbes=Limbo makes it impossible for a pedantic reader to look for interferences hailed as exotic 'foreigness' or criticized as incompetence, but rather imposes the presence bi-langue, or inter-language, as an intermediary, as a way of expressing how incommunicable always accompanies communicable in the language (El Nossery 392). Phonetic resemblances of unrelated concepts[137] in two languages may cause shifts at higher levels - semantics and pragmatics. For instance, in the quote attributed to Beckett's voice, the alliterative proximity of *choisir-choir* in French triggers another semantic turn in English: "why choose […] every choice is a Fall.

…if I can be Irish and then French I could just as well be Danish or a dog, why choose, how choose […] every choice is a fall (10).	…si je peux être irlandais et puis français je pourrais être tout aussi bien chinois ou chien, pourquoi choisir, choir (11).
If you keep on laughing we'll rip out your spleen. Where exactly is the spleen, anyhow? I smell a rat (24).	Si vous riez, c'est la rate que l'on arrachera. Où elle est d'ailleurs, la rate? Il y a un os (25).

The French for spleen « la rate » prompts to include « I smell a rat » in English.

Home at last. Home's where the heart is (34).	Enfin chez soi. Un home selon mon coeur (35).

[137] Very few of them are actual paronyms.

The play on the proximity of *home* and *homme* in translation of the proverb « home where the heart is/lies » as « Un home selon mon cœur' charges both utterances with ironic polyvalence. « Un home selon mon cœur'could be read as a biblical « un homme selon mon cœur » - man according to my heart (« Acts of Apostle » 13 : 22)

The voice of the narrator deplores the constraints of language, any language:

Language is fascistic; it forces you to specify. What sex (Oooh-la-la!).What tense. The present is very tense. By the time you get to the second syllable you' re out of it; the first is already past. I wouldn't put a dog out in this tense (34).	La langue est fasciste, elle oblige à dire. A dire par exemple quel sexe (Oh!) Quel temps. (Sale!) Le présent, si vite passé. En moins de temps qu'il n'en faut pour le dire. Dès qu'on arrive à la deuxième syllabe c'est fini, la première est déjà passée (35).

Huston translates *tense* into French, goes on playing with the polysemy of the French *temps* (time, tense, weather) and punning on the expression « un temps de chien » - horrible weather, goes back to English and forcefully integrates these meanings and connotations into English.

Without defining it as such, Sylvia Molloy in "Bilingualism, Writing, and the Feeling of Not Quite Being There" also shares her experience of generative capacities of bi-langue. She created a title for a novel written in Spanish[138] as a result of linguistic derivation from English and Spanish: "[Not] a translation, not even a quotation, but the product of many goings back and forth between languages, which amounts to the same. The two titles do not mean the same thing[…]; yet for me they are equal, in the sense that they determine one another, make no sense independently" (70). Such transformations

[138] The novel in Spanish deals with displacement and bilingualism, and "the impossibility of being in only one space, only one language" (Molloy 69). Molloy felt that she needed to distance herself from the novel to be able to name it and found a temporary title in English - Back Home. Struggling to find an appropriate Spanish title, she came across Borges' phrase El comùn olvido, which became the title of the novel in Spanish. Combined with the existing English title, it evolved into "All But Forgotten, " the title of then non-existent English version of the novel.

undermine the very distinction between original writing and translation and emphasize the residue, cumulative effect of going back and forth.

The desperation at impossibility of living in one tongue or outside any is expressed with an awkward rhyme in English followed by a self-deprecating metacommentary:

Oh, To be released from the obligation to live in any tongue! To relinquish language, once and for all! To vanquish languish. That's a good one, Well, so-so (28).	Ah! Ne plus être dans aucune langue. Ne plus languir. N'être. La bonne blague. Enfin, couci-couça"(29).

A more succinct French equivalent, besides the alliterative repetition of 'langue' and languir, introduces a newly coined contraction "n'être."[139] *N'être*, articulated by Beckett's voice again, marks the desire to stop the endless flow of words and stories running in circles, to stop the imposture, to be released from the obligation of being in language and choosing a language; but being a perfect homophone to naître (to be born), n'être also signifies a constant rebirth in both languages, in poetics of his own.

I have found my own language at last, a language comprehensible to myself alone (30).	J'ai enfin trouvé ma propre langue, c'est -à –dire une langue compréhensible pour moi seul (31).

Nancy Huston's rebirth consists in striving to find a language comprehensible to someone other than herself. Division is vital to Huston, that is where she finds her voice, but even though Limbes=Limbo is one of the most playful texts about writing and the impossibility of stopping the verbal flow and cultural and textual memories embedded in each language, it presents two independent versions apart, each of them affected by the

[139] This coinage was also noted by Nicola Danby in "The space between: Self-translator Nancy Huston's Limbes/Limbo"

presence of the other, yet fully comprehensible to the francophone and Anglophone reading publics.

The emphatic difference between the twin-texts and the deliberate display of pressure they mutually exert, do not aim at exclusion of most readers, but rather at raising their awareness of the nature of any linguistic and cultural translation. Huston's project can be contrasted with Le Schizo et les Langues, another experimental text written in French by an American self-proclaimed student of schizophrenic languages. In Le Schizo et les Langues, the narrator dissects the shrilling sounds of his mother's speech (and by extension of his mother tongue) into disparate phonemes according to the self-imposed procedure reminding us of Raymond Roussel's[140] formal method and transposes them into similar sounding words in French, Russian, German and Hebrew. Although his solipsistic project eventually proved therapeutic for him, it precludes any real communication.

Unlike Wolfson's project of schizophrenic translation, Huston's text, whether it is defined as an original bilingual text or a self-translation, creates two open, but accessible worlds. I contend that bilingual writing is a cosmopolitan practice precisely because of the material and semantic limits imposed by two or more natural languages: they can be stretched creatively, but certain rootedness, resistance of the fabric, and the discipline such practice requires, remains. The border space becomes undoubtedly productive, but absence of border and resistance will only produce schizophrenic hodge-podge. "Unbounded polyphony," as Todorov remarked commenting on his own experience of

[140] For an insightful reading of Wolfson's method, see Deleuze, Gilles. "Schizologie."Preface to Le Schizo et les langues. Paris: Gallimard, 1970

bilingualism in "Dialogism and Schizophrenia" results in schizophrenia, mental incoherence, and impossibility of forming a new totality (212-14).

Pascal Bruckner reminds us that we cannot possibly eschew the same problem of defining borders when we attempt to translate not only between texts and languages, but between literary and non-literary spaces: how does one transfer open-mindness, hybridity, awareness of multiple perspectives and voices from literary space into a daily life? (244). Bruckner concludes that "[t]rue cosmopolitanism, in contrast to the stew of Babel, is rooted in the depths of several layers of memory, in numerous particularities. It does not indulge in flying over all the world's summits, its seas, and its elevations. It does not collect traits here and there. It becomes incarnate" (247).

The Divided Writers and Cosmopolitanism

In her essays, Huston notes that the twentieth century saw the emergence of the divided writer, who is "neither rooted nor uprooted"[141] ("The Decline" 324). Curiously, her definition of the divided writer reveals striking similarities with Bruckner's definition and with what I have been referring to as the phenomenon of literary bilingualism. Such writers do not feel at home wherever they go, she argues, they are at home nowhere, but they are not stateless either. Such writers do not claim an acquaintance with all humans and all cultures (the ambition of pulverized writers like Gary), but their profound awareness of at least two cultures enable them to empathize with concerns of people of all cultures. These writers, according to Huston, concur with the idea that for people living in the industrialized West the certainties of the nineteenth century are non-existent, and there will never be such a thing "as a nice, comfortable, cradle-to-grave identity," but

[141] The metaphor of roots is hardly appropriate to denote these writers' situation, but I will refrain from resorting to a more fashionable/alluring concept of rhizome as its use can be equally misleading.

they maintain that despite the multiplicity of identities inhabited by everyone and enhanced through cultural contacts, the differences among individual consciousness and cultures will never cease to be interesting (327-28).

Literary bilingualism hinges on the same sensibilities: even though bilingual writers unsettle categories of nation, genre, and self, they never lose sight of specific historical and literary experiences of their readerships; they are conscious of the specificity of their own practice shaped by incessant back-and-forth movement and rarely, if ever, try to universalize it. In Huston's words: "they are usually reluctant to make speeches or join parties. They tend to avoid chaos, rather than reflecting it in their writings. Their goal is to construct, reconstruct, on the page, a world in which it is possible for them to breathe, live, move. ("Our only nation is imagination," as Confiant once put it.) Their purpose is not to bolster certainties, but to rattle them. That is what they do. That is the one and only thing they do…but *in depth*" (330).

I contend that this might be the reason why bilingual writing, often as an artifice, as a way of double estrangement, is more productive, or at least more sustainable than writing in imaginary or schizophrenic languages: it is conducive to a deeper engagement not only with self, but also with communities of readers that such writing conjures up. Bilingual writing is instrumental in cultivating bilingualism and biculturalism of the reader. While Limbes=Limbo is admittedly a very ostentatious display of the splendor and misery of bilingualism, for a monolingual reader, it demonstrates one of the ways of immersing oneself into an experience of bilingualism.

Polyphonic Reading

In conclusion, I would like to start sketching possibilities of bilingual reading and to verify if the strategies I have examined in Nancy Huston's work (musicalization of a literary narrative, alternating languages of composition, and simultaneous presentation of the bilingual text) can be conducive to it. Many studies examine reading habits of bilinguals,[142] and bilingual authors themselves occasionally point to a different way of perceiving signs (the graphic resemblances of words or letters from different languages may bring about a gamut of semantically unrelated associations). Sylvia Molloy confesses that when she sees "Icy Pavement" on a highway, "for a split second [she] inevitably think[s] *icy* in French (and medieval French to boot)" or if she sees "hay" driving down a country road, her spontaneous reaction is to read it in Spanish - meaning there is or we have (74). "For me, the sign should read *hay hay*, the first in Spanish, the second in English," she quips (74). What happens to bilingual and monolingual readers of texts written by bilingual writers?

In her first novel Variations Goldberg, Huston starts scrutinizing the relationship between creation, performance, and reception of a work of art. Adrienne, the page turner, claims to be equally involved in making music. She holds on to every nuance and thinks that she appreciates music more than the performer, Liliane, because she loves what she is hearing. She asks "Alors pourquoi la composition d'une oeuvre d'art vaut tellement

[142] See, for instance, Hamada, M., & Koda, K. "Influence of first language orthographic experience on second language decoding and word learning." Language Learning 58 (2008): 1–31 (this article offers an extensive literature review); Hausmann M., Durmusoglu G., Yazgan Y., Gunturkun O. "Evidence for reduced hemispheric aysmmetries in non-verbal functions in bilinguals." Journal of Neurolinguistics, 17. 4 (2004):. 285-299; Harrison, G., & Krol, L. "Relationship between L1 and L2 word-level reading and phonological processing in adults. "Journal of Research in Reading 30 (2007): 379–393.

plus que sa réception?" (24). I have already suggested that literary bilingualism inevitably reconfigures the relationship between the writer, the text, and the reader: bilingual readers presented with only one version of the text are tempted to see the shadow of the other language and second-guess what might have been derived from it. It is naïve to expect the reader to go through both texts written by a bilingual writer unless she is researching them, but reading procedures of monolingual readers exposed to only one facet of the writer's production can be polyphonic too.

From the reader's point of view, narrative strategies necessitating doubling of decoding procedures (for instance, incorporating music or other media) can be of interest. George Steiner, who approaches almost any cultural text as a translation project, contends that for a proper translation (in time, place, language) a different degree of re-creative interpretation is needed. "It is almost radically life-giving in the case of musical performance," he claims. "Each musical realization is a new poiesis... Its ontological relationship to the original score and to all previous renditions is twofold: it is at the same time reproductive and innovatory" (Steiner 27). My contention is that this approach represents both an active reading strategy required of readers of musicalized fiction and the writers' mode of self-translation that I will examine in the next chapter.

If music becomes a constitutive element of a literary narrative, readers have to find ways to incorporate this invisible dimension, to establish temporary links and to work out the relationship of contiguity between seemingly incompatible parts. How do they proceed about it? Are the readers supposed to be familiar with a piece in question, to listen to it, or to rely exclusively on the textual treatment of the musical piece?

In any case, the notion of the immutable *original* in music and in a literary text gives way to the idea of degrees of interpretation. There will always remain a sense of absence, of incompleteness of *the original*. After all, even when music is being performed, most listeners are exposed to its interpretation by a performer or, in fewer cases, they supplement it with their own reading of the score, an approximate transcription of the composer's intent. Besides, reconciling conflicting relations of temporality of a music performance and the reading process and reassembling the disparate parts requires a considerable cognitive effort.

In addition, printing techniques may alter the reading process. Brian Fitch in his important study of Beckett's bilingualism Beckett and Babel : an Investigation into the Status of the Bilingual Work, was exploring ways of presenting "bilingual texture" in print besides a more standard juxtaposition of the two texts side by side in a bilingual edition. Even though some of his experiments are hardly possible to carry out (fusions – one sentence in English followed by its translation, dialogue-like alternation of languages), different ways of publishing bilingual writers' work, especially self-translations, have to be further explored.[143] As each act of writing for bilinguals is tinted by the presence of another text or another language, the mere awareness of incompleteness of any given text and the existence of its double, which is neither inferior

[143] There are also convincing arguments against bilingual face-to-face publications or self-translation in general, especially when they involve a dominant and a minor language. See, Krause, Corinna. "Finding the Poem - Modern Gaelic Verse and the Contact Zone." Forum. <http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/>, 1-11; Whyte, Christopher, "Against Self-Translation." Translation and Literature 11. 1 (Spring 2002): 64-71.

or superior, neither a copy nor the original, is a step toward a polyphonic bilingual reading.

Chapter 4: Self-Translation

Problematics of Self-Translation and Literary Bilingualism

To the question of a French journalist, "Vous êtes anglais, M. Beckett?" Beckett presumably quipped, "Au contraire." Beckett's diversion is in line with his characters' sense of humor, but it also goes much further and characterizes his own position as an Irish-born expatriate writer creating in English and French. By the same token, the famous response encapsulates remarkably well researchers' painstaking efforts to locate the identity of any bilingual author and of a bilingual or a self-translated text: is there "a hypothetical total text"[144] or a unifying core self, a sense of pre-linguistic unified identity that is actualized in several versions in different languages, or do self-translated texts constitute dialogical palimpsestic formations depending on the intended reader and predicated on multi-centeredness?

Beckett's witticism is a reminder that some of our theoretical conundrums may be

---

[144] Walter Benjamin's seminal essay "The Task of the Translator," probably the most quoted text in relation to self-translation, introduced the idea of translation and the original as complementary, "as fragments of a greater language" (Benjamin 79). While Benjamin's notion of pure language was instrumental in theorizing translation and moving away from the binaries of fidelity and freedom, it created a whole paradigm of the bilingual text as a hypothetical, ideal work "in which the versions in both languages would rejoin one another and be reconciled" (Beaujour 112). Even Bruno Clément's fine reading of Beckett's bilingual oeuvre in L'Oeuvre sans qualités also echoes Benjamin's concept of pure language. Clément is referring to this phenomenon as simultaneous presence-absence evoking some "ideal oeuvre," whose materialization is necessarily flawed: "l'oeuvre ne peut s'identifier ni à une version ni à l'autre [...] elle est seulement ailleurs, chacun des deux textes qu'on a la possibilité de lire et d'interroger constituant une sorte d'ébauche, d'incarnation imparfaite d'une oeuvre idéale que toute entreprise de matérialiser corromprait nécessairement" – "The work cannot be identified with either version […] it is elsewhere, each of the two texts that we can read and examine constituting a kind of draft, an imperfect embodiment of an ideal work that would be inevitably flawed by any attempt at materialization" (245).

equally misguided: is Beckett an Irish or a French author; is Nabokov Russian or American; is Huston Canadian or French?[145] Should the self-translated text be treated as original writing or translation? In fact, what would be the opposite of "Englishman" in Becket's case? Mary Lydon elaborates on this joke that "undoes and displaces the English/Irish opposition" and reads it as a reflection of an indelible frontier formed in the Irish imagination. The French expression, she argues, which is neither an assertion nor a negation, "makes opposition yield to difference, while deferring identity. It is the French […]commonplace expression, "au contraire," that allows "Irishness" to erupt in the entre-deux, the in-between that is the privileged territory of Beckett's oeuvre, the territory in which alone it could, in the fullest sense of the phrase "take place" (Lydon 7).

In my view, Beckett's facetious "au contraire," points to the locus of bilingual authors' self-translated texts. First, it indicates that it is not an immanent self that is translated; rather, self is created through repeated acts of linguistic and cultural crossing and transgression. Bilingual consciousness is formed in the process of translation, as this dislocation forces one to search out one's roots and to recreate them. I argue that while authors composing and performing their work in two languages do their best to inscribe themselves into each language and to recontextualize their work, in their case, language does not automatically equal *nation*. Their work fractures the post-Romantic conflation of national identity with language and literature and exposes its normalization. Secondly, "au contraire" signals bilinguals' shared reluctance to take themselves or anything too seriously and confirms that the only way to approach thorny issues of identity, belonging, and voice is with a pinch of the comic.

[145] This question is not merely an idle meditation on identity; it concerns classification and cataloguing of books in academic institutions and bookstores. Ironically, in Beckett's city of birth, all his books in both languages irrespective of their genre are located under the class mark 842 – French theatre (Astbury).

Self-translation, alternatively referred to as autotranslation, is probably the most remarkable strategy of bilingual writing. If the reasons for language switching range from circumstantial (forced exile, censorship, a limited access to the reading public in one's first language, or impossibility of finding a publisher) to affective (gaining emotional distance from the mother's tongue and culture), self-translation, the practice involving both psychical transformations of self through re-creation in a different context and particular contingencies of reception and publishing, appears even more perplexing.

Most bilingual writers have to self-translate at some stage of their career, and few find the process rewarding. To illustrate misrecognition experienced in the course of self-translation, the Russian-French writer Elsa Triolet (née Kagan) chose a photograph of a Janus-faced statue of a woman as a frontispiece for her La mise en mots. While the woman is looking at one of her faces in a mirror, which reflects the face as a distorted image, her second face looks over her shoulder. In a caption, she commented on the plight of bilinguals confronted with this task: "Pour les bilingues *se* traduire devrait être facile? Non pas! On se regarde comme dans une glace, on s'y cherche, ne reconnaît pas son reflet" ("It would seem 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 your own reflection") and complained, paradoxically, that because she could translate herself, she was condemned to a "demi-destin. Un destin traduit" ("a half-destiny, destiny in translation") (Triolet 76, 8). Vladimir Nabokov described the process of translating his own work « a terrible thing, sorting through one's own innards, and then trying them on for size like a pair of gloves" (Nabokov qtd in Beaujour 90). In her study of Russian bilingual writers, Elizabeth Beaujour concludes that for that group of writers,

self-translation was a sort of purgatory, a painful, but often necessary exercise on the way toward their new identity in a new language (51-2).

