A NARRATIVE STUDY OF EXILE: WRITERS' REFLECTIONS

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A dissertation submitted to
The Sanville Institute
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Clinical Social Work

By

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March 20, 2009

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read A NARRATIVE STUDY OF EXILE: WRITERS' REFLECTIONS, by Mario L. Starc, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Social Work at The Sanville Institute.

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ABSTRACT

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by

MARIO L. STARC

This qualitative study explores the subjective experience of refugees through an examination of published memoirs for the purpose of better understanding how the refugee experience is integrated into one's life over time and how this shapes one's identity, sense of self, and view of the world. The literature is primarily focused on the early stages of exile, with little exploration of the later stages of the refugee experience. Much of the extant literature regarding early stage refugees suggests limited potential for adjustment, although there are exceptions to this perspective, which found potential for recovery.

Informed by a Grounded Theory approach, a narrative analysis was applied to the memoirs of five notable refugee authors: Salman Rushdie, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Andrew Lam, Vladimir Nabokov, and Isabel Allende. Interpretation of the meanings implied within each memoir lead to the development of explanatory narratives regarding each source narrative (the memoir). Out of this process both unique and common thematic categories of experience emerged.

The symbolic meaning of "home" or sense of home, encompassed each writer's relation to memory, to family, to language (of origin and adopted). While longing for the lost home was a common experience, the development of identity within a new context

appears to have been accomplished precisely because the meaning of home was not perceived in literal terms.

Though the experience of shame and guilt aroused by a sense of having abandoned "home" was common, a significant experience of long-term exile was the development of a broad perspective on life explicitly beyond the boundaries of country and national origin. There was a notable absence of nationalism or the need for political recovery and a strong identification with more universal values. As writers, each found language itself to be an arena of expansion. The importance of the passage of time in the process of adjustment was noted.

The findings mirrored the perspective of those writers who suggest that recovery is possible for the refugee and that "pathology" as a lens may not be appropriate for understanding the experience of exile. This study suggests that for the long-term refugee, recovery as well as creativity and emotional growth are realistic outcomes.

This exploratory study was limited by its size and the narrowness of the social class involved. There is a need for future research to expand the scope and avoid the limitation of a pathology-based perspective.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents
Joseph and Pauline Starc.
They had great courage and love,
and they understood much
about life and about me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In reflecting on my dissertation experience I am mindful that this work is the product of the efforts of many, and I feel both blessed and humbled by everyone's collective generosity. I want to especially thank my committee. I am extremely grateful to Sylvia Sussman who encouraged me to pursue my rather different approach and method, and was more than generous in her contributions to every aspect of my work. Cynthia O'Connell was also generous with her insights and intellect, and with her ability to help me to maintain a focus and process that was reflective of who I am. And finally Patricia Sohl, whose conversations and insights enabled me to find a theoretical voice for my thinking, and whose warmth and encouragement gave me hope.

I am also grateful to Angeleen Campra for her insightful and instructive editing, and Sonya Kaufman for the thoroughness of her research assistance. I would further like to thank The Sanville Institute, its faculty and students, who gave me an intellectual and emotional home for these many years. This work would not have been possible without this.

Throughout all this, my children, Josef, Martina, and Antonia, have been a source of inspiration to me. I thank them for their support, and ask their forgiveness for my inattention to their needs. My brother Tom, my sister Mimi, and my uncle Frank have been a steady voice of encouragement and support throughout, and I am in their debt.

But most of all, I thank my wife, Helena, who has been steadfast in her support, constant in her belief in me, and intuitively understanding about the importance of my goal. She ultimately has made this work possible, and I am eternally grateful to her.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study explores the refugee experience over time, specifically its long-term implications, adjustments, and integration, through a narrative analysis of published personal memoirs by refugee writers.

The Problem and Background

The refugee experience, the experience of banishment and exile, is ubiquitous throughout history and across cultures. It has been an aspect of the human condition since the beginnings of recorded history, as shown in literary traditions throughout the world. The literature of religion, for example, is replete with stories of uprooting. In Western Civilization it is the cornerstone of Judaic and Christian theological traditions. The banishment from Eden and mankind's subsequent struggle to return to Paradise, Lot's escape from Sodom and Gomorrah, the travails of the Israelites in Egypt and their attempts to return to the Promised Land, are all stories of exile. The Hegira of Muhammad, the infant Jesus' flight into Egypt, the epic tale of Rama in the *Ramayana*, are further indications of how religious tradition worldwide embraces and elevates this experience. Similarly, in classical literature the stories of the *Iliad*, *Jason and the Argonauts*, and *Oedipus Rex* all speak of the universal theme of exile and longing for home. Through these examples we can see the power of the refugee experience, and often, its heroic, and most especially, its transformative potential.