Beckett, who doubled almost all his work, admitted on several occasions that he dreaded the work of translation, and translating his own work did not make an exception. In April 1957 he wrote to Alan Schneider a propos of Endgame: "I have not even begun the translation. I have until August to finish it and keep putting off the dreaded day… I have nothing but wastes and wilds of self-translation before me for many miserable months to come" (Beckett qtd. in Fitch 9). Echoing Triolet and Beckett, Huston at a talk given in 2003 at the University of Toronto, acknowledged that she was going through a crisis of translation:

> The theme song is "I can't go on like this'. Writing two versions of each book. Dying of boredom. Translating sentence after sentence, who else has endured this tedium? Beckett, but his books were usually shorter (…). God, how I long to say Okay, folks, enough of all this schtick. From now on, I'm gonna write all my books in…and choose one of the languages. But which one? Handicapped in both, not happy, not satisfied, because if you've got two languages, you haven't really "got" any language at all.[146]

What can compel anyone to pursue it then? How pressing can be the desire to validate one's double life, to erase the difference between the original and translation or to use translation as a tool for incessant revision and double articulation, "a response to the pressure for two interpretations," as Philip Lewis points out in his "The Measure of Translation Effects" (44)? [147]

George Steiner describes a particular hermeneutic model of rewriting of one's own

[146] Huston's position, however, seems to have changed. In Nord perdu she expresses a very different attitude to translation and self-translation in particular. She claims that "translation is hope for humanity."

[147] Ironically, the article on translating Derrida is a revised self-translation in itself ("Vers la traduction abusive").

original as "one of essential donation, but also of narcissistic trial or authentication" (336). The writer, who, according to Steiner, attempts to recreate in the gift destined to another language the "core lineaments of his own inspiration," possibly seeks to "enhance or clarify these lineaments through reproduction" (Steiner AB 336). On one hand, Steiner's model implies some kind of Ur –text destined to a certain language, but open to others; on the other hand, he emphasizes that these "core lineaments" are triangulated by the presence of two languages and by the act of retracing the original intentions. Reproduction, then, becomes crucial to validating the very working of the original.

The term itself, especially in English, immediately raises issues of identity and suggests an exercise in performing and translating self. I used to prioritize self-translation as one of the most spectacular representations of literary bilingualism, a zone of total dislocation, reinvention and performance of self; a balancing act between a schizophrenic dispersal and stabilization of identity. Although my view has not radically changed, I feel that it needs to be revised in order to bring a historical dimension into focus and to accentuate the relation of self-translation to conventional translation and to the overall creative output of the authors.

I still regard self-translation as a compelling cultural practice, which was marginalized in translation studies and undertheorized until recently, but not as an exceptional one. Its eccentric status largely stems from the Romantic equation nation – language – person-author-identity. Situated in this context, self-translation indeed unsettles the categories of original writing, translation, author, reader, translator and raises a number of typological questions, but the categories themselves and even the

authors' attitudes to self-translation need to be historicized.[148] Admittedly, self-translated texts still give us more clues about the author's style and intentions as démodé as these concepts may be, than about generalized translation procedures, and this may be one of the reasons why self-translation still occupies a marginal place in translation studies.

I concur with Hokenson and Munson's hypothesis that "current concepts of bilingualism and translation are still largely legacies of German Romantic philosophy of language" (3). In Western Europe alone, self-translation has been an integral part of forming the literary canon and developing new genres. Creating a single text in two languages for different audiences was known in Greco-Roman antiquity and in the Middle Ages; in early modern Europe, writing in Latin and self-translating in vernaculars was a part of poetic "finger exercises" for many poets (Forster 30). Studying careers of several multilingual authors today[149], causes me to think that self-translation will be a constitutive part of World Literature, or, if this designation is not to last, of literature originating in various parts of the world, predicated on local peculiarities and addressing paranational communities.

In other words, self-translating will probably be more common in the twenty-first century than in the 19-20th centuries. It brings to the fore new ways of belonging, introduces less common or minor literatures and genres in some cases, draws attention to the dynamic relations between major and minor languages, and avoids or subverts

[148] I cannot agree more with Maria Filippakopoulou's suggestion that a historicizing perspective would be a welcome addition to self-translation studies (25).

[149] To mention just a few, Ariel Dorfman, André Brink, Vasilis Alexakis, Samar Ottar, Francesca Duranti, Jorge Semprún, Jordi Sierra i Fabra. Eva Gentes, whose primary research interest is self-translation, provides an updated bibliography and short commentary on many European bilingual authors on her blog http://self-translation.blogspot.com

censorship.[150] Self-translation can still be a tool for creating a new poetic idiom of nationhood, but, by the same token, it can speak beyond nation.

When I am examining literary bilingualism and self-translation as manifestations of cosmopolitanism, I use cosmopolitanism critically, as the term that is being developed and refined in the process of cultural analysis. I take self-translation as one of the cultural forms that, in Paul Rabinow's words, define cosmopolitanism as "an ethos of macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness […] of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates" (Rabinow qtd. in Robbins 1). What I also relate to the notion of cosmopolitanism is bilingual writers' and texts' fluid roles - the tension between appropriation and disowning during the reading process and the desire for constant revision coupled with the constraints imposed by the status of translation. The opposition between nationalism and cosmopolitanism as allegiance to the worldwide community of human beings[151] is no longer tenable, (Robbins 2), and the practice of self-translation articulates this new relationship in different terms inscribing it into linguistic and cultural particulars[152]. Self-translation becomes a unique locus of the intertextual and intratextual dialogue, where in the act of critical re-reading, language has to be temporarily stripped of its baggage, and its

---

[150] Samar Attar writes that self-translation helps her to keep her Arabic, but most importantly, it is a way of circumventing censhorhip: "Censorship was and still is the reason that forced me to use translation as a strategy to assert my voice as a writer" (141).

[151] Martha Nussbaum's definition of cosmopolitanism.

[152] Another strategy indicative of a different dynamics between national and worldwide concerns is replacing translation by a different way of mediation. Anthony Pym argues that in non-literary contexts, translation as a way of rendering in TL what was in SL may give way to multilingual text. See, Pym "On the Pragmatics of Translating Multilingual Texts."

automatized associations with nation and history are critically probed before establishing the new ones.

Brian Fitch and Michael Oustinoff's major studies of bilingual writing and self-translation rightly stress the difficulty of finding an appropriate, all-encompassing theoretical model for the enterprise of self-translation, and it is not my intention to introduce one. Since each translation is driven by different needs and impulses, I find it more productive to study the role of self-translation within the ensemble of the authors' work and to examine the changing functions and audiences of self-translated texts. As Hokenson and Munson observe in their diachronic study of the bilingual text, the text's functions change historically - from ecclesiastical and courtly in the Middle Ages to colonial functions at the age of modernity, and so do its readerships. They maintain that "the semiotics of the dual text always challenges audiences' interpretive procedures" (15).

In the previous chapters, I have already observed how even within one language, readers may experience the text's duality and the need for double interpretation due to unusual structure and syntax (for example, Beckett's Comment c'est/How It Is and Lessness), musicality (Beckett, Huston), iconicity (Nabokov, Beckett), covert translation or pressure exerted by other languages; unexpected cognitive models, hybrid genre and narrative conventions (Nabokov, Beckett, Huston), or printing techniques making the bilingual status of the work apparent (explicit indications of authorship and translation, alternating passages in different languages (so far mostly restricted to experimental prose and verse or unpublished drafts), and face-to-face bilingual editions.

The extreme case of such a change of the function of translation and the role of the reader would be simultaneous presentation of bilingual texts. When shorter bilingual texts or poems are presented as parallel texts that complement each other, but never merge, they create, according to Fitch, creative critical commentary of each text (30), "the sum total of the two texts, which is "necessarily greater than either of them [alone]" (32). McGuire follows up on Fitch's research and examining Beckett's "Poème 1974" and its translation "Something There" concludes that

> [t]he true appreciation of parallel texts, as outlined here, ironically necessitates a bilingual reader, undermining completely the conventional view of translation: that is, to make works accessible in other languages. If this is still the fundamental purpose of translation, the notion of a bilingual text is ancillary to that goal. Beckett's example, if we carry it to the extreme, might propose self-translation and/or bilingual composition as a valid art form in itself.

McGuire provides a befitting disclaimer - the common purpose of translation is called into question only if the example is carried to the extreme as it was in Huston's homage to Beckett, Limbo – but with the practice of simultaneous production or presentation of both texts becoming more widespread,[153] his statement deserves a serious consideration. What are the implications of translation used as one of the modalities of writing or "a valid art form in itself"? The parallel texts seek to address a different type of readership, primarily bilingual, and draw attention to the space in-between resulting from incompatibility of the two versions. Will self-translation become a new modality of writing conducive to different interpretive models - bilingual reading or will it become a tool of exclusion? The texts by expatriates, who chose to be in a different country and

[153] Most of them are shorter prose texts or poems. The novel, in Bakhtin's words, the most open and dialogically-oriented genre, resists multilingual editions due to its sheer volume. Thus, a more accessible and widely read genre is bound to national copyright laws and is limited in its circulation. This is probably another reason for a startling discrepancy in reception of self-translated novels in different countries. However, digital editions may change this trend.

language, are less imbued with nostalgia for the lost home than with the urgency to define what home, self, and language are, and how they can be represented in this in-between space. It is not surprising then that such texts tend to speak to other bilinguals in a similar position, but it would be too precipitous to conclude that this group alone constitutes their ideal reader.

Acknowledging both the internal, profoundly personal reasons for self-translation as well as a variety of external factors related to the practice, does not deflect from its significance. On the contrary, the double orientation situates self-translation within a larger scope of literary bilingualism and allows for a better examination of this strategy. Although many of the modifications in self-translation can be legitimately approached through linguistic analysis, self-translation as well as any type of translation involves much more than language.

In order to conceptualize models of self-translation, I offer a critical overview of its key questions, then I will outline Nabokov's, Beckett's, and Huston's practice of self-translation situating it within their overall writing trajectory, generic experiments, and other interlingual practices; finally, I will discuss how their work relates and illuminates major theoretical issues of self-translation studies. When I was analyzing various strategies employed by bilingual authors in the previous chapters, I have closely read the originary text alongside with the author's or authorized translation. The scope of this chapter does not allow me to provide a close reading of self-translations of all the three authors; therefore, I will draw on the previous chapters' material, my earlier work on self-translation as well as on other scholars' research on individual texts.

Whenever possible, I will compare the authors' views on translation and their

translative methods with their self-translating strategies. Admittedly, authors-translators are in a position to take more liberties with their own text compared to regular translations,[154] but their activities of translators, nonetheless, constitute an essential part of their oeuvre. Translations of other writers as well as their own work provided an impetus to original creation: Beckett's translations of Joyce and surrealist poetry seem to have influenced his own experience of language; Nabokov's monumental translation-cum-commentary of Eugene Onegin found its reflection in Pale Fire; Huston's alternation between English and French in Instruments des ténèbres/Instruments of Darkness followed by translation of each fragment into the other language, constitutes a central narrative element that propels the plot and creates a new sense of identity for the narrator.

There is no denial that the critic's metalanguage is far from being transparent: it is influenced both by her native language, by the language of criticism if it differs from the native one, and, to an extent, by the critical tradition developed within this language. Brian Fitch reminds us about the differences in Beckett's audiences and criticism that are largely derived from the division of his work - while Beckett's Anglo-American readers and critics reading mostly his English texts in the context of British and American literature, tend to perceive Beckett as "the anglophone existentialist writer," the French critics mostly read him alongside other French writers, and for them, he is "the francophone New Novelist" par excellence (Fitch 16).

---

[154] These changes are construed as liberties according to prevailing theories and methods of translation today. It was not always the case, and loyalty to the original text was not as prized. There was little preoccupation with linguistic difference in medieval bilingual texts, the distinction between target and source was immaterial since target and source, as Hokenson and Munson write, were "conflated in the immanence of the divine" (21).

In the same vein, I am aware that my own sense of simultaneous identification and incontrovertible foreigness, my "au contraire" position vis-à-vis the three writers and at least two of their languages and literatures, situates me in a critical no-man's land. It would be an act of unforgivable arrogance to claim that the position of an outsider, reflecting on her own relation to *nation* and linguistic identity, necessarily leads to a better understanding of the conundrums of self-translation or provides a vantage viewpoint of the authors' work. Yet, it inevitably pervades my analysis, and I can only hope that something of value can be gained from this perspective.

Toward Non-theory of Self-translation

Numerous illuminating studies have been devoted to comparisons of individual authors' works and translations, tracing the overall effect, differences, additions, omissions, and amplifications. By contrast, Henriette Levillain claims that since the poet's self-translation belongs neither to the category of translation nor to the category of creation, the principles of translation cannot be applied to a self-translated text (texte intermédiare) and studying losses and gains would be futile. "Il faut s'habituer à l'idée que l'originalité du texte provient de son double statut de traduction et de création. Il faudra donc toutes les nuances de la circonspection pour lui faire parler de l'une et de l'autre sans pour cela l'enfermer dans l'un ou l'autre de ces deux genres" - "We should get used to the idea that the originality of the text derives from its double status of translation and creation. Therefore, extreme caution should be taken in order to give the floor to both [categories] without at the same time reducing the text to either of the two genres" (Levillain qtd. in Oustinoff 187-188). Instead, she proposes that the self-translated text be approached as an intermediary discourse (discours intermédiaire),

which can be as illuminating as Victor Hugo's ink drawings or Baudelaire's art criticism (187).

Another tendency in theorizing self-translation is to move away from the notions of equivalence,[155] original and translation altogether. Corinne Scheiner contends that Bakhtin-Voloshinov's notion of dialogism, which prioritizes constant change of the subject/addressor and the recipient, transmutation of meanings and the word itself through repetition and recycling of texts, is more appropriate for approaching bilingual texts than Benjamin's notion of pure language. Her cogent study of Beckett's and Nabokov's self-translated texts emphasizes the primacy of context and the implied reader. Michael Oustinoff[156] and Hokenson and Munson propose developing Genette's work on palimpsest and transtextuality (transtextualité), which they take as an instrumental concept for denoting consistency of the writer's style through multiple variants of the text. The writer uses additions, omissions, amplifications and reductions even within one language from version to version. In translation, Genette considers the original as hypotext and the translation as hypertext (Genette in Hokenson 195). This approach may be justified if we accept that there is no considerable difference between intralingual and interlingual translation, and the movements from a version of the text in

[155] Equivalence is a highly disputed, unstable term. For more on the evolution of the term, see Pym, Anthony. Exploring Translation Theories. London and New York: Routledge, 2009 and The Moving Text. Localization, Translation, and Distribution. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2004.

[156] Oustinoff's study emphasizes literary functions of linguistic structures (in the light of Jakobson's theories) and considers self-translation as one of the poetic tools that sharpen authors' central techniques deployed in either language.

language A to a version in language B are generally comparable to several versions in the same language.[157]

Hokenson and Munson seek a promising compromise between these approaches. They capitalize on Anthony Pym's notion of interculture and emphasize the continuity of bilingual writers' work that stems from their bilingual style:

> Writing from the midzone, the bilingual self-translator does not just bridge the gaps between cultures, but combines them as a single subject living bilingually, and writes both languages with one hand. Split in two by post-Romantic traditions of reading national cultures and language-specific texts the self-translators can be better approached through such non-binary concepts as interculture and through the attendant correspondences that span their work (165).

While the increasingly popular image of the midzone[158] created as a result of crossing language and cultural borders may resonate with the idea of the pre-existing core or an ideal oeuvre, it is not exactly the same, nor does it imply an essential vision bifurcating into two. Following up on the idea of the mid-zone, I suggest considering self-translation as an integral part of the ensemble of other discursive practices constituting literary bilingualism. Earlier, I have also attempted to define a hybrid, innovative linguistic identity of the bilingual authors and their texts informed both by their respective cultures and languages and by the language of their own – bi-langue, but, I still struggle to reconcile the apparent continuity of the bilingual oeuvre with its pronounced decentering impulses. The very impossibility of this reconciliation, the oscillation between continuity

---

[157] Brian Fitch coined a neologism intra-intertextuality referring to the relationship between texts by the same author. For more, see Fitch, Brian. "Just between Texts: Intra-Intertextuality." The Narcissistic Text: A Reading of Camus's Fiction. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982. 89-108.

[158] For instance, Hokenson and Munson's survey The Bilingual Text, Gentes' thesis Writing from the Midzone, Danby's thesis and article "The Space Between: Self-translator."

and difference, in my view, is a salient feature of literary bilingualism in general and of self-translated texts in particular.

This constantly shifting terrain can be better served by a combination of literary and translation studies. However, their respective developments are often at odds. If the work of the authors I am studying is informed by modernist questioning of the mimetic model of literature, this questioning did not seem to extend to translation theories. Whereas modernists question the very syntax of relation between the world and language, translation is still held to the mimetic standard. "[W]hy should translation theory," Hokenson justly inquires, "continue to hold bilingual writers to a mimetic standard and measure their translations by how well the two texts mirror each other in the word-thing correlation, when their literary project is so often to disrupt that very premise?" (198).

For the bilingual writer and Beckett scholar Raymond Federman, the self-translated text is a creation illuminated by the knowledge of the previously composed text : "The original creative act…always proceeds in the dark…and in ignorance and error. Though the act of translating and especially of self-translating, is also a creative act, it is performed in the light (in the light of the existing original text), it is performed in knowledge (in the knowledge of the existing text), and therefore it is performed without error - at least at the start" (Federman "Writer as Self-Translator" 14). Creative repetition producing difference[159] - re-creation, evokes the idea of music-like poiesis. Any composition is actualized only through a performance, in which meaning is created through an act of reading and interpretation. However, unlike musical performance, one of the variants of the self-translated text eventually becomes fixated and becomes in its

[159] See Deleuze, Gilles. Difference and Repetition. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

turn a master text, from which translations into other languages can be made.[160] As a result, the presence of the pre-existing text also makes self-translation one of the most constrained forms of creative writing: linguistic structures turn out to be linguistic strictures. The second traversing presents new formal obstacles, but it also creates tantalizing possibilities of taking the text elsewhere.

In the introduction to the Translation Studies Reader, Lawrence Venutti proposes that «the history of translation can in fact be imagined as a set of changing relationships between the relative autonomy of the translated text, on the translator's actions, and two other concepts: equivalence and function» (5). Recent studies in translation stress the constitutive, if not manipulative, role of translation in linguistic and historical exchanges; they historicize and challenge the idea of the indisputable superiority of the original and the status of a translated text as a copy (Bassnet, Trivedi 2). If self-translation is to be treated as translation at all, it does not eschew the same tendency. Even when we examine texts that are self-translated from one major language into another, they form a new relationship between and within source and target literary spaces and raise a number of questions: how does a self-translated text circulate? What categories does it designate in distribution and publishing? In what direction are texts translated more often and why?[161] Both bilingual and monolingual readers' experience will differ if the work they are reading is presented as an original or as a translation, and whether the translation was

[160] Nabokov considered his revised translations from Russian into English as definitive master texts, which would be the base for subsequent translations into other languages.

[161] For Pascale Casanova, a disciple of Bourdieu, self-translation is subsumed into a bigger category of what she defines as *literarization* (*littérarisation*), any operation validating a work as literary and facilitating access to prestigious literary spaces of the time. See, Casanova's République mondiale des lettres (188-93). There is no denying that even for native speakers of dominant languages, self-translation as well as writing directly in another literary language are often propitious strategies designate their new, worldly status.

made by the author or another translator.[162] It is not clear if the author's translation is necessarily perceived as superior,[163] but this knowledge bestows on it a particular quality.

The texts' movements also emphasize the complexity of the author-translator relationship: even though the divide between the author and the translator for bilingual writers may appear as outdated as the divide between the categories of nation, language and identity, the gradations within this relationship – collaboration with co-translators, editorial pressures, translation as an elaboration on an important theme – remain meaningful and repel the hierarchy of the author and the translator.