Similarly in ancient and modern historical records, exile has been a theme across cultures and continents. In the most comprehensive study of the subject, *The Anatomy of Exile*, Paul Tabori (1972) begins with the story of Sinuhe of Egypt, which is dated around 2000 BCE. He then describes numerous waves of political and religious exile in the

subsequent centuries, before culminating his work with an analysis of refugee movements in the 20th century, a century, according to Falicov, whose last two decades saw the "largest and most diverse migrations ever recorded in history" (2002, xv).

Beyond literary tradition and recorded history, the refugee experience is a significant contemporary social problem. It continues to be a worldwide phenomenon, and indeed in the previous century and now in the 21st century, we have seen forced migration on a scale that has never been witnessed before. The most current statistics from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2008, p. 7) list 11.4 million people officially counted in the narrowly defined category of refugees. This does not include another 26 million individuals who are officially classified as internally displaced. (p. 23). This ancient human experience remains a widespread phenomenon without regard to culture, class, or region.

Despite the universal theme of the plight of the refugee there has been little study aimed at the longer-term experience, or more specifically after the initial crisis has passed. The lion's share of literature and focus in the social sciences is on the enormous personal and social costs of the early phase of the refugee experience. In addition, what are most often addressed are the geo-political consequences of the refugee experience, for example the ongoing intersection of two refugee cultures, Israel and Palestine, as they continue to both fear and vilify one another. In similar fashion, problems with refugee groups assimilating into a host country are often assessed in terms of the crisis that this presents to existing social service structures, while attempts to explore the personal experience are generally focused on early phase adjustment or on resultant mental health concerns.

Most of the psychological research literature focuses on psychiatric problems. Whicker and Schoch (1988), Westermeyer (2000), Weine, et. al. (2004) all concern themselves with the effects of the refugee experience as evidenced in psychiatric illness. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in particular has become, in Ahearn's (2000) words, "the most popular descriptor of refugee health or lack of health today" (p. 10).

With respect to the long-term implications of living a life as a refugee, some authors, such as Muecke (1992) and Marsella (1996) are concerned with the limitation of Trauma theory. Most particularly, Renos Papadopoulos (2002a, 2002b) and his colleagues at the Tavistock Clinic have argued that we should be cautious in our reliance on trauma theory as the sole lens through which we examine the refugee experience. They suggest that perhaps there is also emotional growth, wisdom, and creativity that come out of the experience, as evidenced by the artistic, cultural, and academic contributions of the refugee community. As Leon and Rebeca Grinberg wrote in *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration and Exile:*

> On both sides of the Atlantic, many have remade their lives, healed their wounds, and have been sustained by what the new and different world had to offer. The most talented poets, scientists, musicians, painters, professors, actors, and writers among them were able to learn from experience; and, enriched by their experience trials, and tribulations, they produced work that transcended the borders of their adopted countries. (1989, p. 165)

There is the possibility that the experience is more than just an ongoing tragedy, that indeed it may have led some to personal transformation and growth. It is this possibility that is especially interesting to me.

The Research Question

The following questions will be addressed in my research: How is the refugee experience, initially a crisis but eventually leading to a life in exile or diaspora, integrated

into one's life? How does this experience shape one's identity, one's sense of self, and one's view of the world over time?

My means of examining the experience of being a refugee who has remained in exile is through the method of document analysis, presented as a narrative analysis as described by Polkinghorne, (1995). Using this method, I have analyzed examples of memoir written by refugee writers such as Salman Rushdie and Vladimir Nabokov. Examining writers who are reflecting back on their experience after some years allows for the requisite distance from the beginning phase of the experience and from the crisis perspective of social services. I believe the narratives I have analyzed provide the data of human experience and reflection within which is found an accurate representation of how one's refugee experience impacts one's identity over time. I have considered memoir written by refugees who have been out of their home country for at least 15 years, in what could be considered a generation away from one's mother country. I believe that this provides sufficient distance from the initial loss, and sufficient time to relocate and resettle, to create the safety within which one can become deeply reflective.

Clarification of Terminology

Given my specific interest in the refugee experience, I believe it is important to clarify what the term *refugee* implies, particularly to differentiate this from other immigration experiences. The current accepted definition of the term *refugee* is from the *1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. This document identifies a refugee as a person who

> owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. (UNHCR, 2007, p. 16)

There is a technical aspect to this definition that is very important, and that is the phrase "outside the country of his nationality." To be a refugee means that one has to cross an international border, and to no longer be protected by one's native country. Unless this crossing occurs one is officially classified as an *Internally Displaced Person.* Again, according to most current statistics there are approximately 26 million internally displaced persons—individuals who have been uprooted within their own countries (UNHRC, 2008, p. 23). A further distinction is made for the large numbers of people who flee to get out of harm's way temporarily and could return without persecution, thereby making them displaced persons rather than refugees. For example, displaced person status is sometimes given to individuals who have had to leave home due to some natural disaster, e.g., earthquake or famine due to drought. In this study, I am focusing only on persons who are uprooted due to military or political circumstances and who cannot safely return to their homeland. The term *exile* will be used to describe this state.