The array of terms and tropes used to describe self-translation underscores the theoretical tension underlying this practice. I see the proliferation of various, often conflicting models as a necessary stage for reflecting on the nature of self-translated texts, as a valuable contribution for charting the previously neglected area and for articulating the ramifications of self-translation at present. On the other hand, I am apprehensive of the excessive search for a perfect definition of each re-writing.[164] Could it be that our attempts to define and to categorize actually deflect our attention from what

---

[162] For discussion of the interaction between monolingual and bilingual readers and the self-translated text, see Fitch, Brian. Beckett and Babel (19).

[163] Christopher Whyte, for instance, expresses his skepticism about the author's ability to translate his own words. To support his position, he quotes Paul Valéry, who inveighs against the idea of the author's supreme authority over the "meaning of a text." In the conclusion of his essay on Le Cimetière Marin, Valéry states that "*There is no such thing as 'the real meaning ' of a text*. The author has no special authority. Whatever he may have *wanted* to say, he has written what he has written. Once published, a text is, so to speak, a mechanism which everyone can use in his own way and as best he can: it is not certain that it constructor uses it better than the next man. Besides, if he really knows what he *wanted* to do, this knowledge always interferes with his perception of what he has *done*" (qtd. in Whyte 68). Viewed in this light, Whyte argues, the author is not necessarily the best qualified to interpret or translate his own work.

[164] Qurratulain Hyder, for instance, called his own translation from Urdu into English "transcreation," not a translation, but recomposition (qtd. in Assaddudin 243-244), Nancy Huston defines her creation of the French version of Plainsong as "re-writing."

it does, why and under what circumstances each text was created? It is the polyvalence of self-translation that destabilizes the category and requires re-contextualization of each instance.

Vladimir Nabokov's Metarmorphoses and Self-Translation

Interviewing Vladimir Nabokov in Montreux in 1963, Alvin Toffler asked if the writer felt "any strong sense of national identity?" Nabokov's curt response, which would not have seemed so unusual today, was: "I am an American writer, born in Russia and educated in England where I studied French literature, before spending fifteen years in Germany" (SO 26). Among bilingual writers, who consciously chose their poetic idiom as adults, Nabokov stands apart. According to his autobiography Speak, Memory, he was raised as "a perfectly normal trilingual child," in an aristocratic family, who, not unlike the inhabitants of Ada's Antiterra, took an intense pleasure in multilingual puns and language games (19). The change of language in his family's conversations, as Nabokov shows in Speak, Memory could also could signify a gradation in emotional distance and a way of broaching and connecting unrelated subjects.[165] Before becoming one of his recurrent figures of writing, translation was an important part of Nabokov's everyday life and one of his early literary exercises.

[165] One of the humorous and sad incidents that Nabokov evokes in his autobiography is representative of such sliding from one language into another. When young Nabokov, who was spending a fall in Berlin, asked his parents about the nature of his physical discomfort associated with images of women, his father "ruffled the German newspaper he had just opened and replied in English (with the parody of a possible quotation – a manner of speech he often adopted in order to get going): "That, my boy, is just another of nature's absurd combinations, like shame and blushes, or grief and red eyes.' '*Tolstoy vient de mourir*,' he suddenly added, in another stunned voice, turning to my mother. '*Da chto ti* [something like 'good gracious']!' she exclaimed in distress, clasping her hands in her lap. '*Pora domoy* [Time to go home],' she concluded, as if Tolstoy's death had been the portent of apocalyptic disasters" (Nabokov SM 161).

One of young Nabokov's whimsical feats was his translation of Mayne Reid's The Headless Horseman from English into French, which he completed at the age of eleven (Boyd NRY 256-7). Several years later, it was Nabokov's father, Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov, who challenged the author to translate Romain Rolland's unwieldy Colas Breugnon, into Russian, and young Nabokov accepted the challenge.[166]Nikolka Persik, as it was baptized by Nabokov, was published in 1922, and soon afterwards, it was followed by a translation of Carroll's Alice in Wonderland – Anya v strane chudes (1923). The title alone shows that Alice in Wonderland was thoroughly russified. Not only did Nabokov invent his own puns, word play, poems based on the Russian classics but he replaced historical figures with the ones familiar to the Russian reader: for instance, William the Conqueror is substituted by Vladimir Monomakh in Kiev.[167]

An aspiring poet himself - Nabokov had written hundreds of poems in his teens and twenties - he kept translating poetry all his life.[168] Significantly, during the second half of his life, Nabokov continued writing verse in Russian (while his major prose works were written in English).[169] This intriguing split[170] between genres and languages yields

---

[166] Later on, Nabokov himself will find it an immensely edifying exercise for his son Dmitry, who will end up translating most of his father's work.

[167] Nabokov, Vladimir. Anya v strane chudes. Sobranie sochineniy russkogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 1, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2000. For more, see Weaver, Warren. Alice in Many Tongues. Mansfield Center: Martino Publishing, 2006.

[168] An interesting point of contact in Nabokov's and Beckett's careers is their translation of Arthur Rimbaud's "Le Bateau ivre" into Russian and English respectively. Nabokov's translation was published in the famous Russian newspaper Rul in Berlin in 1928, and Beckett's "Drunken Boat" appeared in the early 1930s.

[169] Seventeen-year old Nabokov published a volume of verse with an unassuming title Stikhi (Poems), and before his death, coming full circle, he was preparing for publication an eponymous volume of his translated Russian verse, which appeared posthumously in 1979.

noteworthy clues to Nabokov's bilingual writing. Though Nabokov himself asserts that [he has] "never been able to see any generic difference between poetry and artistic prose…the magic of prosody may improve upon what we call prose by bringing out the full flavor of meaning, but in plain prose there are also certain rhythmic patterns, the music of precise phrasing, the beat of thought rendered by recurrent peculiarities of idiom and intonation" (SO 44), Laurent Rabaté's examination of Nabokov's writing in the context of the Russian poetic tradition emphasizes thematic differences between Nabokov's poetry and prose: Rabaté contends that the poetry is inextricably linked to the Russian cultural tradition while even Nabokov's early prose bears the traces of the break with Russia and its heritage, is quite convincing (Rabaté 397-398). Although many of Nabokov's themes (exile, "the otherworld") are much more explicit and transparent in his verses, Nabokov's poetry, and arguably most poetry, does not easily 'pass' in self-translation. Instead, Nabokov's own poetry and his translations of other poets and prose writers, especially during his earlier period, help shape his unique prose style.

In his study of Nabokov's bilingual writing, Oustinoff compiles a table that juxtaposes Nabokov's translation activities with his own writing. The layout underscores the effect of simultaneity; with one column feeding off the other, it elides the traditional division into two periods: Russian and American. The division is indeed questionable as during his Russian years, Nabokov was introducing English and French literature to the Russian reader while his American years were marked by a constant desire to repay his debt to the Russian language, and to promote a deeper understanding of its literature and

[170] This split does not mean that there is a clear language-to-genre mapping. Nabokov occasionally wrote verse in English as well.

history. After moving to the USA, he translates Lermontov's A Hero of our Time (1958), The Song of Igor's Campaign (1960), and Pushkin's Eugene Onegin (1964).

The table also makes apparent the progression of his work: during Nabokov's early stage, all of his translations are from English and French into Russian, except for some translations of Russian poetry into French in the late 1930s, while all his fictional writing is in Russian. In the 1930s, parallel to his writing in Russian and a piece in French ("Mademoiselle O"), Nabokov starts translating his earlier work into English. The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, devoted to complexities of genealogy and identity in language and written directly in English, became a transition to writing original prose work in English (1939).

The distinction between original writing and translation in Nabokov's case becomes increasingly tenuous: first of all, Nabokov resorts to self-translation as one of his polyvalent rhetorical devices in nearly all his books, regardless of the language of composition. It can range from mimicking conversations among multilingual characters, repeating the same idea in different languages in order to create a stereoscopic or comic effect - ("Страшно больно покидать чрево жизни. Смертый ужас рождения. L'enfant qui naît ressent les affres de sa mère» (The Gift 486); «*lakomyashchayasya yagodami* (feasting on berries)», «*tout ceci, vsyo eto*, in tit and toto» (Ada 35, 79) - to deliberate linguistic slippages and mistranslations constituting the very texture of Pale Fire and Ada or language switches as tests of identity in The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, where V unmasks the «very French» Madame Lecerf by playing a multilingual prank on her. He turns to his Russian friend and starts talking about Madame Lecerf in Russian, a language she presumably does not understand: «*A oo neighna sheike pahook*,»

I said softly. The lady's hand flew up to the nape of her neck, she turned on her heels. [...] «*J'ai quelque chose dans le cou*. There is something on my neck, I feel it,» said Madame Lecerf» (171). Although there are a few instances of redundancy resulting from juxtaposition of the same utterances in two or three languages, Nabokov's textual self-translations are far from isolating or excluding languages, the effect that Rainier Grutman defines as «mono noise,» a semblance of interaction and plurality that masks virtual exclusion of the other language (224). Even if such juxtapositions can in theory encourage the readers to skip repetitive passages in an unknown language and read English or Russian only, Nabokov's readers are unlikely to ignore other languages altogether; they are aware that besides the effects of particular multilingual texture, this seeming repetition can provide important clues to the plot.

Secondly, almost half of Nabokov's output in English are his self-translations from the Russian, often considerably modified. Dissatisfied with Winifred Roy's translation of Camera Obscura (1936), in 1938, Nabokov creates his own translation, probably the most modified among his works, and entitles it Laughter in the Dark.[171] Laughter in the Dark will still be altered for subsequent London editions in 1961 and 1969. At around the same time, he also translates his Otchaianie (Despair), which first appears in English in 1937 and then considerably revises it in 1966. Did he thereby

---

[171] To commemorate Nabokov's centennial, Laughter in the Dark, in its turn, was recently translated into Russian and published as a separate novel Смех в темноте (Smekh v temnote) in collected works of his American period. Nabokov, Vladimir. Smekh v temnote. Sobranie sochineniy amerikanskogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 2, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2008. Alla Zlochvskaya argues that Camera Obscura and Laughter in the Dark are not translations, but two separate novels treating similar themes. The transformations of imagery in the two novels, according to her, are too profound, and the novels are centered around different metaphors. She does not hesitate to call Laughter in the Dark an inferior, significantly simplified novel "devoid of internal dramatism" (Zlochevskay).

establish that authorial translation is something apart? It would be premature to draw the line between translation procedures applied to others and his self-translations without considering particular circumstances of their production.

In translating his early work from the Russian, the characters and the images are further stylized, Nabokov's sense of humor becomes more ruthless, and thematic and color patterns are amplified. Jane Grayson's study of Nabokov's first four Russian texts and their self-translations (Camera Obscura, Otchaianie, Sogliadatai, and Korol', dama, valet) indicates that the narrative distance from the characters and the effects of narrative artifice are increasing in English, and pathetic or despicable aspects of characters are augmented (28, 47). My comparison of Camera Obscura with Laughter in the Dark resulted in similar findings, but this tendency cannot be applied to the ensemble of Nabokov's work. First of all, these works, all set in Berlin and almost entirely divorced from any national sensibilities, occupy a particular place in the author's oeuvre. Secondly, although the lapse of time between the original and modified translations is not the major reason for the revisions, some modifications were made in order to update the language or adapt it, depending on the edition, to the American or the British reader.

Hokenson and Munson argue that French, Nabokov's third active language, might be helpful in deflecting attention from the irresolvable tension between Russian and English. French can be used "as a kind of Archimedes's lever, lifting the analysis out of the standard binary mode of analyzing his bilingual Russian/English writing" (182). I concede that French can be used as an illustration for many Nabokovian devices regardless of Russian or English, but I am more inclined to think that French only confirms the particularities of Nabokov's idiolect. What the analysis of translation of

"Mademoiselle O" into English amply demonstrates is that regardless of a specific language, Nabokov's choice in translating earlier work[172] is toward a greater stylization, distance, and artifice, and translation into any language sharpens the focus on those features (Hokenson 183).

Another way of undoing the binary between the two worlds and two languages that structure Nabokov's fictional universe, is introducing imaginary languages, which undo the binary between the two real ones. Before creating fantastic multilingual universes of Ada, Pale Fire and Bend Sinister, Nabokov experimented with imaginary languages in the Russian Solus Rex, from which many elements of Pale Fire were later developed. However, the function of imaginary languages varies in every novel: if in Bend Sinister, one of his early English novels (1947), according to Beaujour, "the mixing of languages, code-switching, and hybridization of tongues are negatively marked, and paranomasia, cross-linguistic puns, neologisms, and spoonerisms are linguistic practices associated with a vile totalitarian country whose language Nabokov describes as 'a mongrel blend of Slavic and Germanic' (40), Ada's explosion of allusions and mistranslations, introduces a version of Nabokov's country of his own, a new cosmology, which the mind can grasp only through going back and forth in time and

[172] The examples that Grayson provides in her study recall the moves that Nabokov undertook in revising the base translations of Camera Obscura or Dar (The Gift): "L'aile moirée d'un oiseau exotique au chapeau de Mademoiselle," displaying Nabokov's attention to play of light and reflection and verse-like rhythmic quality becomes "the ruffled exotic bird with one bloodshot eye on Mademoiselle's hat" (Grayson 148). The added "bloodshot" eye travels to the Russian text and remains in the revised English version – Speak, Memory. "Il faut bien noter que, malgré l'emphase de son langage et la naïveté de ses idées; le français de la Mademoiselle était divin" In English, there are numerous additions, and all the "alliterative sins" are deployed to ridicule Mademoiselle and to underscore the contrast between the beauty of her language and the banality of her thought: ""And, really, her French was so lovely! Ought one to have minded the shallowness of her culture, the bitterness of her temper, the banality of her mind, when that pearly language of hers purled and scintillated, as innocent of sense as the alliterative sins of Racine's pious verse?" (Nabokov qtd. Grayson 151).

learning to distinguish between languages and characters' family resemblances and differences.

It is obvious that Nabokov's translation methods applied to Carroll and Rolland and his own work in the 1930s could not be further removed from his exigent literalism that he declared in the preface to Eugene Onegin. The translations were made in different contexts and with a very different reading public in view; therefore, it is erroneous to extend Nabokov's translation postulates in the preface to Onegin to his overall translation theory and practice. In the 1940s and 1950s, Nabokov, still struggling to secure temporary teaching and writing jobs, translated major Russian verse and prose. Paraphrasing Pushkin's dictum of translations being the post-horses of civilization, Nabokov condemned most English translations of Russian classics as "the wild asses of ignorance," and started providing his own translations using them as a teaching aid for his classes of Russian Literature (Boyd NAY 32). His intended audience, therefore, was supposed to have a fair grasp of Russian and, in a sense, to read bilingually: using the English translation and commentary for clarification.[173] Nabokov's notorious literalism stems mostly from his teaching and his reaction to overly smooth, domesticating translations misrepresenting Russian classics.

After the gargantuan four-volume edition of Eugene Onegin, Nabokov mostly translates his own work, often revising the version prepared by his son, Dmitri Nabokov and by other translators. Only one major novel during that period was self-translated from English into Russian, one of Nabokov's favorites – Lolita (1967). In fact, it was Lolita's

[173] "My translation is, of course, a literal one, a crib, a pony. And to the fidelity of transposal I have sacrificed everything: elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage, and even grammar" (Nabokov SO 38). Nabokov was discussing the possibility of printing his translation of Eugene Onegin facing Pushkin's original (Boyd NAY 381).

notoriety that brought Nabokov's previous work to the attention of the American reader. Besides the desire to introduce his Russian texts to the American reader, editorial pressure to produce new work might have caused Nabokov to turn to translation of his Russian books: Nabokov had to produce eleven books in five years, according to his agreement with McGraw-Hill,[174] and after the feat of composing Ada, the aging author felt too drained to take up more original work.

Authorized translations occupy a particular place in Nabokov canon. They are as significant for the study of his bilingual style as his own translations. His most indefatigable and most devoted translator was his son Dmitry, but several novels were first translated by other translators and then revised by Vladimir Nabokov himself. Among the most notable in the 1960s-1970s are The Gift – translated by Michael Scammel and revised by Nabokov in 1963, Mary (1970), translated by Michael Glenny as well as a number of novellas translated from the Russian in collaboration with Peter Pertzov and Simon Karlinsky. When Nabokov started translating his Russian work, first, (up to mid-60s), his revisions were mostly limited to explanations of details of émigré life, explication or substitutions of Russian allusions. He explained to Michael Scammel that resorting to the base translations prepared by Dmitri or other professional translators helped him refrain from substantial rewriting of his earlier work. The base translations made by others, in a way, preserved the original, but Nabokov's further revisions accorded these texts a new status. After the English translation was revised, it would be considered a master-text, a more definitive than the Russian text, and subsequent

[174] The books he submitted by January 1973 were King, Queen, Knave (1968), Ada (1969), Mary (1970), Poems and Problems (1971), Glory (1971), Transparent Things (1972), A Russian Beauty (1973), Strong Opinions (1973), a new edition of Bend Sinister (1973), Lolita: A Screenplay (1974), Tyrants Destroyed (1975) (Boyd NAY 609).

translations into other languages were to be made from the revised English version (Boyd NAY 484).

As we have already observed in comparing Dar with its authorized translation, Nabokov usually changes the base version in favor of alliterative patterns or the rhythmic effects and compensates for the striking imagery based on synesthetic associations, transferred epithets or on juxtapositions of the abstract and the lofty with the tangible and the sensual (less common in Russian) by introducing rare, polysyllabic epithets or very precise, technical terms in English. This is true of his revisions of other drafts provided by his collaborators. Significantly, the collaboration with other translators anchors linguistic and cultural transfers in a different paradigm and undermines the distinction between the original and translation, the author and the translator even further: base translations with their consequent revisions introduce another stage in textual production, a mid-zone of a different kind that brings into relief variants of the translated texts and the very machinery of the process. The chosen master-text bears the traces of multi-directional textual and human exchanges; it is no longer the product of a single artist, but a result of negotiations between the original intention, the writer's retrospective reading of the text, and his response to the collaborator's reading and rendering. By the same token, the choice of the language for the master-text both reflects and reaffirms the language's current preeminence in the publishing world.

The Autobiography: Memory Speaking in Three Tongues

A fastidious translator and memorist, Nabokov subjected none of his work to so much linguistic and structural metamorphosis as his autobiography. It germinated as a separate novella in French devoted to his governess Mademoiselle O and was published in French in 1938, by the end of his European years. In collaboration with Hilda Ward, Nabokov translated the story into English and published it in the January edition of the Atlantic Monthly in 1943. From 1948 to 1951, he composed and published in American journals fourteen other autobiographical stories. These collected stories as well as "Mademoiselle O," incorporated into his memoir, turned into a book Conclusive Evidence: a Memoir. Under this title, it was published in the USA in 1951.

The same year, it was also published in London, but under a different title – Speak, Memory, which Nabokov would retain for his revised 1966 version. In 1954, Nabokov produced a Russian translation of his memoir entitled Drugie berega (Other Shores). Finally, in 1966, when Nabokov was no longer viewed as a Russian émigré reflecting on his own family history and the life of other intellectuals in Russia and in pre-war Europe, but as a renowned American author, he produced a new revised English edition Speak, Memory: an Autobiography Revisited. The extensive revisions result in as many as three English versions of every chapter,[175] a good illustration of intra-lingual translation merging with interlingual one. The Russian Drugie berega omits one chapter "because of the psychological difficulty of replaying a theme elaborated in [his] Dar" (Nabokov qtd. in Grayson 140).