An additional unique category is that of *Asylum Seeker.* In simple terms an asylum seeker is one who is outside his home country and who is physically in a country where he is requesting protection due to persecution in his home country. For purposes of asylum one can be in a foreign embassy (technically a part of a country outside of the geographical boundaries of a country), or in a territory or protectorate of a country. In effect, an asylum seeker is awaiting a determination that he faces a *well-founded* fear of persecution if he is returned, but is already in a host country with or without official permission. Individuals seeking asylum are often incarcerated pending a decision, sometimes in a special *immigration* facility, and other times in regular jail facilities.

The initial refugee experiences can involve any of these categories, but eventually one is considered a refugee after it has been established that one has been forced out of one's country for political reasons, and that one cannot return to his country of origin due to the aforementioned "well-founded fear of persecution." Again, it is on these refugees, who have settled and remained outside their home country for a period of at least 15 years, who remain in exile, that I have focused my inquiry.

Consideration of the Nazi Holocaust

One challenge in pursuing this course of interest is the paucity of research that has focused on this topic. A great deal of focus has been given to the experience of one particular refugee group, that is Jewish survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, but my concern is that this refugee population, i.e., Holocaust survivors of Jewish descent, has had a particular experience that is unique to it alone. Most refugee experiences involve some amount of mass executions and brutality, but the levels of brutality in this holocaust make this particular experience one that is *defined* by the violence rather than affected by the violence. Given this uniqueness I have not considered the memoirs of Holocaust survivors as part of my study.

Significance

While the academic and clinical literature is focused on early social adjustment and on issues of mental health, there is little attention to longer-term adjustment and integration of the experience of exile. Where there does seem to be evidence of introspection and perspective over an accumulation of years is in the area of memoir. Perhaps due to the retrospective view that memoir requires, there seems to be room for the reflection that is needed to evaluate the impact on one's life that exile creates. It is my

belief that this reflective stance gives us insight into how internal relocation, i.e., the ability to integrate this life changing experience and resettle one's self emotionally, occurs in those who have been forced out of the world in which they were anchored and in which they had a sense of self that was rooted over time.

CHAPTER 2: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

As was indicated in Chapter 1, the main focus of prior research into the refugee experience has been on its humanitarian and political implications, and therein the primary interest has been in the early phases, which require immense societal effort and responses. Inquiry has focused on how society responds to the refugee and how the refugee adapts to society, with less attention given to the experience from the individual's perspective. Thus, the primary work in this area has had a sociological focus. My interest, on the other hand, is in the lived experience of the individual, the psychosocial arena. In addition, I wish to explore the long-term implications of the experience during resettlement, the period when social acculturation and integration have taken place to one degree of success or another. This phase of the refugee experience is what some refer to as part of a "residual phase" (Stein, 1981, p. 320), in which one has given up plans to be repatriated and remains in exile in a host country. I have explored the small body of literature that has addressed this phase, texts that focus on the long-term experience of the refugee, particularly the period I have designated as the later adjustment phase, and most particularly on the individual's psychosocial experience. This review is divided into the following sections: Phases of the Refugee Experience, The Refugee Experience as a Mental Health Concern, Selected Contemporary Perspectives on the Refugee Experience, The Refugee Experience With the Passage of Time, and The Refugee in the World of Literature.

Phases of the Refugee Experience

One of the difficulties in discussing the refugee experience can be found in the range of ways in which it is defined and described. The legal definitions of what qualifies one as a refugee are clear but terse, and do not provide much description of the experience of being a refugee. Questions such as when the experience begins and when it ends are not addressed by the law, nor is there much in the literature with respect to this. Several authors are almost universally cited; one of the earliest who began to conceptualize a way of describing the experience beyond "flight and settlement" (1973, p. 127) was Kunz. He developed categories distinguishing refugees who flee in anticipation of displacement; for example, those who leave as they observe the political situation beginning to crumble, from those who leave in situations of great chaos, military action, etc. In similar fashion, Keller (1975), a political scientist, examined refugee communities in India some 20 years after the partition of India and Pakistan. He identified three phases of the experience: "warning and impact," "flight," and "resettlement and return to normal life" (p. 97).