Many changes are caused by the degree of familiarity of the intended reader with Russian history and realities of the early twentieth-century lifestyle of an aristocratic

[175] Nabokov glosses over his changes to the chapters that he had to make when he was compiling Conclusive Evidence from the journal versions of the same stories (Grayson 139-40).

family; others are modified by Nabokov's desire for a greater precision, but most of his emendations, including paratextual ones – for instance, the sketched map[176] of his former estate that omits, distorts, and invents more than documents - are subordinated to Nabokov's artistic manipulation, an integral element of his autobiographical discourse. It is important to note that even though the final version of Speak, Memory after all the elaborate revisions and going back-and-forth between languages, is supposed to be more complete, Drugie berega is replete with more detailed descriptions of certain scenes and characters, especially servants.

In Drugie berega, Nabokov complained that his original English autobiography, Conclusive Evidence, "took the longest time to write (1946-1950) and writing it was particularly excruciating since the memory was attuned to one key- which was musical, sketchy, and Russian-but was forced to use another key-a detailed English one" ("писалась с особенно мучительным трудом, ибо память была настроена на один лад – музыкально недоговоренный, русский, а навязывался ей другой лад, английский и обстоятельный» (Nabokov DB143). When all the pieces came together, however, Nabokov was rather satisfied with a resulting sense of a coherent whole until the moment he started translating it into «my former, my *major*[177] language,"and the process exposed glaring shortcomings: "This or that sentence was staring at me with disgust, there were so many gaps and so many redundant explanations that an exact translation into Russian would be Mnemosine's caricature» (144). («Так отвратительно

[176] For an illuminating discussion of paratextual devices in Speak, Memory, see Zarankin, Julia. "The Literary Memoirist as Necrographer: Khodasevich, Tsvetaeva, Nabokov, and Proust." Diss. Princeton University, 2004.

[177] Italics mine

таращилась иная фраза, так много было и пробелов и лишних пояснений, что точный перевод на русский язык был бы карикатурой Мнемозины» (144).

I cannot agree more with Galya Diment, who discourages us from pitying Nabokov after reading those lines. His statements are certainly not insincere, but when confessing his linguistic and spiritual torments, she believes, Nabokov was addressing himself to the Russian reader, who would welcome such remarks. It is worth noting that Nabokov still emphatically calls Russian his "major" language while most of his original writing during this period is produced in English. It is true that when working on Drugie berega, Nabokov discovered that "sometimes, by means of intense concentration, the neutral smudge might be forced to come into beautiful focus so that the sudden view could be identified, and the anonymous servant named" (SM 12). Grayson attributes this sharpening of focus to reversion to the same language in which these memories were lived (141), but the opposite tendency – writing about the most intimate memories or recollections of childhood in a different language while using the mother tongue for fiction writing – has also been proven true.[178]

The more personal the memories become, the more one needs a protective shield of "this second instrument . . . a stiffish, artificial thing . . . which cannot conceal poverty of syntax and paucity of domestic diction" (Nabokov SO 106). Overall, there is the same tendency in his autobiography as in his other reworkings: with every revision, he is moving toward a greater tightness, precision, humor, and a sentimental distance. It seemed that Drugie berega, undoubtedly, one of his most sentimental Russian prose

[178] See, for example, Beaujour, Elizabeth. Alien Tongues (45), Diment, Galya. "English as Sanctuary: Nabokov's and Brodsky's Autobiographical Writings." The Slavic and East European Journal 37. 3 (Autumn, 1993): 346-361; Huston's numerous interviews and autobiographical essays in Longings and Belongings and Nord perdu.

works, would be the last one. From then on, Nabokov will cajole his prodigious artistic memory to speak in English only.

In an interview with Alvin Toffler in 1964, Nabokov confirmed that he would never write another novel in Russian because of the impossibility of eliciting any response or even "some reverberation" from the police state, where his books would remain banned (Nabokov SO 37). However, "in compensation, in a spirit of justice to [his] little American muse," soon afterwards, he breaks his own promise and puts himself to the task of translating Lolita to protect it from "vulgar paraphrases or blunders" (38). Since Nabokov expected the Russian Lolita to be published in the USA or in Paris (53), where the remaining Russian émigrés could certainly read it in English or French, in translating Lolita, his motivation was certainly not commercial, but nor was it driven by a mere pedantic search for precision.

The laborious process marks, in Nabokov's words, "a new spiral" of his creative life, and adumbrates his vicarious return to Russia. Despite Nabokov's proclaimed growing indifference to Russia, he did not completely relinquish his desire to reach the hypothetical future reader, who will cherish every bit of his "unreal estate" – be it a dreamily reconstructed life in pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg and Vyra, the grotesque émigré Berlin of the 1930s, or Lolita's Americana. As Rita Wilson notes, more often than not, being one's own translator, "takes us beyond language into the realms of nostalgia, loss of identity, rootlessness, and invisibility," and the act of self-translating can also be seen as an "a manifestation of the essential human desire for recognition; a vital urge to be heard and understood" (191).

Since its publication, Russian Lolita has had a mixed reception. On one hand, it has been praised as a translation tour-de –force that revitalized the Russian language. Gennady Barabtarlo holds it as "in many stylistic respects [Nabokov's] finest" work that deserves to be placed "on the very top step of the frozen escalator of Russian masterpieces," and Vladimir Weidle, in my view, correctly predicts a greater significance of Lolita for the Russian language and literature than for English literature (qtd. in Boyd NAY 490). Nabokov's revival in the 1980-1990s Russia, where Lolita along with Nabokov's other Russian works came to represent for the new Russian reader a different branch of its literary history and an alternative way of being in language and in the world, confirms this view.[179] At the same time, Nabokov's Russian Lolita was condemned as an inferior translation compared to *Samizdat* translations in Russia, mostly because of its excessive use of Anglicisms and obsolete syntax and vocabulary.

Nabokov himself in a new afterword to the Russian edition admitted that translation of Lolita proved to be a process of disillusionment:" Alas, that 'marvelous Russian language' that I thought awaited me somewhere, blossoming like a faithful springtime behind a tightly locked gate whose key I had kept so safe for many years, proved to be nonexistent, and beyond the gate are nothing but charred stumps and the hopeless autumnal vista, and the key in my hand is more like a jimmy" (Nabokov qtd. in Boyd 490).[180] However, Nabokov's frustration with a relative paucity of technical, sports,

[179] See my discussion of this phenomenon in chapter 1. Nina Khrushcheva addressed Nabokov's role in Russian art and politics in her recent book Imagining Nabokov: Russia between Art and Politics. New Haven: Yale UP, 2008.

[180] The afterword to English Lolita contains Nabokov's complaint about his private tragedy of having to "abandon my natural idiom, my untrammeled, rich, and infinitely docile Russian tongue for a second-rate brand of English, devoid of any of those apparatuses--the baffling mirror, the black velvet backdrop, the implied associations and traditions, which the native illusionist, frac-tails flying, can magically use to transcend the heritage in his own way" (317)

and fashion terms in Russian and the difficulty of transplanting his most American novel (embedded, as he emphasized, in his own *imaginary* America) into imaginary future Russia, where it had a faint chance of being read, made him devise many novel word combinations in Russian[181] and, more importantly, inspired the lineaments of Ada with its *petroplanes*, *dorophones*, and other quaint means of communication between Russian estates and American states, between Terra and the Anti-terra.

Similarly to Terra and Antiterra, Russia and USA, Nabokov's original compositions and translations do not form a whole, but eventually they become connected. Even though his choices of translation strategies vary depending on the circumstances of production and the intended audience, they are driven by the same exigency for precision, detail and sharp focus. Nabokov's triumph consists in constructing a polyglot world of his own, in which this interrelation, defying time and political constraints, is finally attained. This connection, however, is never taken for granted from the start; it is achieved only through an immense effort, and its dazzling appearance never completely conceals a soupçon of an irreparable loss.

*Samuel Beckett: The **Artist and the Artisan***

In the history of bilingual writing and translation, Beckett's sustained practice of bilingual work is probably unprecedented. The doubling of his work in English and in

[181] Most of them are compiled and documented in An English-Russian dictionary of Nabokov's Lolita by Nakhimovsky, Alexander, S. Paperny.

French unsettles definitions of translation and writing even when they are formally designated as such. As Hugh Kenner remarked, even "conventional title-page formulas – 'Translated from the French by the author,' or 'Traduit de l'anglais par l'auteur' – should be understood to designate a second traversing, phrase by phrase, of ground already mapped, performed with an intensity of concentration appropriate to new composition. This is true even when a collaborator's name appears" (Kenner qtd. in Oustinoff 33). Moreover, the translations resulting from this traversing seem to introduce unusual style and language in both languages, in some cases, perhaps, more so than in the originals.[182]

Beckett's scholars and readers have been searching for unity and continuity in his work and acknowledging at the same time a decentering[183] thrust apparent in his writing. Self-translators do not simply deal with translation of an originary text, but with the muptiplicity of texts, which come to life in an act of translating: intertextual insertions, allusions, variants of their texts, and recurrent themes in their own work. In Propositions pour une poétique de la traduction, Henri Meschonnic calls translating a text "a translinguistic activity, as is the very writing of a text" (305). Translation in Beckett serves as another distancing device deflecting from preoccupation with self and,

[182] To list just a few, Lessness (translation of Sans), The Unnameable (L'Innomable), Ill Seen Ill Said (Mal vu mal dit) in English strike me as slightly more poetic and innovative than their French versions. Hugh Kenner believes that the English versions created via translation "constitute something new in English prose" (86). For more, see Kenner, Hugh. A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1988.

[183] Henri Meschonnic posited translational decentering (décentrement) differently: as a textual relation between two texts in two language-cultures opposing it to the notion of transparency. "Le décentrement est un raport textuel entre deux textes dans deux langues-cultures jusque dans la structure linguistique de la langue, cette structure linguistique étant valeur dans le système du texte" - "Decentering is a textual relation between two texts in two language-cultures that extends to the linguistic structure of language, this linguistic structure being a constitutive component of the system of the text" (308). Pascale Sardin Damestoy in her Samuel Beckett autotraducteur ou l'art de "l'empechement" links linguistic decentering (décentrement langagier) to the overall Beckettian project of subject decentering.

paradoxically, due to distance and repetition, it helps to define self through what is Not I, the move that Beckett has been deploying from the Trilogy - gradually divesting characters and their voice from all the externals, materiality, belonging, nation, causality, and even their own words.

As Fitch's infuential monograph on Beckett's bilingualism and self-translation showed, attempts to locate the work either as the original, translation, or rewriting lead to an impasse. The very idea of setting up these categories creates an artificial theoretical problem: first of all, in most cases, Beckett's translations and revisions result from crossings of multiple texts – using previous (non-published) drafts, variants, manuscripts. Fitch himself analyzes several variants of Ping /Bing and Company/Compagnie. For instance, there are seventeen sentences from Company that are missing in the French Compagnie. The English edition of Company was further reworked after its translation into French, as the statement on the back cover indicates.[184] As a result of his analysis, Fitch develops a hypothesis that the translated text acquires the function of commentary or a critical interpretation and elucidates the work's ambiguities (104).

Yet, despite its ostensible futility, the quest for the status of the self-translated work remains. What is often neglected is that the author's versions in other languages differ depending on the circumstances of their creation and on the time lapse between the first version and its translation – Rainier Grutman in a dictionary entry on autotranslation distinguishes between a simultaneous self-translation (made while the first version is still in progress) and a delayed one (produced after the work was completed and published) (Grutman 20). It is impossible to apply the same criteria to Mercier et Camier, Beckett's

[184] "Written in English, it has already been translated into French by the author and revised in the light of the French text" (Fitch 105).

first novel written in French in 1945 and translated in 1974 as to En attendant Godot, which was translated almost immediately after its publication in French (1953) or to Stirring Still/Soubresauts (1985), started as a text in both languages.[185] Secondly, translation itself became a very broad term, especially in Beckett's case, and it is used not only as a linguistic transposition from one language to another, but as adaptations of Beckett's work across various media and as a trope concerning the movements between mind and body.

Harry Cockerham's and Ruby Cohn's early comparative work was mostly focusing on Beckett's plays, but it revealed many of the changes that Beckett introduced in his prose work as well. Approaching Beckett's bilingual work from different theoretical perspectives, they agree, nonetheless, on certain patterns of Beckett's translative practices. For instance, keeping a slightly higher register in English ("quelle gallerie de crevés" in English Molloy becomes "gallery of moribunds"), enhancing the comic tone in French, and consistently maintaining more colloquial style in French plays, especially in Waiting for Godot, which in many instances is neutralized in English[186] (Cockerham 152).

I did not discern the same tendencies in translation of Comment c'est, which can be also read as a reflection on translation procedures, and not a very cheerful one - transcribing the unnamed voice and torturing the other into speech. Lori Chamberlain, for

---

[185] See, van Hulle's "Electronic Textual Editing: Authorial Translation: The Case of Samuel Beckett's Stirrings Still/Soubresauts. <http://www.tei-c.org/about/Archive_new/ETE/Preview/vanhulle.xml>

[186] Vladimir's "An, non, là tu te goures" turns into a neutral "Ah no, there you're mistaken." And his remark about their rights "Nous les avons bazardés" becomes simply "We got rid of them." Cockerham observes that even when Beckett translates his later plays from English into French, French is still more colloquial. The translation of the Man's "She put a bloodhound on me, but I had a little chat with him. He was glad of the extra money" intensifies the familiar tone "Elle me colla un privé aux fesses, mais je lui dis deux mot. Il fut ravi du rabiot." His man's remark "We had fun trying to work this out" is translated by a colorful "Tordante salade. Nous avons bien ri" (qtd. in Cockerham 152-53).

instance, views all the sadomasochistic relations between the narrator and the voice or the narrator and Pim as "characteriz[ing] the relationship between an original and a translated text" (19). The interchangeablity of the roles of the tormentor and the victim can also be read in this light. The syntax of Comment c'est, however, is more radical than that of How it is, so read together, a more explicit How it is at times becomes a commentary on the French text. Comparisons of Beckett's drafts with the published translation and with Hugh Kenner's translation reveal the tendency to replace polysyllabics with shorter, sometimes onomatopoietic words, imitating panting, and the preference for the spoken word.

When Beckett's earlier work was translated from the French several decades later (for instance, Mercier et Camier), it revealed a lot of omissions and a consistent enhancement of strangeness of locutions in English, making them less realistic (Connor 2-3). Fitch's analysis of Company/Companie and Le Dépeupleur confirms that in the works of that period, English is more colorful and detailed compared to French (Fitch 120). Fitch finds multiple examples proving different narrator's positions in English and French: in French, the voice is more distanced, and it is devoid of emotion and sympathy compared to English (123). The prolixity of such modifications makes Fitch conclude that there are two different textual universes in English and in French, and when the translation is finished, the originary text becomes incomplete without it (60, 123).

I share the belief of many scholars[187] that a particular rhythm and musicality that makes Beckett's prose resemble poetry, define many of Beckett's choices. Beckett's translations are indeed inscribed in « entre-deux monstrueux » a new linguistic space

[187] Ludovic Janvier, James Knowlson, Ives Thomas, Mireille Bosquet, and many others.

created as a result of trespassing of both codes (Meschonnic qtd. in Bosquet 82). What I find dissatisfying in this term is that it either remains too vague and ill-defined, neglecting the changing nature of Beckett's work, or it tends to be confined to the interaction between English and French only. It would be erroneous to claim that Beckett's attention was always divided between English and French. His immersion into Italian literature, particularly in Dante, shaped the topography of his writing and led to the creation of Beckett's recurrent characters (for instance, Belacqua). Beckett's connection with German art and language was equally important. After leaving London in 1936, Beckett spent about two years traveling in Germany and improving his German; later, he was also directing German versions of his plays. Ironically, Beckett's first translation of his own work, a poem "Cascando,"(1936), was from English into German. Secondly, similarly to Nabokov, Beckett oscillated between poetry and prose - even his last piece "Comment dire/What is the word" is a poem, and his translations as well as his work in other genres display attention to form and a phenomenal compression characteristic of verse.

Nor was there a neat transition to writing exclusively in French after the experience of the war, as it is often assumed. Beckett tried his hand at writing poetry in French in 1938-39, which allowed him to "get away, most of the time, at least, from the dense allusiveness, wide erudition and "intimate at arms –length" quality of his English poems" (Knowlson 270). There were other considerations: Beckett's earlier conflicts with censorship in Ireland and in Britain were to last, and his complicated relation with his mother tongue could also be an extension of his extremely fraught relationship with his mother, May Beckett. After switching to French, not only did Beckett's style change,

but his production visibly accelerated: while it took him almost four years to finish Watt, he wrote most of his post-war masterpieces in rapid succession. Since publication of Beckett's works was often delayed, the chronology of his French works and their subsequent translations is complicated,[188] but despite the lapses between completion of the works and their subsequent publication, the increase in productivity is obvious.

From 1954 on, Beckett starts writing both in English and in French From an Abandoned Work, but, as the title suggests, the work was never completed. In 1956, the radio play All That Fall reintroduces English as the language of composition. Julien Carrière in his dissertation "Samuel Beckett and Bilingualism: How a Return to English Influences the Later Writing and Gender Roles in All That Fall and Happy Days" argues that after a creative impasse, an opportunity to work in a new genre (a radio play prompted by BBC's interest to his work) and switch to English allowed Beckett to include some of the autobiographical and Irish elements in his work, the themes that were deliberatly purged from his French plays. It is about this time that Beckett starts consistently translating all his work. It should be noted, however, that during that period, most of his work originally composed in English were radio and theatre plays, the only exception being the incomplete From an Abandoned Work. The first prose work in English, Company, was created much later and published in 1979.

---

[188] Malone Meurt (written between November 27 1947 and May 30 1948) and L'Innommable (written between March 29 1949 and January 1950) had preceded publication of the first novel of the trilogy Molloy, which appeared in print only in 1951. Malone Meurt and L'Innommable were published by Lindon in 1951 and 1953 respectively while En attendant Godot, written in 1948, came out in 1952, premiered the same year as Watt was published - 1953 (January 5). However, even before Molloy was completed, Beckett had written a story "Suite" (perhaps, his first French text) completed May 27, 1946, Mercier et Camier, dated July 5 1946 to October 3 1946, a story "l'Expulsé;" October 6 - October 14 1946), "Premier Amour" (October 28 – November 12 1946).

As I have mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, even before switching to French, Beckett's relation to English was equally complicated. Born into a well-to-do English-speaking family, Beckett did not speak or write Gaelic. Yet, being Irish, it was impossible to elude the sense of the linguistic division,[189] which, in a sense, defined the Irish identity. Although Gaelic was virtually smothered by the time Beckett was born, its very absence exerted an influence on Beckett's relation to English, which already contained traces of duality and dissent, and could not be viewed unequivocally as an extension of a stable, uniform self rooted in the national identity. Thus, it was possible to imagine English untethered from its baggage and to look at it as *a* language with a distancing potential even before French was discovered as an even better means of writing "sans style."[190]

Federman acknowledges that Beckett's similar, but divergent tones in French and English constitute a remarkable continuity of his idiolect. Moreover, envisaging a comprehensive analysis of Beckett as a translator, he prioritizes his bi-culturalism: […] "certain cultural, philosophical, and literary allusions, and even quotations, are not simply translated but transposed into a French or an English context to produce a totally different set of cultural, philosophical, or literary connotations (Federman "The Writer as Self-Translator" 13). Indeed, Beckett's translations testify to his deep immersion into French culture and literature and to his ability to bridge both cultures. For example, Happy

[189] Ann Beer in "Beckett's Bilingualism" emphasizes the importance of this issue. Also, see Lydon, Mary. "Stretching the Imagination: Samuel Beckett and the Frontier of Writing." The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association. 30. 1/2, Spring (1997): 1-15

[190] It became a commonplace in Beckett studies to resort to this explanation. Clément in his Oeuvre sans qualités provides a more sophisticated explanation of what constituted *writing without style* for Beckett (230-31).

Days, consisting of rambling, numerous quotations and allusions, presents serious translation challenges. Some of Winnie's lines are translated literally, while others are replaced by lines from French classics or French songs. When Winnie quotes Guiderius's son from Shakespeare's Cymbeline – "Fear no more the heat o' the sun," in Oh, les beaux jours," it is translated by a slightly distorted translation from Racine's Athalie - "Qu'ils pleurent, oh mon Dieu, qu'ils frémissent de honte" (qtd. in Cockerham 153).

The awareness of both literary and cultural contexts is particularly striking given that Beckett's full immersion into French happened at a relatively late stage of his life. On the other hand, I believe that the experience of formal acquisition of French left an important mark on Beckett's style both in French and in English. Cockerham contends that Beckett's progress is an inversion of the development of a native speaker – moving from a formal style to increasingly informal registers that he had experienced doing odd jobs during the Occupation contexts. Thus, Beckett's growing proficiency in French went from the learned to the extremely colloquial, and an unusual variety of stylistic registers and tones characterizing Beckett's plays might have originated from this order of language exposure. (155). For instance, brevity and naturalism of the spoken language that Beckett introduces in his plays were foreign to the French theatre (156). This argument may be related to other bilingual authors who have consciously acquired their other literary language.

Linguistic exuberance and emphasis on the inflections, resonances, and playful ambiguity of the spoken word as contrasted with the literary language are shared features of many bilingual writers. Their creations take shape not only in the space between two languages (*langue*, in Saussure's terms), but in intertextual and intratextual crevices

between multiple *langages* even within one language. Moreover, they are susceptible to further fragmentation within several genres. Beckett's self-translation is closely intertwined with his other mediating activities: literary criticism, translation of other authors, his work for theatre, radio, and television, and even with the technique of reiteration that spans his own oeuvre. As Sardin-Domestoy observes in her analysis of Beckett's short prose works, "Chez cet auteur, la réécriture est inscrite dans l'écriture même. L'auto-traduction est un travail de (mal)-citation de soi prolongeant le travail intra- et intertextuel déjà inscrit dans une oeuvre qui n'a de cesse de se citer d'un texte à l'autre" - With this author, rewriting is inscribed in the writing itself. Self-translation is a work of (mis)-quoting oneself, which extends the intra- and intertextuality already inherent in a work that incessantly quotes itself from one text to another" (217).

Beckett as a Translator

> The artist has acquired his text: the artisan translates it. "The duty and the task of a writer (not an artist, a writer) are those of a translator"
> Beckett. Proust

In Beckett's rare work of criticism, Proust, young Beckett defines his own role by selecting a famous quote by Proust and translating it. Significantly, he intercalates Proust's quotation with his own emphasis in parenthesis ("not an artist, a writer") thus making the equation incontrovertible: the writer is an artisan whose enormous task is to translate the book already existing in him by relating the workings of memory, fleeting impressions, past and present, and revealing a work of art through retrospective reading

of himself. Listening to voices and panting that were coming from within and without, never quite sure if he had fully acquired any text and can claim it his own, Beckett certainly excelled as an artisan.

Until as late as 1952, according to Maurice Nadeau, Beckett was mostly known in France as a translator. Before trying to translate his own texts, young Beckett expressed ideas about literary translations that sounded nearly as uncompromisingly literalist as Nabokov's: in 1934, reviewing Rilke's work in English, Beckett insisted that "the translation gets least in the way when it follows its text most closely…The numerous deviations are unwarrantable, that is to say, ineffective" (Disjecta 67). It is worth noting that for the production of The Old Tune, a radio play commissioned by BBC, Samuel Beckett completely departed from his own prescription and brilliantly transposed Robert Pinget's La Manivelle abounding in colloquial French into Irish English. Pinget's Parisians, Toupin and Pommard, became Dubliners Cream and Gorman. The play was first broadcast on BBC 3 on August 23 1960, later adapted to the stage, and was published as a face to face bilingual Edition (Minuit). Although Beckett devoted considerable time and effort to translation[191] throughout his life, later on, he did not comment much on his translation of others.

During his first stay in Paris as an English lecturer at *École Normale Supérieure*, Beckett meets Joyce and other writers from an avant-garde literary journal transition.

[191] During Beckett's collaboration with transition, an avant-garde literary magazine that after the war turned into a new journal introducing French literature to English speakers, he did several unsigned translations for the journal, including "Zone" by Apollinaire, Sartre's "Last Class" and many others (for more, see Ackerley, Gontarski The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett 586). Beckett contributed 19 translations to Negro: an Anthology (edited by Nancy Cunard, 1934. Alan Friedman in Beckett in Black and Red : Samuel Beckett's Translations for Nancy Cunard's " Negro (1999) demonstrates that these translations are important for studying the evolution of Beckett's poetics. Beckett's last commercial translation - the writer refers to it as his "worst literary experience" was Anthology of Mexican Poems, edited by Octavio Paz (1958) (Beckett qtd. in Ackerley, Gontarski 14).

Joyce's influence on Beckett's personal and artistic formation is indisputable, and it became an object of many serious studies. Although Beckett sought to differentiate himself from Joyce's linguistic exuberance in his later works describing their respective positions as opposites: "Joyce was a synthesizer […] I am an analyzer" …"Joyce tends toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist […] I am working with ignorance, impotence" (qtd. in Federman, Graver SB 148), the meeting of the two writers became a momentous event in Beckett's career as a writer and a translator. With the help of Alfred Péron, Beckett translated Joyce's "Anna Livia Plurabelle" in 1931. Significantly, Beckett parodies Joycean multilingual quotation in Dreams of Fair To Middling Women and More Kicks than Pricks. James Knowlson argues that the technique of interweaving quotations from many languages and literatures into Beckett's early work was "Joycean in its ambition and its impulse" (112).

There are certain parallels in Joyce's and Beckett's working methods including "plunder[ing] the books" they were actively reading or researching so that they could use memorable quotes and witty sentences as building blocks in their own writing. Knowlson acknowledges that while "Joyce took meticulous care with his research, reading books primarily for what they could offer him for his own writing, " Beckett was "inspired more by disinterested intellectual and scholarly curiosity." Nonetheless, Beckett's private notebooks show that he studiously checked off those quotes once they were integrated into his fiction (Knowlson 111-12).

In 1932, Beckett translates Breton's and Eluard's poetry and "What Is Surrealism?"by André Breton for an English magazine This Quarter. Beckett's connection with the Surrealist movement played a significant role in his formation, and

this connection has recently received more critical attention. Daniel Albright in Beckett and Aesthetics, asserts that "Beckett's early translations of the Surrealists were . . . as important to his artistic development as his critical studies of Proust and Joyce were" (10). John Fletcher notes similarities between Beckett's early verse and surrealism and defines them as "metric anarchy, the precedence of image over the sense, lines of greatly varying length within the same stanza, and a tendency to construct poems on the basis not of syntactical coherence but of associated imagery, the association usually existing only in the mind of the poet" (Fletcher Samuel Beckett's Art 25).

Beckett's work on Surrealist poetry might have indirectly influenced conceptualization of form in Beckett's own work, but his writing never accommodated the explosion of the unconscious conflated with an overt political charge characteristic of Surrealists. In "Beckett and Language Pathology, " Benjamin Keatinge demonstrates that, unlike Surrealists, Beckett was distrustful of uncontrolled, irrational expression of the unconscious and "co-opted language pathology as a deliberate strategy rather than as an effusion from the unconscious" (Keatinge 90). What is particularly illuminating in that comparison is a clear delineation of semiotic explosion and proliferation, inherent in many works written by bilinguals, from pathology. Whereas many unusual associations in Beckett are derived from the unconscious or primarily sensorial impressions, their structuring is controlled and deliberate. Moreover, I find this combination recurring in the works of all the three writers, and, if it were not for the intense anxiety of generalization, the authors' *bête noire*, I would define it as one of their salient characteristics.

Further on, when Beckett joined the Resistance (cell Gloria SMH), his work there involved translation, summarizing and typing of information reports brought to him from all over France. Reduction, compression, and minimizing that would later mark his literary work were the basic requirements for this dangerous job. The compiled information was then microfilmed by a photographer and entrusted to a courier (Knowlson 282-83). [192] The designation of translation as *artisanat*, a craft, in Beckett's case is by no means disparaging, on the contrary, it is an honorary title. The discipline and methods of translating others' work is carried over to Beckett's composition methods and his self-translations. Moreover, this experience made him even more cognizant of the difficulty of the enterprise. "The more I go on, the more I think things are untranslatable," Beckett is reported to have said listening to his own translation of Endgame as the play was being rehearsed (qtd. in Cockerham 146).

Yet, not only did he make the impossible task the central tenet of his project, but he kept pursuing it through numerous transpositions and transformations of his work in other genres - theatre, film, and radio, and even adaptations of radio plays commissioned by BBC for German television.[193] In fact, it is the theatrical success of En attendant Godot that might have precipitated the need for self-translation as Beckett could foresee inferior translations (Knowlson DTF 359).

Beckett's direction of his own plays has also been compared to self-translation. Each performance is different from the text that it tries to recreate, and through production of difference, each performance brings the play to life, reinforces it, and

[192] The concurrent translation of Murphy also served as a cover for Alfred Péron, a regular carrier of those scraps of paper and miniature messages: he was working on a French translation of an Irish writer's work (Knowlson 283).

[193] Besides, Beckett directed two German versions of TV plays (Eh Joe, Ghost Trio), and one of them, Eh Joe, was subsequently adapted to the stage at the Beckett Festivals in New York in 1978 and in Paris.

ensures its existence.[194] Clément likens the very linguistic procedures pre-requisite for resituating the text in a different language to Beckett's theatre experience:

> duplication, comme procédé permettant au poète de recentrer son oeuvre, d'en rendre la réception plus efficace dans l'autre langue, s'applique bien au genre théâtral, l'auto-traduction devenant un moyen d'améliorer le texte d'origine, d'en éliminer les imperfections, ou d'aller plus avant dans une direction seulement ébauchée auparavant. C'est ainsi que, d'un point de vue scénographique, plusieurs pièces portent le fruit des mises en scènes auxquelles Beckett a participé. Ce dernier traduisait en effet son texte à la lumière de son expérience de la scène (53).
>
> The procedure of doubling that enables the poet to re-center his work, to make it more acceptable in the other language, definitely applies to theatre. Self-translation becomes a means of improving the original text, of eliminating its imperfections or going in the direction that was only sketched out before. That is why, speaking schenographically, several plays benefited from the experience of staged performances, in which Beckett participated. In fact, he translated his text in the light of his experience of the performances.

Beckett's revisions for the stage are not mere analogies of his translative practices; I view his revisions, adaptations and self-translations as integral parts of his oeuvre and as manifestations of its consistent decentering. Clément's stress on the possibility of constant revision and improvement activated by the stereoscopic vision of theatrical performances or a double text is judicious. In addition, the experience of stage as well as any experience of translation, epitomizes the complexity of the dialectical relation between the authorial intention and the life of a text as it is embodied and performed by actors with a certain public in view or materialized in a different language through an equally complex process of mediation.[195]

It is, therefore, reductive to single out Beckett's method of self-translation or limit

---

[194] This phenomenon brings to mind Benjamin's reflections on reproducibility in his seminal essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."

[195] Another bilingual author, Hafedh Djedidi, coming from a very different context and background (Tunisia), has also emphasized the importance of theatre for his literary creation. See, Djedidi, Hafedh. Anthologie de la nouvelle maghrébine. Ed. James Gaasch. Casablanca: Editions Eddif, 1996. 54-57.

it to a certain genre of his texts. It is also fruitless to argue whether he prefers naturalizing or foreignizing translations because in translating different texts, he employs different strategies. Pascale Sardin-Damestoy concludes that Beckett's practice eludes any definition: at times, he chooses equivalence of effects over literal faithfulness translating, for example, Le dépeupleur as The Lost Ones, but in other instances, Beckett prefers to foreignize the target text, French in this case, by translating an English idiom in Play literally: « we were not long together when she smelled the rat » : "nous n'étions pas longtemps ensemble et déjà elle sentait un rat"[196] instead of idiomatic French *découvrir le pot aux roses* (qtd. in Bousquet 78).

A telling illustration of Beckett's hybrid translative practices is his direction of Krapp's Last Tape,[197] the play that itself hinges on repetition and replaying. Krapp's Last Tape, a powerful meditation on solipcism and possibilities of dialogue as engagement with one's own voice reflected in time, was subjected to more revisions than any other Beckett play. As Beckett was preparing its productions in French, German, and English, he kept tightening and simplifying the play and reducing its farcical moments.[198] Thus, interlinguistic movements in the revisions were inseparable from the experience of various performances.

Nancy Huston: Healing the Split

From Self-hatred to Self-translation

" I do not like myself. Yes." This disconcertingly simple confession of Sviatoslav Richter, a legendary twentieth-century pianist, opens Nancy Huston's Losing North:

[196] In Limbo, Nancy Huston will provide a creative commentary on Beckett's translation of this expression.
[197] The pun in the title is lost in translation (La dernière bande, Das letzte Band)
[198] See, Cohn Ruby. A Beckett Canon. pp. 238-241.

Musings on Land, Tongue and Self that first appeared in French as Nord Perdu. "All sorts of behavior can be inspired by self-hatred," the author explains, "You can become an artist. Commit suicide. Adopt a new name, a new country, a new language. All of the above" (Huston 1). Huston evokes Romain Gary, whose chameleonic transformations, sadly, resulted in "all of the above." But was it really self-hatred that motivated Huston herself to become a writer, to change her country and her language?

Unlike Nabokov and Beckett, Nancy Huston had not written in her native English before turning to French. In fact, she is convinced that she would have never started writing at all, had she not experienced the vertiginous freedom of French. After studying with Roland Barthes, Huston was publishing in feminist journals and translating - significantly, in 1976 a New York literary journal Fiction published her translation of Barthes's[199] "Billy Graham in the Winter Cyclodrome" - but she did not dare to write fiction until the death of her spiritual father, as if the grip of theory had been too powerful.

Even though the literary machine depends on friction and dissonance, according to Huston's own account, and a flight from the former self with all its attachments may well lead to a refuge in a new language, perpetual self-dissatisfaction alone is a dubious vehicle for sustained creativity. Creation of a new self in a new language is too facile an explanation, and it becomes untenable given the turn that Nancy Huston's writing took since the early 1990s after the publication of her first novel in English. As I have

[199] She also translated "for pleasure" Barthes' book The Eiffel Tower and dreamed of being anointed as his official translator of Empire of signs (Huston "Knowledge " 337).

attempted to show in the previous chapter,[200] Huston's work as we know it today, is shaped in the process of re-writing, and self-translation is one of its central, generative modes.

Even in her first French novel, Variations Goldberg,[201] Huston attempts to consolidate the vision of self as a relation to the multiplicity. She unfolds her musical narrative as a co-creation of the performer and the experiences of thirty-one guests, all related as first-person narratives. Her translations provide another dimension to the same search. "Tu ne peux te réconcilier avec toi que dans le croisement; tu n'es chez toi que dans un lieu qui n'en est pas *un*" - "You can come to terms with yourself only at the crossroads; you are in place only in a place, which is not one" (Huston, Sebbar 154). I second Carolyn Shread's thesis that "even in the instance of self-translation we are concerned with multiplicity in authorship. It is because both writing and translation enable the performance of alternate identities that they are compelling and necessary activities: our need to move beyond individual subjectivities into subjectivities-as-encounter[…]" (61-2). What starts as a flight from self, seems to have turned into the urge to acknowledge not only the multiplicity of selves, but also the need to relate to one's own past, and to see places of origin and belonging as equally multiple and shaped by those encounters.

Even if coinciding with oneself and being at home is possible only in the process of crossing, in no-land ("un lieu qui n'en est pas *un"),* it is still impossible to escape the pull

[200] Since writing and translation activities are at times inseparable in Huston, I have started the discussion of Huston's self-translation practices under a slightly different angle in the previous chapter. Since I have already provided some important background information related to Huston's linguistic formation, I will not repeat it here.

[201] The novel published in 1980 was not self-translated until 1996.

of places that are inexorably real. However, they acquire the sense of authenticity and reality only through their imaginary recreation, and self-translation becomes another important tool for developing a relation not only to Huston's own past and present, but also to the history of Canada and France. Moreover, even some of the designations that undo the binaries of translation terminology (for instance, Huston's insistence on the term re-writing rather than translation in case of Plainsong and Cantique des plaines) are determined not solely by the author's impulse, but by the sensibilities of those real places and, curiously, their award and copyright conventions.

One of the most obvious benefits of self-translation is a possibility of revision and improvement in the light of the process. No other reading can reveal thin spots in the narrative as mercilessly as the translator's reading. Huston comments on the process of translation of her first novel written in English, Plainsong:

> C'était fascinant, il y avait un aller et retour pendant plus d'un an entre les deux langues, parce que la «traduction», ça oblige toujours à voir quelles sont les faiblesses du texte original. Donc, grâce au français, j'améliorais l'anglais et vice-versa. [...] C'était assez fastidieux, c'était très long, c'était un peu comme traîner des pierres (Huston qtd. in Klein-Lataud « Les voix » 226).
>
> It was fascinating. For more than a year, there was a process of going back and forth between the two languages because "translation" also makes you see the weaknesses of the original text. Consequently, thanks to the French [version], I improved the English text and vice versa. The process was tedious and very long, it was a little bit like dragging stones.

At a talk at the University of Toronto in February 2003, Huston tried to analyze her own linguistic behavior and translation practices in order to find a pattern or an explanation for choosing one language over the other, and realized that it was pointless:

> Since 1993, I've done two versions of each work before showing either to a publisher: three in English then French (Plainsong, Slow Emergencies, Dolce Agonia), three in French then English (Mark of the Angel, Prodigy, and Adoration)

> and one in alternating chapters of French and English (Instruments of Darkness). I have nothing to say about the type of book, style, themes and so forth which incites me to choose one language other than the other. When asked, I say it depends on the language the characters are speaking. Might there be other factors which determine this choice?[202] (Huston qtd. in Danby 31).

It should be noted that her translation practices still vary, and at times, the choice of the language of the composition seems motivated. Small discrepancies between Prodige: Polyphonie and Prodigy reveal that the French text achieves a greater formal and structural coherence: there is, in my view, more temporal ambiguity in French due to Huston's use of *Futur Simple*; the musical themes are in a tighter connection with the plot - polysemantic *fugue* (fugue as a musical form and flight from oneself and others) and *repetition* (practicing, rehearsal, and repetition of the same patterns) are enacted at a greater number of levels and shape the reading experience differently in French . While the notion of polyphony as correlation of several voices, generations, and selves is central to the novella in both languages, it does not appear as part of the title in English. In a way, in Prodige, the choice of French is felicitous, and unlike Huston's later texts, the novella can be treated as the original.