Building on these two authors, Stein (1981) posited a fuller conceptualization of the phases of the refugee experience. He wrote:

> These stages are perception of a threat; decision to flee; the period of extreme danger and flight; reaching safety; camp behavior; repatriation, settlement or resettlement; the early and late stages of resettlement; adjustment and acculturation; and, finally, residual states and changes in behavior caused by the experience. (p. 321)

Stein also addressed more specifically the stage of the experience that the others had described more vaguely, and which is the focus of this study, that is the later phases of resettlement. He categorized refugee adjustment over time as having four stages: "1)

the initial arrival period of the first few months; 2) the first and second years; 3) after four to five years; 4) a decade or more later" (p. 325). His discussion of the resettlement phase, which he tied to the goal of assimilation, added an important dimension and expanded the understanding of the refugee experience, although his view of the potential in the period after a decade of resettlement was rather pessimistically framed:

> After ten years the refugee group will have achieved a certain stability. The recovery of lost status will have continued but at a much slower pace. The sum total after the first decade is one of decline. Despite the drive and determination, the effect of exodus is to produce lower status. (p. 326)

The later phase of resettlement, while minimally defined, remains little explored in the literature.

The lack of long-term studies of the refugee experience may also be linked to the traditional measures of cultural adjustment, that is, concepts such as assimilation and integration. Assimilation was first described by anthropologists Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (149). Over time, the concept has begun to include not just changes in a cultural group, but also in the individual, and more often than not it refers to the impact of change on the members of a non-dominant group, i.e., the refugee group.

Berry (1988a) posed four acculturation options, which he listed as "Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and Marginalization" (p. 44). Dona and Berry (1999) see assimilation as the relinquishment of one's cultural identity for identification with the host country, and integration as implying the desire to maintain one's heritage identity

while at the same time becoming part of the larger society. It is within these areas of successful assimilation and integration that refugee resettlement is often evaluated.

In addition to these rather abstract measures, more concrete factors have been evaluated in the process of describing positive social adjustment. For example, successful occupational adjustment (R. Bach & J. Bach, 1980; Finnan, 1982), and decreased utilization of social welfare assistance (Kraus, 1983; Montero & Dieppa, 1982) are often used as measures of societal assimilation in refugee groups. Assimilation and social adjustment are underlying, contributing factors in the long-term subjective experience of the refugee. However, the emphasis in this body of literature is on the way a person is absorbed into society or becomes a part of the social milieu, rather than on how one manages to live with the experience over time, which is the focus of my study.

The Refugee Experience as a Mental Health Concern

The social science literature on refugee populations is primarily aimed at social service concerns and humanitarian relief responses of governments and agencies. When looking at the experience of the individual refugee, the focus is usually framed in the context of health, especially mental health. The bulk of this literature deals with the early phases of the refugee experience, often highlighting a seriously deleterious impact. For example, in a large study of 20 surveys providing results for nearly 7,000 adult refugees from seven different countries, Fazel, Wheeler, and Danesh (2005) concluded:

> About one in ten adult refugees in western countries has post traumatic stress disorder, about one in 20 has major depression and about one in 25 has generalized anxiety disorder, with the probability that these disorders overlap in many people. (p. 1309)

The Nazi Holocaust

There are few studies in the mental health literature that refer to the long-term effects of the refugee experience, and most of these specifically refer to the Nazi Holocaust (Shoah literature). While I will comment on some of this, I view the Nazi Holocaust as a unique experience in and of itself, one with such overarching impact that it overshadows the experience of other, less horrific forced migration, and therefore it may not be optimally useful for my research. However, its relevance to the concern of trauma and recovery makes it an important area of consideration. For example, in a Canadian study of Holocaust survivors in the province of Quebec, a near majority of the 135 survivors interviewed showed evidence of mild psychiatric consequences more than 33 years after their Holocaust experiences. The authors also concluded that their distress was further amplified by then recent incidents of anti-Semitism in Quebec (Eaton, Sigal, & Weinfeld, 1982). In an Israeli study by Nadler and Ben-Shushan (1989), the conclusion from both questionnaires and subsequent interviews of Polish survivors was that after 40 years the effect of the Holocaust remained quite powerful, perhaps resurfacing as survivors advanced in years.

Most notably in this body of literature is the work of psychoanalyst and survivor Henry Krystal. In 1981 he suggested that psychoanalysis had limited effectiveness with Holocaust survivors. He wrote, "there was limit to how much the survivors could absorb through grieving and the degree to which they could achieve integrity and good-natured acceptance of the past" (1981, p. 179). In 1997 he presented a follow-up study with a group of survivors that he had evaluated in the 1960s. He warned of the difficulty in treating them in therapy and bleakly described their condition by saying:

> What we discover is an agony of envy, feeling "worse off than anybody," a feeling of failure, torture of constant obsessions with memories of the most painful kind, and the anticipation of rejection, the dread and expectation of being abandoned, forgotten, the fear and expectation of total loneliness, visions of ending up a "nobody in a nursing home." (1997, p. 80)

It was in response to Krystal's pessimistic conclusions that other authors began to consider alternative perspectives regarding survival. Most notable was a paper written by self psychologist and Holocaust survivor Anna Ornstein (2001), who was highly critical of the dominant psychiatric perspective. She challenged the limited perspective that held that survivors responded homogenously to the Holocaust because it did not take into consideration individual strengths. She proposed that with more careful observation and proper treatment, survivors could be better helped to integrate this traumatic experience. She states:

> However, because of their almost exclusive emphasis on psychopathology most of these investigators failed to recognize the particular manner in which survivors mourned their enormous losses and made an effort to integrate their painful memories into the rest of their personality. This meant the loss of an opportunity to learn about the process of recovery following severe traumatization. (p. 21)

This possibility for recovery was echoed in an Israeli study by Shmotkin, Blumstein, and Modan (2003) in which the authors interviewed 126 Holocaust survivors. They concluded that while the effects of trauma were formidable, "people who have endured a trauma gain a hope for recovery and often achieve a newly restored life" (p. 232). This shift in opinion regarding the Holocaust has broader implications with respect to trauma, and also provides a useful perspective within which to consider the refugee experience.

Hantman, Solomon, and Horn (2003) explored differences between certain types of Holocaust survivors, highlighting heterogeneous coping styles that allow some to

adapt better than others. In this study, 150 Holocaust survivors who were confronted in later life with a cancer diagnosis were interviewed. Within this group the researchers identified three types of adaptation: "The 'Victim,' the 'Fighter,' and 'Those Who Made It.'" They found that "The 'Fighter' and 'Those Who Made It' types, who comprised over 80% of the sample, reported successful adaptation in the aftermath of the Holocaust" (p. 126). This appreciation for individual responses to traumatic events is, again, a position that is highly relevant to the study of the refugee experience.

Psychiatric Approaches

Ornstein's critique of the emphasis on psychopathology can be applied to a good deal of the extant writing on refugee mental health. Indeed, Knudsen (1995) suggests that for refugees, therapeutic intervention, and specifically psychiatric diagnosis, is something to be avoided as it might impact their future immigration possibilities. Nevertheless, concern with psychiatric illness remains predominant. Wicker and Schoch (1988) cite two studies of Eastern European refugees, one which showed a rate of psychiatric breakdowns five times greater than that of the native non-refugee Norwegian population, and another study showing a rate of psychiatric breakdown four times greater for men and five times greater for women as compared to the native, Australian population. The post-Vietnam War period was replete with concerns about the mental health needs of (especially) Southeast Asians as they settled around the world (Westermeyer, 1998; Steel, Derrick, Phan, & Bauman, 2002), as is the literature with respect to the former Yugoslavian refugees (Weine et. al., 2004).

There is growing evidence of an attempt to view the refugee experience as more complex and nuanced than the view provided though the medical lens of psychiatry. In

concert with Ornstein regarding Holocaust survivors, Brody's (1994) critique of mental health approaches to refugees suggests that the individual characteristics of refugees, their personalities, and life experiences need to be considered as important factors in their psychological adjustment. He warns of the "risk of evaluating the migratory or refugee experience as the sole feature influencing their mental health" (p. 57), and suggests that critical factors such as the new social context of the refugees' situation should be considered, as well as their psychological make up.

In a complex review of published refugee studies from 1959 to 2002, Porter and Haslam (2005) concluded that there were numerous factors leading to positive mental health outcomes in refugees. They wrote:

> In sum, this study supports the role of enduring contextual factors before and after displacement as moderators of mental health among the world's refugees. The psychological aftereffects of displacement by war cannot be understood simply as the product of an acute and discrete stressor, but depend crucially on the economic, social, and cultural conditions from which refugees are displaced and in which refugees are placed. (p. 611)

Steel et al., (2002) completed a population-based study involving nearly 1200 interviewees from the Vietnamese refugee community in Australia. Individuals in this group, who had a mean length of resettlement in Australia of 11.2 years, were, in the main, found to be free from overt mental illness. Those who were viewed as most vulnerable to mental illness were those subjects who had experienced *multiple* (more than three) traumas in addition to their forced migration. Again the refugee experience in and of itself was not the primary cause of mental illness in most individuals, and many other factors need to be considered in assessing this population's mental health.

Theories of Loss and Trauma

A primary contemporary frame of reference in refugee literature that is related to the mental health perspective is the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The diagnosis first came into common usage in reference to Vietnam War veterans who were having difficulties adjusting to civilian life or who were having difficulties later in life that seemed to relate to their wartime experience. The American Psychiatric Association's (2000) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* describes the essential feature of PTSD as

> ...the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate. (p. 463)

Post-Freudian interest in trauma and psychotherapy grew out of crisis intervention work, starting with Boston's infamous Cocoanut Grove fire, which took place in 1942. Eric Lindeman (1944) studied the effects of this tragic nightclub fire and how loss was such a seminal issue for those involved. In the 1960s there was new research on the topic of stress (Lazarus, 1966), which was followed by Horowitz's writing (1976) that was instrumental in shaping the development of PTSD theory (Joseph, Williams, & Yule, 1997). These ideas coincided with the first waves of post-Vietnam War soldiers *and* refugees. In the early 1970s the term *culture shock* was used in psychoanalytic work with refugees (Garza-Guerrero, 1974; Ticko, 1971), but in a short time PTSD and trauma became what Ahearn (2000) calls "the most popular descriptor of refugee health or lack of health today" (p.10).

With this official codification occurring just as numerous Southeast Asian refugees were being resettled in the United States, the diagnosis was then applied to thousands of Vietnam War civilians, many of whom were being seen in health and mental heath facilities. Over time, numerous writers (Boehnlein, Kinzie, Rath, & Fleck, 1985; Drozdek, Noor, Lutt, & Foy, 2003; Kinzie, Fredrickson, Rath, & Fleck, 1984; Kinzie & Jaronson, 2001; Kroll, et al., 1989; Lin, 1988) have applied this label to subjects in their studies, and its use in describing the refugee experience became almost synonymous with the experience itself.

Selected Contemporary Perspectives on the Refugee Experience

Beyond these traditional perspectives on the refugee experience are other voices that have emerged in the area of refugee studies. One of the earliest and strongest was that of Marjorie Muecke (1992) a professor of nursing, who called for "a new paradigm...one to take the polyvocality of refugees into account, and one to construe refugees as prototypes of resilience despite major losses and stressors" (p. 515). She further articulated her criticism of traditional perspectives on the refugee experience:

> The data and conclusions about refugee health that we have in the literature are exclusively negative. Absent is the study of refugee health or of healthy refugees. Yet refugees present perhaps the maximum example of the human capacity to survive despite the greatest of losses and assaults on human identity and dignity. (p. 520)

Similarly, Fredrick Ahearn (2002), in *Psychosocial Wellness of Refugees*, argued against the limited perspective that a pathology-based perspective provides.

> It is interesting to observe that there is little agreement as to what constitutes psychosocial well being. It is much easier to describe factors associated with well-being, especially negative factors that connote a lack of well being. This approach has limitations for it highlights weakness and pathology rather than strength and health. It focuses on the negative rather than the positive, oftentimes "medicalizing" the problem. . . . The vast majority of researchers in this field

> prefer to study trauma, stress, and the like rather than investigate psychosocial well-being. (p. 5)

In addition to concerns about the limitations of a mental health perspective, there are others who are concerned with the limitations of PTSD in relation to other, i.e., non-Western, cultures (Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995; de Silva, 1999; Farias, 1991; Marsella, 1996). Still others (Berry, 1986; Griffiths, 2002; Gross, 2004) suggest that the socio-political context of the refugee experience is the real cause of emotional difficulties. That is, pathological behaviors and attitudes are often responses aimed at coping with how host countries treat refugees, rather than being the result of previous trauma. Nevertheless, these concerns are attempts at explaining pathology. They are not making a case for viewing the refugee experience as a complex life experience rather than as a psychiatric problem.

One of the most articulate alternative voices in the area of refugee studies is Renos Papadopoulos and his colleagues at the Tavistock Clinic, who have been articulating a broader perspective. Critical of generalizations, either negative or positive, about the refugee experience, they take the view that individuals experience their forced migration in their own way. In *Psychotherapeutic Care of Refugees,* Papadopoulos (2002) proposes the concept of therapeutic care of refugees, an approach that is not limited to the work of psychotherapy with refugees, but rather, encourages a therapeutic attitude toward understanding the refugee experience. In the words of Falicov (2002) who wrote the introduction to the Papadopoulos book, the intent is to "fully recognize the suffering endured and yet not stereotype refugees as helpless victims, or reduce them to the diagnosis of posttraumatic stress" (p. xvii).

Along similar lines, taking issue with the traditional concepts of acculturation and integration as the universal goal and measure of adjustment, Loizos (2002), a colleague of Papadopoulos, compared the experiences of group of Polish refugees that he had worked with in a factory. He found distinct differences in the perspectives and aspirations of different individuals to be based more on age, class, pre-migration profession, etc., rather than on simple difficulties in adjusting to the new culture. He suggests that one's native culture should be not be seen as a straightjacket but rather as a cloak "which could be worn in many ways, even taken off when not needed, or pulled tightly around the body when it's cold" (p. 51). He further suggests that fitting into a society may be less critical than having a group to belong to, even if it is a group that one has left behind. In short, integration into a dominant culture may be less critical to the emotional well being of a refugee than has been believed.

Beyond a critique of traditional refugee studies, Papadopoulos takes the view that in emphasizing or focusing on the socio-political tragedies that create refugee experience we may be pathologizing those who have survived these conditions. He calls for a perspective that can conceptually hold all aspects of the experience in order to see what impact the experience may have on an individual. He further emphasizes that out of this consideration we can not only see creativity and growth as outcomes, but it might also allow our interventions to be more creative as well (2002a).