In Instruments des ténèbres/Instruments of Darkness, however, translation clearly

---

[202] Intrigued by the question herself, Huston proceeds to analyze her private journal writing with the zeal of an obsessed researcher. She goes as far as doing a statistical analysis of her writing during four months in 2001 and arrives at the following results: "58 entries in all, of which: 28 in French, 16 in English, 9 beginning in English and ending in French, 5 the other way around; for a grand total of 25 in English and 33 in French. These figures are not particularly significant: a sample taken from another time period might very well have revealed the opposite imbalance, that is, in favor of English. Same goes for content analysis. It would have been satisfying to discover *something*: to discover, for instance, that the themes I dealt with in French were more abstract or more psychological and that in English I tended to describe life in its sheer raw materiality. Or to discover that a switch of languages in the middle of an entry bespoke avoidance, discomfort – the wish to flee. Unfortunately, I discovered nothing of the kind. The same complaints, the same monotonous music from one page to the next, one language to the next, *nothing of interest*." Mimicking researchers' attempts to classify Beckett's work along body/mind divide, she continues: "English: the body, one would like to say, and French the mind. NO. English:obscenity and French:repression. No. English: the unconscious, and French: the superego. No such luck. Do I take the same liberties with the French language as I do [with] English? No idea. Don't want to know. *Want out of this dead end* (qtd. in Danby 32).

becomes a major thematic and linguistic strategy: two narratives (there is an embedded story of the French peasant-girl Barbe, "Resurrection Sonata," composed and narrated by an American writer) are composed in different languages and then correlated via translation; moreover, the presence of both languages is crucial both at the metadiegetic and diegetic levels. For instance, the puns that are more meaningful in French - Barbe's elaborations based on her confusion of fishermen (pêcheurs) and of sinners (pécheurs) - are translated literally with a commentary provided in parenthesis. The same principle is applied to the American writer's tricks in English: attempting to renegotiate her subjectivity, she crosses out *I* in her name Nadia reducing herself to *nada*-nothing. She keeps the same name in French and has to add an explicatory "le je" to make the change meaningful ("quand il m'est devenu clair que I, le je, n'existait pas, je l'ai éliminé. Dorénavant mon nom, mon petit nom, mon nom de plume, mon seul nom restant, c'est : Nada" (IT 213). The combination of overt and covert translations emphasizes the importance of bi-langue in the novel, the term I have used for designating a constant dialogue and a latent translation within bilingual works. The use of Spanish *nada* is not contradictory, on the contrary, it confirms that the space of the dialogue is never really restricted to two languages; it is conducive to further interlingual divisions and hybridity.

Thus, translation alongside other thematic and linguistic strategies is used to address and to exemplify the issues that Huston repeatedly approaches in her fiction and autobiographical writing: defining self through alterity, making a meaningful connection between remote times and places, between the fantasy and the real, and striking an impossible balance between freedom of imagination and constraints of being situated in a certain time and place and dealing with people and beliefs that we do not choose. Despite

Huston's complaints about the unbearable boredom of translation, she recognizes that it serves as a guard against insanity, a reminder that embracing division and multiplicity should not result in total fragmentation or, as Huston puts it, pulverization of identity.

In no other text does Huston exemplify the inner workings and the pitfalls of bi-langue as much as in Limbes=Limbo : un hommage à Samuel Beckett. The text, in which she "writes her own writing block" (Danby 30) becomes a glimpse into Huston's creative laboratory. Limbo is a concentration of her bilingual poetics confirming McGuire's contention that the self-translated text is a valid form of art in itself - a translation and a bilingual text at the same time. An homage to Beckett's bilingualism, his unique aesthetics and landscapes, the text at times turns into defiance of Beckett. The dialogue between the female narrator and imaginary Beckett's voice includes endless cultural and literary references in English and French, and it is propelled by a whole array of translation techniques ranging from cultural adaptation to attempts to re-create the effects of the pressure that languages exert on each other for the bilingual narrator. Although I do find this experimental text extremely illuminating for studying literary bilingualism, I have to concede that Limbo is not representative of the majority of Huston's translations.

The translation of Plainsong, the novel that marked Huston's turn to English and bilingual writing, is probably the most studied one.[203] First of all, it is one of Huston's few novels replete with culturally specific realia (Canadian history, Protestant hymns, native Americans) that are particularly challenging in translation. Most of her other novels, except Instruments of Darkness set in eighteenth century Berry, are almost devoid

[203] See, for example, Christine Klein-Lataud's "Les voix paralleles de Nancy Huston, Noelle Rinne's "La tierce langue de Nancy Huston, Nancy Senior's "Whose Song, Whose Land."

of regional peculiarities. Their themes, characters, and major preoccupations appear easily translatable and transportable. In a way, they form a community or a country of their own: they could be easily transplanted into any big, cosmopolitan city without much detriment to the plot or language – the tendency that has provoked accusations in elitism, lack of credible human characters or relations.[204]This is not the case with Plainsong, and even Huston's deft translation, as Nancy Senior shows in "Whose song, whose land? Translation and appropriation in Nancy Huston's Plainsong /Cantique des plaines," could not fully convey the impressions the songs created in English.

Besides, the novel's genealogy and reception proved crucial for Huston's relation to her country of origin, its history, her sense of belonging, and her positioning as a writer. When the first page of Plainsong came to her in English in a hazy state between sleep and waking, Huston remembered that she was literally allergic to most things associated with her native culture: horses, hay, cattle. She decided to confront this "action of the other" (as etymology of allergy suggests) "head-on and and turn [it] into power of action" (Huston "Singing" 251). She also realized that what she had considered a bland, somnolent place devoid of history, had its own history that was inaccessible to her and resisted narration – the history of Alberta being first and foremost history of Plains Indians. As she was progressing with her research on the novel, she was unsettled by the realization that nothing dramatic or colorful actually happened in the province itself except for "a few little massacres here and there, of Whites by Indians or the other way around" (Huston "Singing" 253).

What eventually made Albertan history come alive was another unlikely

[204] Some reviews describe this as a negative tendency, but I do not see it as such.

juxtaposition – this time not of languages, but of places, - Canadian Alberta with Haiti. As Huston was proceeding with her research on the novel, she was also preparing a series of radio programs on Haitians in exile. Alberta and Haiti, usually thought as polar opposites of each other, suddenly became part of the same history of destruction of the native people, in which the idea of God played a principle role. The parallels appeared very strong, but while Haiti "was the bloody, violent starting point of the conquest of America, […], Alberta was its soft, mushy, flabby, attenuated ending-point" (Huston LB 254). Alberta in the light of distant Haiti became a historical place worth exploring and narrating. I argue that this tortuous road to the place of birth - from Paris to Calgary via reconstructed Port-au-Prince (Huston was interviewing exiled Haitians living in New York, Montreal, Miami) - is representative of conundrums negotiated by contemporary bilingual writers as it bears witness to the changing idea of origin and identity.

It is neither a nostalgic, penitent quest for the lost home, the immutable cradle of one's irretrievable, authentic self nor a blind denial of dependencies and roots by a self-engendered subject, who chooses to create her own history. Instead, re-establishing belonging can be relational – happening through a series of improbable displacements, comparisons and sudden realizations that always preclude the subject's omniscience. It is a movement characterized by a succession of infinitely small steps, each of them bringing one a little closer to a deeper understanding of self in relation to others, but never quite providing the certainty of reaching the bottom. Making each step and reaching a new level, however, can be immensely satisfying. I am inclined to think that most self-translations in Huston's case may reveal the same mechanism at core – a deeper understanding of how two texts in two languages and cultures relate to each other through

their differences - and the satisfaction derived from these realizations can fully compensate for the laboriousness of the process.

Re-writing of Canada

When Plainsong was completed, Huston "rewrote" it in French as Cantique des plaines. In 1993, the book received the prestigious Governor General's Award in the category "French literature – fiction" which immediately caused a lot of controversy concerning its status and, implicitly, Huston's role on the Canadian literary scene. The protests of Quebecois critics arguing that the text was not original fiction in French, but a translation, emphasized Huston's status of a foreign body in both French and Canadian literature.

She is not Quebecois or French-Canadian, and the text, the critics argued, was a translation from the English, and could not, therefore, appear in the category French literature. Moreover, Plainsong was not even shortlisted in the English language category. It should be noted that Huston's critical reception in Anglophone Canada at the time was much more guarded compared to France. The controversy around the award revealed more about Canada's uneasy relation to its bilingualism and history than about the quality of the English or the French version.

Ironically, the book's passage through French with its displacements, necessary comparisons and compromises replicated Huston's rediscovery of Alberta through Haiti. The entire novel is the second-person address, an epistolary exchange between Paula and her grandfather Paddon, whose voice she is trying to invoke when she is sorting through Paddon's diaries after his death. There is another curious structural and linguistic displacement in Paula's reconstruction of Paddon's life, which becomes more

pronounced if the two texts are compared: first, even though the action of the novel takes place in Anglophone Alberta, Paula chooses to write to Paddon from Montreal as if the epistolary genre necessitated some geographical and linguistic distance. Noelle Rinne sees this choice as another manifestation of functional interdependence of English and French for Huston: "[…] chacune des deux langues de Huston se démarque de l'autre, s'affirme par rapport à l'autre, mais, finalement, ne peut survivre qu'en présence de l'autre, toujours dans un contexte signifiant l'exil, l'altérité. […] Il semble donc que chez Paula aussi, la distance et l'inégalité perçues, ressenties, vécues entre les langues participent pleinement du discours global franco-anglais" – " […] each of Huston's two languages distinguishes itself from the other, asserts itself in relation to the other, but, ultimately, can survive only in the presence of the other, always in the context of exile and alterity. […] It seems that in Paula's case as well, the perceived, experienced, and lived distance and the inequalities between the languages participate fully in the global Franco-English discourse" (3). Secondly, as if its position was not complicated enough, Cantique des plaines is written in Continental, not Quebecois French.[205] Whether Cantique des plaines is considered an original book, re-writing, or a translation, its reception was more favorable than that of Plainsong – "never underestimate the attraction of exoticism, " Huston wryly remarks in NP (52).

While there are a number of cultural and even temporal modifications[206] in Cantique des plaines, some other changes were merely compromises caused by legal and copyright conventions. This humbling realization is significant for demystifying the

[205] In "Bilingual translation/writing as intercultural communication," Daniel Gagnon provides a list of examples. Some of them are "mamie," chut et flûte," "scouts" instead of "guides," which are more likely to be used in Canada in the same context (122).
[206] See Rinne's "La tierce langue de Nancy Huston."

practice of self-translation. When we are painstakingly comparing two texts and conjecturing the extent of the poetic license or the competence of the reading public, some translation choices may be just a matter of legal or editorial drudgery.

If Plainsong's epigraph is a quote by Flannery O'Connor "*Then you ain't saved?,* Cantique des plaines, opens with a quote by John Lennon and Paul McCartney : « *No one you can save that can't be saved.* » Klein-Lataud muses playfully: "S'agissait-il d'un choix opéré en fonction du lectorat, les Beatles étant choisis pour les Français parce qu'ils sont universellement connus, alors que Flannery O'Connor était présumée référence trop obscure ? Pas du tout" - "Was the choice made according to the readership, the Beatles chosen for the French because they are universally recognizable whereas Flannery O'Connor was considered as too obscure a reference? Not at all." In a letter to Klein-Lataud, Nancy Huston explains that the simple reason for replacing Beatles' quote by O'Connor's was the denial of copyright authorization to reproduce the same quote in the English edition! (Klein-Lataud "Les voix" 6).s

What the translation or re-writing of this most Canadian of Huston's books suddenly revealed was that while the novel's thematics were rooted in Canada and so were the peculiarities of its reception and the critical discourse it generated, the book's narrative technique and its language situated it outside Canada, in Beckett's cherished "au contraire." Surprisingly, Huston herself argues that this inability to coincide with any identity, the "uncomfortable coexistence in [her] soul of two languages and two ways of being," and an acute awareness of ambiguity is what makes her "most profoundly Canadian" ("Towards Patriotism" 278).

However, Canadian reviewers did not share her view and found the work of their prodigal daughter 'un-Canadian.' Frank Davey writes that "Huston's novels are currently 'un-Canadian' in being politically conservative and theologically Augustinian, in that they offer little possibility for collective human improvement. In each, the struggle is individual and private – a struggle to have the least painful private life within a social order of repetitive violence and misogyny" (Davey 9).[207] I find a striking similarity between this perception of Huston's work and reception of Nabokov by Russian émigrés in the 1930s not because the authors' writing is alike, but because apparently it conflicts with cognitive and emotional expectations of the readers accustomed to their national models.

Davey rightly notes that part of the Anglophone Canadian critical reticence toward Huston comes from a less nuanced and sophisticated image than she enjoys in France, where, largely due to her autobiographical writing, Huston appears more emotional, vulnerable, and much more sympathetic toward Canada. Besides Huston's arguably French sensibilities, lyricism, and narrative aesthetics that Davey examines in detail, her self-translations or, rather lack thereof, affect the reception. It is true that Huston is still represented by a wider variety of genres in French: scholarly writing (Dire et interdire based on her master's thesis written under the direction of Roland Barthes), social criticism (Mosaïque de la pornographie, 1982), children's books co-written with her daughter Léa (Véra veut la vérite, 1992, Dora demande des détails). The gap between Huston's production of literary criticism in French and in English is gradually disappearing: Tombeau de Romain Gary, published in 1995, was followed by an article on Gary in English - "Romain Gary: A Foreign Body in French Literature" adapted from the novel-biography and published in Poetics Today in 1996. There was a more

[207] In fact, it is hard to accuse Huston of political apathy. She has been actively involved in the French feminist movement. Apparently, in Huston's case, words are louder than actions, and they have a more lasting impression.

substantial delay in publication of her collection of essays in literary criticism and autobiographical pieces: Désirs et réalités was published in 1995 while Longings and Belongings - only in 2005. Davey regrets that many of these texts and genres are virtually unknown in Canada, but to a large extent, this gradually diminishing genre discrepancy, is the result of Huston's own translation choices.

Huston's poignant autobiographical writings Lettres parisiennes (1986) or Journal de la création (1990) have never been translated into English (17). Fortunately, Nord perdu (2000) that reestablishes the importance of childhood and conscious belonging for any writer, was published as Losing North[208] in 2002; moreover, parts of the book had appeared as separate articles in English ("The Mask and the Pen"). In addition to its overt acknowledgment of genetic and intellectual dependencies, Nord perdu's structure as well as its musings on words and concepts reminiscent of Barthes' Mythologies, are, in a way, a tribute to Huston's teacher.

However, even the slight difference in the English and French titles is indicative of the instability of the narrator's identity: always attentive to words' etymology, Huston reflects on the idea of her own cultural disorientation ("losing east") punning on the French idiom "(ne pas) perdre le nord," and examines its literal (losing contact with

[208] The translation of Nord perdu, or at least of its segment, provided a rare chance of comparing the author's translation of the same piece with that of other translators. Nicola Danby relates the details of a student translation contest held at Université Paris-3 Sorbonne Nouvelle in 2001. The participants had to translate a segment from Huston's Nord perdu – its author's translation had not been published yet. Nancy Huston herself submitted her translation under a pseudonym of Lou Denver, and out of the four finalists, Lou Denver's translation was judged the best. One of the conference and contest organizers, Marta Dvorak, knew about Lou Denver's identity, but she let the other members of the jury make a decision. Both Huston and Dvorak were surprised at the result (Danby 19-20).

North-Canada) and figurative meanings. She emphasizes the shifts in translation by providing a dictionary translation "to be all abroad" (NP 12). Even though the connotations in the French expression are lost in transposing the modified idiom literally, Huston chooses to keep the image in translation. The choice of gerund instead of past participle is more difficult to explain. Was Huston guided by euphony alone or was the temporary variation meaningful, as Noelle Rinne suggests: in French, it is already a fait accompli, but in English she is still "losing North" (4). The emphasis on the process in the English title suggests that the connection is not entirely severed; after all, it is in Nord perdu that Huston declares the idea that everything that matters is translatable: "Voilà à ce jour ce que j'ai trouvé de mieux: est important ce qui est traduisible" - "That's the best I've found so far: the important things are what can be translated" (90). In "Healing the Split," she goes even further and explains that despite all the torments of self-translation, she pursues it because after the translation is done, "I feel healed, because it is the same book, telling the same stories, eliciting the same emotions, playing the same music; then I am elated, then I am delighted, as if that somehow proved that I am not schizophrenic, not crazy, because ultimately the same person in both languages. Translation is hope for humanity" (3).

I would like to believe that if Huston, following Beckett's example, continues doubling her work in all the genres, including the hybrid essay-autobiography, her reconciliation with two parts of her life, the two continents and everything they stand for, would be complete. However, just looking at the titles of these works that look similar, but point to divergent meanings that Huston seeks to preserve and emphasize in the book itself, leads me to a different conclusion. Even if translation allows Huston to heal the

split, it also emphasizes the complexity of attachments and influences of the bilingual subject and reinforces the feeling of perpetually present asymmetry and dazzling variations in expressions of what could appear as fundamental universals of life.

Elizabeth Beaujour concludes her study of bilingual Russian writers with an eloquent expression of the belief that:

> a successful self-translation is [...] the ultimate triumph. It provides the Mephistophelian pleasure of creating two mutually orbiting works in dynamic equilibrium [...]. In a successful self-translation, the writer finds alternatives and compensations in the two linguistic systems at his disposal, and the *text* passes. The voice passes, and is unmistakably the same in both languages, and this very fact indicates that it emanates from a self which must exist below both languages, flowing up through the growth rings of the tree, manifesting itself in a bifurcating trunk and in separate systems of branches and leaves, all of which are in active balance (175-76).

Although I agree with the statement that the only way to experience oneself as authentic is to actively experience both linguistic and cultural systems and to create an active balance between them, I do not find the idea of the self existing below both languages very convincing. Rather, the voice is created in the process of probing, transgressing and trespassing the boundaries of the established categories of writing and national literary models. Self-translation is just a strategy of acquiring the voice, albeit an important one

When Nabokov was asked about his puzzling decision to publish chess problems together with a collection of his English and Russian poems in Poems and Problems, his pertinent explanation could have equally described the place of self-translation in the authors' oeuvre: it "demand[s] from the composer the same virtues that characterize all worthwhile art*:* originality*,* invention*,* conciseness*,* harmony*,* complexity, and splendid insincerity" (15).

Conclusion

What does it mean to be cosmopolitan, and how can one possibly practice cosmopolitanism? Following recent theories of cosmopolitanism[209] that no longer take it to be solely a normative, ideal project and disprove the opposition between the national, the local and the cosmopolitan, I have used the term cosmopolitan to call attention to existing forms, attitudes, and practices that demonstrate in-depth engagement with otherness and acceptance of inherent multiplicity even within one's own language and culture. The fictional texts by Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, and Nancy Huston are often considered very private and apolitical; however, by introducing new modes of being in language that cultivate multiple psychical and linguistic attachments, these writers create a new sense of identity in the multiplicity of texts and acknowledge interconnectedness of profoundly personal and international experiences. The peculiarities of reception and distribution of their works also situate them beyond the confines of national literatures.