The Refugee Experience With the Passage of Time

Again, as is the case with most writers, even Papadopoulos and his associates seem to be focused on more recent arrivals. What is not addressed in any depth is the experience as it continues over a long period of time. The refugee phenomenon has been

evaluated over a fifty-year period regarding the societal and political experience, however these studies have not focused on the individual's subjective experience over the long term (Beyer, 1981). The Holocaust studies not withstanding, there are few studies exploring 20 or more years after forced exit. Steel, et. al., (2002) and Wallin and Ahlstrom (2005), for example, have looked at some populations over time, but these do not approximate the 20-year mark.

There are only a few exceptions, primarily in the field of Anthropology. Baskauskas (1981) authored a paper on Lithuanian refugees that specifically discussed the impact of grief on the process of assimilation and acculturation. She proposed that grief, both expressed and unexpressed, is a primary factor in the behavior of individual refugees as well as of the collective refugee community. In this case the individuals discussed were over 30 years past their exodus. Boone (1994), also an anthropologist, studied five Cuban-American women who were asked to reflect on their own personal development and change in the 30 years since their departure from Cuba. While the study seemed to have as its primary interest an examination of women and Cuban cultural traits, it mirrors Papadopoulos's ideas about the potential for creativity and transformation. In discussing the reflection of the Cuban women, Boone writes, "One of the most striking qualities of the 'self' that women described was breadth. They said that they had 'expanded their view,' 'reworked their values,' and 'have a broader outlook'" (p. 198).

The Refugee in the World of Literature

Given the presence of the theme of exile from the beginnings of written tradition, there has been much interest in the refugee experience in the world of literature and

literary critique. While there is much written, a good deal of this is related to experiences other than that of political exile and is not relevant to my inquiry. Numerous writers are examined in relation to their experience of exile, but in the main these relate to *periods* of exile rather than permanent exile. Kingsley-Smith (2003), in her examination of Shakespeare's exile, and Sandler's (1989) work on Pushkin are examples of how exile is imprecisely defined in literary discussion.

There are, however, many examples of literary examination of permanent, physical exile. In the field of the classics for example, Giaccherini (2002) presents *Orpheus and Eurydice* as a tale of exile, while Napran (2004) discusses Ovid's writing after his exile to the Black Sea, saying that he is "responsible for the creation of the 'myth of exile' giving it a universal psychological dimension" (p. 2). Both Napran (2004) and Mazzota (1988) focus on Dante and the impact of his exile from Florence, noting how central this experience is to his writing. Mazzota writes:

> Like the prophets, Dante makes of exile a virtue and a necessary perspective from which to speak to the world and from which he can challenge its expectations and assumptions; like the prophets, he also acknowledges that the truth he communicates is, paradoxically, what further alienates him from the world he has already lost. (p. 54)

This view that the refugee condition brings creativity as well as tragedy is mirrored in more contemporary works as well. Said (2000) explores the theme of exile in Conrad's work, while Pichova (2002) examines exile in the lives of both Kundera and Nabokov. Both Said and Pichova express the opinion that it is from exilic tragedy that creativity and art flourishes. Lagos-Pope (1988) discusses contemporary exiled South American writers, and believes it is only through exile that a refugee writer can achieve the "necessary distance to reflect upon the circumstances that lead them into banishment" (p. 122). In like fashion, my belief is that an examination of refugee authors provides a

highly reflective and deeply informative type of narrative of the refugee experience. In addition, just as exile has provided positive as well as tragic outcomes in the lives of authors throughout history, I have found that there are a variety of outcomes and perspectives in the works of the refugee authors studied.

An important distinction between types of exilic literature is posited by Guillen (1976) who suggests two varieties of writing:

> A certain kind of writer speaks of exile, while another learns from it. In the first case, which is common in poetry and often assumes elegiac modes, exile becomes its own subject matter. In the second, which may lead to narratives and essays, exile is the condition but not the visible cause of an imaginative response often characterized by a tendency toward integration, increasingly broad vistas or universalism. (p. 272)

Writings about exile itself then, he views as examples of "literature of exile." The other he refers to as "literature of counter-exile," for these writings "triumph over the separation and thus can offer wide dimensions of meaning that transcend the earlier attachment to place or native origin" (p. 272).

My study is focused on the non-fiction exilic literature, specifically autobiography and memoir. My working assumption was that, when found in personal nonfiction narratives, Guillen's aforementioned "literature of counter-exile" provides insight into the integration of the refugee experience that is the focus of my study.