Although the texts of my investigation part ways with the idea of "language loyalty" (Weinrich), they are informed by their affiliated national literatures and cultures and emphasize the mediating role of both original writing and translation. As Lawrence

---

[209] See, for instance, Appiah's work on Cosmopolitanism (Appiah, Kwame Anthony. Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in the World of Strangers. New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 2006; ---"Cosmopolitan Patriots." Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation. Ed. Pheng Cheah, Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. 91-117); Bruckner, Pascal. "The Edge of Babel." Partisan Review 63.2 (1996): 242-254; Schein, Louisa. "Importing Miao Brethren to Hmong America: a Not-So-Stateless Transnationalism." Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation. Ed. Pheng Cheah, Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. 163-192.

Venuti notes, even in conventional (non-authorial) translation, "[b]oth foreign text and translation are derivative: both consist of diverse linguistic and cultural materials that neither the foreign writer nor the translator originates, and that destabilize the work of signification, inevitably exceeding and possibly conflicting with their intentions" (The Translator's Invisibility 13).

I refrain from the tendency to universalize displacement and to consider it as a shared contemporary condition. The *space in-between* is an apt figure of speech, but a hard place to inhabit, and the three authors struggle to define it by developing complex narrative and linguistic strategies (double narratives, hybrid genres, fictional cosmologies, syntactic disruptions, imaginary languages, and interlinguistic slippages) in order to correlate different worlds, which are always inter-related, but never unified. Yet, I do not consider the practice of bilingual writing exceptional. On the contrary, I have attempted to situate it in the context of multilingual and bilingual writing and to historicize both the practice of bilingual writing and the Romantic idea that original writing is only possible in one's native language. Even though bilingual writers unsettle the categories of nation, foreign and native languages, original-copy, author-translator, and their oeuvre displays continuity across languages, they never lose sight of specific historical and literary experiences of their readership.

Furthermore, their individual responses to exile, nation, language are entirely different: if Nabokov chose to prioritize creative memory and imagination in order to transform his losses and the condition of forced exile into a multilingual, resplendent world of his own; for Beckett and Huston, the choice of another country and language was voluntary, but their respective positions vis-à-vis their countries of origin and their

languages, nonetheless, have always been ambiguous and marked by division. As an Irishman, Beckett could not unquestionably view English, and by extension any language, as a repository of one's immutable personality that coincides with national identity. His unique project of deforming language and at the same time capitalizing on its inherent automatisms and allusiveness is inscribed in this context. Huston's flight from Canada as a place devoid of history, but fraught with familial dramas, ended up in a realization that there was no such a thing as a self-engendered subject free of all dependencies, and that all places of origin and belonging, Canada in particular, have complex histories that have to be arduously reconstructed in relation to herself.

I had originally planned to zero in on workings of language in the authors' texts making them the central site of linguistic and cultural encounters. As my research was progressing, I realized that by doing so, I undermine my own critique and only reinforce the divide between literary studies, linguistics, and translation studies; therefore, I had to overcome my original reluctance to introduce a psychological perspective into my analysis and felt compelled to accord some place to the writers' personal circumstances that shaped their bilingual body of work. Having analyzed Vladimir Nabokov's, Samuel Beckett's, and Nancy Huston's selected texts, essays, and translations as well as the context of their production and reception, I define literary bilingualism as an ensemble of translingual discursive practices (fiction writing, overt and covert self-translation and translation of other authors) infused with bilingualism at phonetic, semantic, syntactic, and cognitive level. The bilinguals' work is marked by proliferation of sign systems, verbal exuberance, juggling of high and low registers, primacy of images, sensorial impressions, and rhythm. However, unlike surrealist or schizophrenic writing,

deformation of language becomes a deliberate strategy, and the structuring of fragments and images is always controlled.

Bilingual writing is a cosmopolitan practice because it requires an in-depth knowledge of at least two cultures, enormous discipline, and respect for the limits imposed by two or more natural languages. The double orientation is one of the reasons why bilingual writing, often as an artifice, as a way of double estrangement, is more productive, or at least more sustainable than writing in imaginary or schizophrenic languages: it is conducive to a deeper engagement not only with self, but also with communities of readers that such writing conjures up. In addition, literary bilingualism establishes a particular relationship with its readership and implies a possibility of a different kind of reading, especially in case of self-translated texts, whether they are presented in face-to face bilingual editions or not.

I should confess that I had started my research from the premise that self-translation is a rare practice consisting in virtuoso mimicry and driven by profound interior changes accompanying re-shaping self in another language. At present, I am willing to pay more attention to the authors' work in genres other than fiction, to the vagaries of the texts' reception and circulation, and other, seemingly extrinsic, factors. It is significant that all the three authors have translated their work in both directions from one major language toward another,[210] even though their corpora of work in both languages are neither equal, nor entirely parallel. If at present, the belief in transparency

[210] Louis-Jean Calvet defines this tendency as horizontal bilingualism. It occurs between two established literatures and languages with no visible threat to either of them (Calvet 61). Rainier Grutman in "La autotraducción en la galaxia de las lenguas" modifies this term in relation to self-translation designating it as a horizontal transfer to self-translation (123-34).

of translation is untenable, Christopher Whyte asserts that self-translation too is never innocent, and it occurs in "situations of exile or of crude subjugation, where one language is attempting to take the place of another" (69).[211] Political implications of the movement from one major language to another are different from translating from or into a minor tongue, this is why I have to refrain from extending indiscriminately the modalities of self-translation I have observed in Nabokov's, Beckett's, and Huston's work to any self-translation in general.

There is little risk of effacing one of the languages or erasing the original altogether. When both the source and the target languages are major, dominant languages can we really say that the authors are minorizing them in the same way Kafka did in German? (Deleuze, Guattari). Ioanna Chatzudimitriou proposes that Huston's self-translation minorizes and deterritorializes both languages, especially in her Limbo (25-26), but I think that the term de-centering, despite the variety of meanings it assumes, is more felicitous for this category. What happens in case of English, French, and Russian, which for a long time have been not only national, but supra-national languages, and have competed for world dominance? Self-translation from and into these languages is no less consequential; by bringing changes to major languages and shifting their dominant aesthetic models, it constantly displaces and renegotiates centers of power.

In a text composed by a bilingual author and presented to the receiving culture, it is not so much the language, but the narrative aesthetics that succeeds or fails to pass for

[211] For discussion of perils of self-translation between major and less common languages (English and Gaelic, Spanish and Catalan), see Whyte, Christopher. "Against Self-Translation;" Tanqueiro, Helena Patricia López L.-Gay, Francesco Parcerisas "Translating, Self-translating, Being translated."A lecture series on literary translation at NYU in Paris. Quaderns. Revista de traducció 16 (2009) : 107-122; Grutman, Rainier. "La autotraducción en la galaxia de las lenguas." Quaderns. Revista de traducció 16 (2009): 123-134

the native. When the work appears manifestly foreign, it can be rejected or, on the contrary hailed as revolutionizing not only the language it uses, but also the major concerns of form and literature worldwide. But what makes the pendulum swing? Although I am extremely sympathetic to the now suspect notion of individual talent, for now, I will defer this explanation. Here I would like to venture a hypothesis about a particular literary and cultural movement of bilingual writing and self-translations within major, supra-national languages. At first, their reception is often more enthusiastic within the 'foreign' culture, especially in the case of France that takes pride in attracting new *francophones* and opening up to the world with its variety of literary expressions (as long as it is *littérature-monde en français)*. Only later does this work make its way to the home country or elsewhere.

The writings of the three writers show a certain proximity to the narrative models existing within their receiving cultures,[212] yet they strike the reader as novel and different. In its tone, inflections, themes, their work is foreign enough to be noticed, but it is more easily subsumed into the receiving literature because of its presumed proximity, and manageable degree of alterity and exoticism. Grafted to the new locale, the bilingual work changes both the adoptive literary space and its own position worldwide. This movement is certainly not nearly as reductive and schematic as I have described it, and there are many more factors involved in movements of bilingual texts, but this simplification allows me to sketch a more specific area for writing and self-translations from and into major, established languages.

---

[212] Nabokov's early Russian works have more affinities with European modernism than those of his Russian contemporaries, the evolution of Beckett's work struck a chord with the post-war French literary sensibilities, Huston's infatuation with words coupled with irony and suspicion (her tribute to Barthes), her attention to form, and the ease of moving from the real to the fantastic and the grotesque seem to appeal to the French reader.

There can hardly be one method of treating the bilingual text and self-translation. Looking for a more appropriate trope tends to be intoxicating and at times - misleading. Nonetheless, there was some value in testing different tropes and models and thinking them through even if eventually most of these models, including my suggestion to view the self-translated text in terms of *composition* and *performance*, have to be discarded. There is no accounting for a variety of functions of self-translated texts, but most attempts to theorize them bring us back to the search for something bigger than one, than 'I,' but not constituting 'we' – be it the internal voice, which is always either temporarily displaced or dialogically oriented or the mid-zone, the in-between, hybrid space where voices and cultures are more open and are likely to intersect. However, the in-between is never static, texts originating there have to move toward new formations and new readers; therefore, focusing excessively on this in-between space, we run the risk of ignoring the movement of texts and people, their destinations and contingencies they have to overcome. The cosmopolitan impulse of literary bilingualism does not consist in its denial of home, nation, borders, and cultural belongings, but in its impetus for mobility, lack of fixity and the urge to re-write, rethink and to re-examine these notions.

Works Cited

Primary works by Samuel Beckett, Nancy Huston, and Vladimir Nabokov:

Beckett, Samuel. Comment c'est How It Is and/et L'Image. Ed. Edouard O'Reilly. New York& London: Routledge, 2001.

---. Disjecta. Ed. Ruby Cohn. New York: Grove Press, 1984.

---. "Enough." Six Residua. London: John Calder, 1978.

---. Happy Days. New York: Grove Press, 1987.

---. "Imagination Dead Imagine." Six Residua. London: John Calder, 1978.

---. Imagination Morte Imaginez. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1965.

---. Krapp's Last Tape. New York: Grove Press, 1994.

---. "Lessness." Six Residua. London: John Calder, 1978.

---. Molloy. New York: Grove Press, 1994.

---. Murphy. New York: Grove Press, 1994.

---. Oh , les beaux jours. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1963.

---. Proust. New York: Grove Press, 1970.

---. Sans. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1969.

---. The Letters of Samuel Beckett: Volume 1, 1929-1940. Ed. Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Lois More Overbeck, Dan Gunn, and George Craig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

---. The Unnamable. New York: Grove press, 1978.

---. Worstward Ho. New York: Grove Press, 1996.

Film. Dir. Alan Schneider. Writ. Samuel Beckett. Perf. Buster Keaton. Videocassette. Foxrock Video, 1965.

Huston, Nancy. An Adoration. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2003.

---. “A Tongue called Mother.” Longings and Belongings. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2005. 47-60.

---. Cantique des plaines. Arles: Actes sud, 1993.

---. Désirs et réalités: texts choisis 1978-1994. Arles: Actes Sud. Montreal: Lémeac, 1995.

---. “Healing the Split.” Montréal L’it. News and Views from Infinitheatre 2.3 (2001): 3.

---. Instruments des ténèbres. Arles: Actes Sud, Montreal: Leméac, 1996.

---. Instruments of Darkness. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 1997.

---. “Knowledge Uprooted.” Longings and Belongings. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2005. 331-350.

---. L’Empreinte de l’ange. Arles: Actes Sud, Montreal: Lémeac, 1996.

---. Les variations Godlberg. Paris: Seuil, 1981.

---. Lignes de faille. Arles: Actes Sud, 2006.

---. Limbes : un hommage à Samuel Beckett = Limbo. Ed. bilingue. Arles : Actes sud, 1998

---. Losing North: Musings on Land, Tongue, and Self. Toronto: McArthur&Company, 2002.

---. Nord Perdu. Arles: Actes Sud, 1999.

---. Plainsong. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993.

---. Prodige: polyphonie. Arles: Actes Sud, 1999.

---. Prodigy. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 1996.

---. Professeurs de désespoir. Arles: Actes Sud, 2005.

---. “Reassuring Strangeness.” Longings and Belongings. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2005. 223-231.

---. “Singing the Plains.” Longings and Belongings. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2005. 245-255.

---. “The Decline of ‘Identity’?. Longings and Belongings. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2005. 313-330.

---. “The Foreign Mother.” Longings and Belongings. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2005. 351-355.

---. “The Mask and the Pen.” Lives in Translation. Ed. Isabelle de Courtivron. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2003. 55-68.

---. Tombeau de Romain Gary. Arles: Actes Sud, 1995.

---. “Towards Patriotism of Ambiguity.” Longings and Belongings. Toronto: McArthur & Co., 2005. 257-279.

Huston, Nancy, Leila Sebbar. Lettres Parisiennes: autopsie de l’exil. Paris: Barrault, 1986.

Nabokov, Vladimir. Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle. New York: Vintage International, 1990.

---. Anya v strane chudes. Sobranie sochineniy russkogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 1, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2000.

---. Bend Sinister. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1947.

---. Dar. Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 4, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2000. 190-541.

---. Drugie berega. Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 5, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2000. 140-335.

---.Invitation to a Beheading. Tran. Dmitri Nabokov, Vladimir Nabokov. New York: Vintage International, 1989

---. Lectures on Don Quixote. Fort Washington, PA: Harvest Books, 1984.

---. Lectures on Literature. Fort Washington, PA: Harvest Books, 2002.

---. Nikolai Gogol. New York: New Directions, 1961.

---. “On a Book Entitled Lolita.” The Annotated Lolita. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970. 311-19.

---. Pale Fire. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

---. Priglashenie na kazn'. Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda v pyati tomakh, vol. 4, Sankt-Peterburg: Symposium, 2000. 46-187.

---. Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited. New York, Vintage International, 1989

---. The Eye. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov, Vladimir Nabokov. New York: Vintage International, 1990.

---. The Gift. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1963.

---. The Real Life of Sebastian Knight. New York: Vintage International, 1992.

Nabokov, Vladimir and Alfred Appel. The Annotated Lolita. New York: Vintage International, 1991.

Secondary Sources:

Abbott, Porter. "Farewell to Incompetence: Beckett's How It Is and Imagination Dead Imagine." Contemporary Literature 11.1 (Winter 1970): 36-47.

Achour, Christine Chaulet. « Nancy Huston et ses langues.» Le Français dans le monde, Recherches et applications, CLE International 39, janvier 2006. 42-51.

Ackerley, Chris, S. E. Gontarski. The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Adamovich, G. "O literature v emigratsii." Sovremennye zapiski. 1932, Book L, 327-329.

Adorno, Theodor. "Music, Language, and Composition." Essays on Music. Ed. Richard Leppert. Trans. Susan Gillespie. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Albright, Daniel. Representation and the Imagination. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Alexandrov, Vladimir. Nabokov's Otherworld. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

---."Nature and Artifice." The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov. Ed. Vladimir Alexandrov. New York: Garland, 1995. 553-556.

---. "The Otherworld." The Garland Companion to VladimirNabokov. Ed. Vladimir Alexandrov. New York: Garland, 1995. 566-571.

Amiran, Eyal. Wandering and Home: Beckett's Metaphysical Narrative. University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1993.

Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. New York: Verso, 1991.

Assaddudin, Mohammad. "Lost/Found in Translation: Qurratulain Hyder as Self-Translator." The Annual of Urdu Studies 23 (2008). 30 May 2009. <http://www.urdustudies.com/Issue23/index.html>

Astbury, Helen. "Samuel Beckett's (Linguistic) Exile: Continuity through Separation." Mots Pluriels 17(avril 2001). 15 January 2008. <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP1701ha.html>

Attar, Samar. "Translating the Exiled Self. Reflections on translation and censorship." Intercultural Communication Studies 14.4 (2005): 131–147.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. Èstetika slovesnogo tvorchestva. Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1986.

---. Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984

---. The Dialogic Imagination. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.

Barabtarlo, Gennady. "Within and Without Cincinnatus's Cell: Reference Gauges in Nabokov's Invitation to a Beheading." Slavic Review 49.3 (Autumn 1990): 390-397.

Bassnett, Susan and Harish Trivedi, ed. Post-Colonial Translation. London: Routledge, 1999.

Baudelaire, Charles. «The Journey.» Selected Poems of Charles Baudelaire. Trans. Geoffrey Wagner. New York: Grove Press, 1974.

Beaujour, Elizabeth Klosty. Alien Tongues. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." Theories of Translation. Ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. 71-83.

Ben-Zvi, Linda. "Samuel Beckett, Fritz Mauthner, and the Limits of Language." PMLA 95. 2 (Mar. 1980): 183-200.

Bethea, David. “Exile as Pupation.” Joseph Brodsky and Creation of Exile. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. 214-251.

Bhabha, Homi. The Location of Culture. London: Routledge, 1994.

Biber, (von) Heinrich Ignaz Franz. Sonatas on the Mysteries of the Rosary. CD. Burbank, CA: Harmonia Mundi USA, 2004.

Bitsilli, P.M."A Review of Invitation to a Beheading and The Eye." A Book of Things about Vladimir Nabokov. Ed Carl R. Proffer. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1974. 63-69.

Blackwell, Stephen. “Reading and Rupture in Nabokov’s Invitation to a Beheading.” The Slavic and East European Journal 39. 1 (Spring, 1995): 38-53.

Blanchot, Maurice. Où va la literature?” Le livre à venir. Paris: Gallimard, 1959.

Bosquet, Mireille. “L’Oeuvre bilingue de Samuel Beckett: un “entre-deux monstrueux”?” Le texte étranger 5. 3 July 2009. *<www.univparis8.fr/dela/**etranger**/pages/**5**/PDF/**bousquet**1.pdf >*

Boyd, Brian. “Nabokov as a Storyteller.” The Cambridge Companion to Nabokov. Ed. Julian Conolly. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. 31-48.

---. Nabokov’s Pale Fire. The Magic of Artistic Discovery. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

---. Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

---. Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Boym, Svetlana. “ Estrangement as a Lifestyle: Shklovsky and Brodsky.” Exile¨and Creativity. Ed. Susan R. Suleiman. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. 241-263.

---. "From the Russian Soul to Post-Communist Nostalgia." Representations 49(1995): 133-166. *MLA International Bibliography*. EBSCO. Web. 1 Dec. 2007.

Brée, Germaine. “Beckett’s Abstractors of Quintessence.” French Review 36.6 (1963): 567-576

Brodsky, Joseph. “A Poet and Prose.” Less than One. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1986.

---. “In a Room and a Half.” Less than One. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1986.

---. Less than One. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1986.

Bruckner, Pascal. “The Edge of Babel.” Partisan Review 63. 2 (1996): 242-254.

Calvet, Louis-Jean. Toward an Ecology of World Languages. Trans. Andrew Brown. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006.

Carrière, Julien. “Samuel Beckett and Bilingualism: How a Return to English Influences the Later Writing and Gender Roles in All That Fall and Happy Days.” Diss. Louisiana State University, 2005.

Casanova, Pascale. La République mondiale des lettres. Paris: Seuil, 1999.

Certeau, de Michel. The Practice of Everyday Life. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Chatzidimitriou, Ioanna. "Self-Translation as Minorization Process: Nancy Huston's Limbes/Limbo." SubStance 38.2 (2009): 22-42.

Clément, Bruno. L’Oeuvre sans qualités. Paris: Éditions Seuil,1994.

Cloyne, George. “In an Elaborate Spoof, Nabokov Takes Us to the Never-Never Land of Zembla.” Rev. of Pale Fire, by Vladimir Nabokov. New York ¨ Times. 27 May, 1962: 18.

Cockerham, Harry. "Bilingual Playwright." Beckett the Shape Changer. Ed. Katharine Worth. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975. 139-60.

Coetzee, John. Doubling the Point. Ed. David Attwell. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

---. “Nabokov’s Pale Fire and the Primacy of Art.” University of Cape Town Studies in English 6 (1974): 1-7.

Cohn, Ruby. A Beckett Canon. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

---.“’Comment c’est’ par le bout.” Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962.

---.”Samuel Beckett Self-translator.” PMLA, 65 (December 1961), 613-21.

Contreras, Gonzalo. “Crisis in Fiction and the Contemporary Novel.” Estudios Públicos 33 (1989): 1-10.

Danby, Nicola. “The space between: Self-translators Nancy Huston and Samuel Beckett.” MA thesis. York University, 2003.

Davey, Frank. “Big, Bad, and Little Known: the Anglophone-Canadian Nancy Huston.” Vision, division: l'œuvre de Nancy Huston. Ed. Marta Dvořak and Jane Koustas. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2004. 3-23.

Davydov, Sergej. “Nabokov and Pushkin.” The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov. Ed.Vladimir E. Alexandrov. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995. 482-496.

Dearlove, Judith. Accommodating the Chaos: Samuel Beckett's Nonrelational Art. Durham: Duke University Press, 1982.

---. “The Voice and Its Words: How It Is in Beckett's Canon.” Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett. Ed. Patrick McCarthy. Boston: GK Hall, 1986.

Deleuze, Gilles. Difference and Repetition. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Derrida, Jacques. Psyche: Inventions of the Other. Trans. Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Diment, Galya. “English as Sanctuary: Nabokov's and Brodsky's Autobiographical Writings.” The Slavic and East European Journal 37. 3 (Autumn, 1993): 346-361.

Dolinin, Alexander. Istinnaia zhizn’ pisatelia Sirina. Saint Petersburg: Academichesky Proekt, 2004.

---. “The Gift.” The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov. Ed.Vladimir E. Alexandrov. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995. 135-169.

Dowling, William. “Who is the Narrator of Nabokov’s Pale Fire?” MLA Index . SBU, Stony Brook. 11 Apr. 2006 < http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~wcd/palenarr.htm>.

Erofeev, V. “Russkaia proza V. Nabokova”// Nabokov V. V. Sobranie sochinenii v 4 t., - Moskva: Pravda, 1990. t. 1.3-32.

Esteban, Claude. Le Partage des mots. Gallimard, 1990.

Federman, Raymond. “Company: The Voice of Language.” Engagement and Indifference. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001.11-41.

---. Critifiction. Albany: SUNY Press, 1993.

---. “How It Is: with Beckett’s Fiction.” The French Review 38.4 (1965): 459-468.

---. “The Writer as Self-Translator”. Beckett Translating/Translating Beckett. Ed Alan Warren Friedman, Charles Rossman, Dina Sherzer. University Park and London:The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987, 7-16.

Filippakopoulou, Maria. “Self-Translation: Reviving the Author?” Other Words 25 (Summer 2005): 23-27.

Fitch, Brian. Beckett and Babel : An Investigation into the Status of Bilingual Work.Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

---. “Just between Texts: Intra-Intertextuality,” in The Narcissistic Text: A Reading of Camus’s Fiction. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982. 89-108.

Fletcher, John. Samuel Beckett’s Art. London: Chatto and Windus, 1967.

Forster, Leonard. The Poet’s Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Foucault, Michel. Order of Things. New York: Vintage, 1994.

Frank, Joseph. Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Gagnon, Daniel “Bilingual translation/writing as intercultural communication.” Sociocultural aspects of translating and interpreting. Ed. Anthony Pym, Miriam Shlesinger, Zuzana Jettmarová Amsterdam ; Philadelphia : J. Benjamins Pub. Co., 2006. 125-136.

Gallagher, Mary. “Nancy Huston ou la relation proliferante.” Vision, division: l'œuvre de Nancy Huston. Ed. Marta Dvořak and Jane Koustas. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2004. 23-35.

Gauvine, Lise. “Écriture, surconscience et plurilinguisme: une poétique de l’errance.” Ed. Christiane Albert. Paris: Karthala, 1999.

Gazier, M., Laval, M. et Bouchez E. « Français dans le texte », *Télérama,* n°2454, 22 janvier. Dossier, 1997.

Gontarski, S. E. The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Texts. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Graver, Lawrence. Raymond Federman, ed. Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1979.

Grayson, Jane. Nabokov Translated. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Green, Julian. Memory of Happy Days. New York: Harper, 1942.

Green, Julien. Journal: suivi de Jeunes années. Oeuvres complètes. vol. 5. Paris: Gallimard, 1985.

Grosjean, François. Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Grutman, Rainier. "Auto-translation." Encyclopedia of Translation Studies. Ed. Mona Baker, London-New York: Routledge, 1998. 17-20.

---. "La autotraducción en la galaxia de las lenguas." Quaderns. Revista de traducció 16 (2009): 123-134.

---. "Mono versus Stereo: Bilingualism's Double Face." Visible Language 27 (Winter/Spring 1993): 207-27.

Harvey, Robert. "'On' dans *Worstward Ho* (*Cap au pire*): fonction et valeur." In Lourdes Carriedo, Ma Luisa Guerrero, Carmen Méndez, Fabio Vericat, eds. *A Vueltas con Beckett*. Alpedrete (Madrid): Ediciones de la Discreta (Colección Bártulos, 7), 2009.

Haugen, Einar. Bilingualism in the Americas: a Research Guide and Bibliography. American Dialect Society: University of Alabama Press, 1978.

Hoffman, Eva. Lost in Translation: a Life in a New Language. New York: Penguin, 1990.

---. "The New Nomads." Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile and Memory. Ed. André Aciman. New York: The New Press, 1999.

Hokenson, Jan Walsh, Marcella Munson. The Bilingual Text. History and Theory of Literary Self-Translation. Manchester, UK & Kinderhook, NY, USA: St. Jerome Publishing, 2007.

Jameson, Fredric. Political Unconscious. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.

---. Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.

---. The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Johnson, Barton. Worlds in Regression: Some Novels of Vladimir Nabokov. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1985

Karakutz-Borodina, L.A. Iazykovaia lichnost' Vladimira Nabokova kak avtora khudozhestvennogo teksta. Ufa: Redaktsionno-izdatelskii otdel Bashkirskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2003.

Karaulov, Iurii. Russkii iazyk i iazykovaia lichnost'. Moskva: Nauka, 1987.

Karpinski, Wojciech. "The Exile as Writer: a Conversation about Sorrow and Joy." Literature in Exile. Ed. John Glad. Durham: Duke University Press, 1990. 131-39.

Keatinge, Benjamin. "Beckett and Language Pathology." Journal of Modern Literature 31.4 (Summer 2008): 86-101.

Kellman, Steven. The Translingual Imagination. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Kenner, Hugh. "Beckett Translating Beckett: Comment c'est." Delos. A Journal of Translation 5 (1970): 194-211.

---. A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1988.

Khaleeva, Irina. "Vtorichnaia iazykovaia lichnost' kak retsipient inofonnogo teksta"// Iazyk – sistema. Iazyk – tekst. Yazyk – sposobnost. Moskva, 1995.

Khatibi, Abdelkebir. Amour bilingue. Casablanca: Eddif, 1982.

Klein-Lataud, Christine. "Langue et lieu de l'écriture." Vision, division: l'œuvre de Nancy Huston. Ed. Marta Dvořak and Jane Koustas. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2004. 39-48.

---. "Les voix parallèles de Nancy Huston." TTR : traduction,terminologie, redaction 9.1 (1996): 211-231.

Knauth, K. Alfons. "Literary Multilingualism I: General Outlines and Western World."Comparative Literature: Sharing Knowledges for Preserving Cultural Diversity. Ed. Marcio Seligmann-Silva, Paola Mildonian, Jean-Michel Djian, Djelal Kadir, Lisa Block de Behar, Alfons Knauth, Dolores Romero Lopez] in Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS*),* Oxford: Eolss Publishers, 2007 <http://www.eolss.net>.

Knowlson, James. Damned to Fame. New York: Grove Press, 1996.

Kramer, Lawrence. Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Kristeva, Julia. "Toccata and Fugue for a Foreigner." Strangers to Ourselves. Trans. Leon Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Kroh, Alexandra. L'aventure du bilinguisme. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000.

Lermontov, Mikhail. «Blagodarnost.'» // Lermontov, M. Iu. Sochineniia: v 6 t. – Moskva, Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1954-57.

Lewis, Philip. "The Measure of Translation Effects." Difference in Translation. Ed. Joseph. F. Graham. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985. 31-62

Lockwood, Lewis. Beethoven: The Music and the Life. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.

Lori, Chamberlain. "The Same Old Stories": Beckett's Poetics of Translation."Beckett Translating/Translating Beckett. Ed. Alan Warren Friedman, Charles Rossman and Dina Sherzer. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987. 17-25.

Lotman, Iurii. Kul'tura i vzryv. Moskva: Gnozis, 1992.

---. Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic theory of Culture. Trans. by Ann Shukman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Lydon, Mary. "Stretching the Imagination: Samuel Beckett and the Frontier of Writing." The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association. 30. 1/2, Spring (1997): 1-15.

Mackey, W.F. Bilinguisme et contact des langues. Paris: Klincksieck, 1976. Mackey, William. "Literary Biculturalism and the Thought-Language-Culture Relation." Quebec: CRIB, Laval, 1971.

Martinet, André. Preface. Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems. By Uriel Weinreich. New York: Production of the Linguistic Circle of New York, 1, 1953.vii-viii.

McCarthy, Mary. "A Bolt from the Blue." A Bolt from the Blue and Other Essays. New York: New York Review Books, 2002.

McGuire, James. "Beckett, the translator, and the metapoem." World Literature Today 64.2 (Spring90 1990): 258. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. 9 Sep. 2009.

<http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.cc.stonybrook.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9610220555&site=ehost-live>.

Melvin Friedman "The Creative Writer as Polyglot: Valery Larbaud and Samuel Beckett." Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters 49 (1960): 229-236.

Meschonnic, Henri. "Propositions pour une poétique de la traduction." Pour la poétique II. Paris: Gallimard, 1973.

Meyer, Priscilla. What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988.

Miłosz, Czesław. "Notes on Exile." Books Abroad 50.2 (Spring 1976): 281-284.

Molloy, Sylvia. "Bilingualism, Writing, and the Feeling of Not Quite Being There." Lives in Translation. Ed. Isabelle de Courtivron. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2003. 69-78.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. The Birth of Tragedy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Nossery, Névine El. "L'étrangeté rassurante de la « bi-langue » chez Abdelkébir Khatibi et Nancy Huston." Contemporary French and Francophone ¨Studies 11.3 (2007): 389-397.

Nussbaum, Martha. "Kant and Cosmopolitanism." Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal. Ed. James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-bachmann. Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press, 1997.

O'Reilly, Edouard. Introduction. Comment c'est. How It Is and l'Image. By Samuel Beckett. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Oustinoff, Michael. Bilinguisme d'écriture et auto-traduction. Julien Green, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001.

Pater, Walter. The Renaissance. Ed. Donald L. Hill. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Paz, Octavio. "Translation: Literature and Letters." Theories of Translation. Ed.Rainer Shulte and John Biguenet. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Pekka,Tammi. Problems of Nabokov's Poetics. A Narratological Analysis. Helsinki, 1985. 97-101.

Perloff, Marjorie. The Poetics of Indeterminacy. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999.

Pollock, Sheldon, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol Breckenridge and Dipesh Chakrabarty. "Cosmopolitanisms." Cosmopolitanism. Ed. Carol Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Durham& London: Duke University Press, 2002.

Pons, Anne. "Makine: Non, il n'a pas change. ' L'Express 23 May 1996: 126-27.

Pope, Alexander. Essay on Man. The Poems of Alexander Pope. Ed. John Butt. London, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

Powell, David. "L'expression contrapuntique: la fugue prodigieuse de Nancy Huston." Vision, division: l'œuvre de Nancy Huston. Ed. Marta Dvořak and Jane Koustas. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2004. 112- 124.

Pushkin, A. S. «Dar naprasnyi.» Polnoie sobranie soshinenii v desiati tomakh. Moskva: izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1962. T. II, 208.

Pym, Anthony. "On the Pragmatics of Translating Multilingual Texts." 1996. 1 Aug. 2009. <http://www.tinet.org/~apym/on-line/translation/translation.html>.

Rabaté, Laurent: "La poésie de la tradition: Étude du recueil 'Stixi' de V. Nabokov". Revue des Études Slaves 57 (1985): 397-420.

Rabinovitz, Rubin. The Development of Samuel Beckett's Fiction. Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1984.

Rée, Jonathan. "Cosmopolitanism and the Experience of Nationality."Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation. Ed. Pheng Cheah, Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. 77-91.

Rinne, Noelle "La tierce langue de Nancy Huston." Crisolenguas. 1:1(2008): 25 Jan. 2009 < http://crisolenguas.uprrp.edu/Editorsnote.html>.

Robbins, Bruce. "Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism." Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation. Ed. Pheng Cheah, Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.1-19.

Ronen, Irena, and Omry Ronen, "'Diabolically Evocative': An Inquiry into the Meaning of a Metaphor." Slavica Hierosolymitana. Slavic Studies of the Hebrew University 5-6 (1981): 371-386.

Rowe, William. Nabokov's Spectral Dimension. Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1981.

Said, Edward Exile. “Reflexions on Exile.” Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile. Ed. Marc Robinson. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1994.

Sardin-Damestoy, Pascale. Samuel Beckett auto-traducteur ou l'art de l'empêchement. Arras : Artois PU, 2002.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. “What is Literature?” and Other Essays. Trans. Steven Ungar. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Scarry, Elaine. The Body in Pain. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Scheiner, Corinne. “Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Self-translation: Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov as Doubled Novelists.” Diss. University of Chicago, 2000.

Scher, Steven Paul. “Literature and Music.” Interrelations of Literature. Ed. Joseph Garibaldi and Jean-Pierre Barricelli. New York: MLA, 1982. 225- 250.

Scherr, Barry. “Poetry.”The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov. Ed.Vladimir E. Alexandrov. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995. 608-625.

Schiff, Stacy. Véra. New York: Random House, 1999.

Schleiermarcher, Friedrich. “The Different Methods of Translating.” Theories of Translation. Ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Schopenhauer. The World as Will and Representation. Trans. E. F. J. Payne. Toronto: Dover Publications, 1966.

Seidel, Michael.”Pale Fire and the Art of the Narrative Supplement.” English Literary History 51 (1984): 837-855.

Senior, Nancy. "Whose song, whose land? Translation and appropriation in Nancy Huston’s Plainsong /Cantique des plaines,"

Seyhan, Azade. Writing Outside the Nation. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. The Complete Works. Oxford: MetroBooks, 1994. 670-713.

---. Timon of Athens. The Complete Works. Oxford: MetroBooks, 1994. 1007-1034.

Shakhovskaia, Zinaida. V poiskakh Nabokova. Otrazheniya.- Moskva: Kniga, 1991.

Shenker, Israel. “An Interview with Beckett.” New York Times 5 May 1956, sec. II. 1, 3.

Shread, Carolyn. “Redefining Translation through Self-Translation: The Case of Nancy Huston.” French Literature Series 26 (2009): 1-16.

Socher, Abraham. “Shades of Frost: a Hidden Source for Nabokov’s Pale Fire.” Times Literary Supplement. July 1, 2005: 13.

Steiner, George. “Extraterritorial.” Nabokov: Criticism, Reminiscences, Translations, and Tributes. Ed. Alfred Appel Jr. and Charles Newman. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970. 119- 127.

---. After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation. 3d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Stepun, Fyodor. “Porevolutsionnoe soznanie i zadacha èmigrantskoi literatury.” Novyi grad 10 (1935): 12-28

Struve, Gleb. Russkaia literatura v izgnanii. – 3 izd. – Paris; Moscow.: YMCA- Press; Russkiy Put, 1996.

Tanqueiro, Helena., Patricia López L.-Gay, Francesco Parcerisas “Translating, Self-translating, Being translated.”A lecture series on literary translation at NYU in Paris. Quaderns. Revista de traducció 16 (2009) : 107-122.

The Oxford English Dictionary. 2d ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.

Thomas, Yves. “Traduire l’effacement: notes sur la traduction de Comment c’est.” Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd’hui 2 (1993): 139-145.

Todorov, Tzvetan. “Dialogism and Schizophrenia,” in Another Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands. Ed. by Alfred Arteaga. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994 203-214.

---. Nous et les autres. Paris: Seuil, 1992.

Toker, Leona. "Ambiguities in Vladimir Nabokov's Invitation to a Beheading." Ambiguities in Literature and Film. Ed. Hans Braendlin. Tallahassee: Florida State University Press,1988. 95-103.

Tolstaya, Tatiana. “Love Story: Dreams of My Russian Summers.” New York Review of Books 20 Nov.1997: 4-5.

Triolet, Elsa. La mise en mots. Geneva: Skira, 1969.

van Hulle, Dirk. "Sans [Lessness]". *The Literary Encyclopedia*. 1 March 2004. 12 November 2009. <http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=2307>

Venclova, Thomas. "An Exercise in Futility: a Case of Andrei Kurbsky." Literature in Exile. Ed. John Glad. Durham: Duke University Press, 1990.139-148.

Venutti, Lawrence, ed. Translation Studies Reader. London: Routledge, 2000.

---. The Translator's Invisibility. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2008.

Vildomec, Veroboj. Multilingualism. Leiden: A.W.Sythoff, 1963.

Vinogradov, Viktor.V. Stilistika. Teoriia poeticheskoi rechi. Poètika.– Moskva: Izdatel'stvo. Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1965.

Vries, (de) Gerard. "Nabokov's Pale Fire and the Romantic Movement." Zembla. 15 Aug. 2007 <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/nabokov/devriespf.htm>.

Walkowitz, Rebecca. Cosmopolitan Style. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

West, Paul."Whispering the Turmoil Down. "Rev. of Samuel Beckett: The ¨ Complete Short Prose. 1929-1989. Ed. S.E. Gontarski, The Bookpress 6:4 (May 1996).

Whyte, Christopher. "Against Self-Translation." Translation and Literature 11. 1 (Spring 2002): 64-71.

Wilson, Rita. "The Writer's Double. Translation, Writing, and Autobiography." Romance Studies 27.3 (2009): 186–198.

Winn, James. Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. Philosophical Investigations. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001.

---. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. London: Routledge Classics, 2001.

Wolf, Werner. The Musicalization of Fiction. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Editions Rodopi, 1999.

Wolfson, Louis. Le Schizo et les langues. Paris: Gallimard, 1970.

Wood, Michael. The Magician's Doubts: Nabokov and the Risks of Fiction. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Zarankin, Julia. "The Literary Memoirist as Necrographer: Khodasevich, Tsvetaeva, Nabokov, and Proust." Diss. Princeton University, 2004.

Ziarek, Ewa Plonowska. The Rhetoric of Failure: Deconstruction of Skepticism, Reinvention of Modernism. Albany: SUNY Press, 1996.

Zlochevskaia, Alla. V. "Kamera obscura i Smekh v temnote: perevod na drugoi iazyk ili dva raznykh romana?" 6 Feb. 2009. 30 July 2009. <http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/374876.html>.