The literature also contains collections of memoir and personal narratives by refugees, some as literary exercises (Nguyen & Halpern, 1989), and others that attempt to document abuses and promote recovery (Mertus, Tesanovic, Metikos, & Boris, 1997). These are powerful and moving pieces, but most are written within the first 10 years after migration. As is the case with most of the social science research, these do not provide information about the long-term lived experience of the refugee. There is a body of

memoirs by refugees who are many years past the initiation of their forced migration. These contain much insight into the refugee experience as it is lived over time, and also provide a degree of emotional distance and objectivity, much like the works of fiction that were discussed above. Examples from such memoirs make up the data for my research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This research focuses on the subjective experience of refugees through an examination of published memoirs. The purpose of this study is to understand how the refugee experience is integrated into one's life over time and how this shapes one's identity, one's sense of self, and one's view of the world. My intent, specifically, is to explore the perspective of refugees who are well past their initial forced migration, and beyond the initial phases of the experience where more practical concerns are paramount. It is my assumption that it is at this point in a refugee's life, in what Muecke (1992) calls "chronic asylum" (p. 518), that one can reflect in a meaningful way about one's experience and its impact. In this chapter I will focus on the methods and procedures I used in exploring the later-phase refugee experience, and I will review my rationale for the particular forms of data and sample that I have examined.

Design

The approach that I have selected for my research is qualitative, informed by Grounded Theory. Within this approach I have pursued a form known as "narrative inquiry," taking my data from document analysis, particularly the analysis of literary memoir. Given that I am interested in the subjective reflections of refugees, the qualitative method is appropriate for my research because it lends itself to exploring and illuminating personal experiences, allowing the individual's perspective to be explored without the limitations of prearranged categories and criteria. This approach relies on systematic methods in order to find emergent themes, and is particularly useful in the exploration of less-studied phenomenon.

Narrative inquiry has been articulated extensively by Donald Polkinghorne (1995), who defined it as "a subset of qualitative research designs in which stories are used to describe human action" (p. 5). He focuses on the examination of narrative, what he deems "narrative analysis," which is described as "studies whose data consist of actions, events, and happenings, but whose analysis produces stories (e.g. biographies, histories, case studies)" (p. 6). Similarly, Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) described narrative analysis as representing "those who focus on the stories of individuals as story with meaning" (p. 25). Narrative analysis does not merely involve transcription of thoughts and actions, but offers a way of making sense of the behavior and articulating its significance to the individual being studied. This approach aims at understanding the lived experience of the individual as is described by the individual, although the story of the individual becomes narrated by the researcher. Narrative analysis, deriving from hermeneutic approaches in philosophy, is focused upon a concern with interpretation of the meanings implied within narrative and upon developing explanatory narratives (stories) about the source narrative.

Polkinghorne described the process of this type of research in citing the 1983 work of Manicas and Secord.

> It is engaged in understanding the concrete person and his or her life history and particular patterns of behavior, including reflexively applied self-understanding. . . . As a scientific effort it requires also that the inquirer use whatever special knowledge is available regarding implicated psychological structures and mechanism as these operated in the individual biography. And since the person is born and matures in a social world, this understanding inevitably also includes references to what is known about social structures pertinent to that biography. Finally, in contrast to our prescientific mode of understanding, hermeneutic inquiry as a science would be constrained by the systematic, public demands of establishing the evidential credibility of its accounts. (as cited in Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 20)

Narrative analysis is related to the Grounded Theory approach, a systematic method of exploring data proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Strauss and Corbin write:

> A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. (p. 23)

It is a Grounded Theory approach that provided the analytic strategy for my data analysis, and this will be described in a subsequent section entitled *Procedure for Data Analysis.*

Document Analysis

For this research my data came from documents in the form of memoir. Patton (2002) lists forms of documents that are used for research purposes:

> Written materials and other documents from organizational, clinical, or program records, memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries, letters, artistic works, photographs, and memorabilia; and written responses to open-ended surveys. Data consists of excerpts from documents captured in a way that records and preserves context. (p. 4)

The process of analyzing documents is not seen as distinct from the approach to other types of data such as interviews. As Hodder (2000) notes "meaning does not reside in a text, but in the writing and reading of it" (p. 704).

Memoir

The form of document that I used in my study is memoir, which Winslow (1980) describes as

> A record of events, not purporting to be a complete history, but treating of such matters as come within the personal knowledge or within the memory of the writer, or are obtained from particular sources of information. (p. 26)

Memoir is related to autobiography; however, in memoir the writer is a reflexive observer rather than a mere chronicler. As Nash (2004) elaborates, "I think of autobiographies as more chronological and linear in structure and format, more historical and episodic in focus, than essays and memoirs" (p. 29).

My assumption in utilizing memoirs of refugee writers was that they provided a rich source of reflection on the refugee experience as it impacts individuals over the course of time. This is endemic to the form itself, as Bikerts (2005) notes:

> The sine qua non of memoir: the past deepening and giving authority to the present, and the present (by virtue of being invoked) creating the necessary depth of field to see the past. (p. 22)

Through the use of this form of document, i.e., memoir, which is in itself a narrative, I found that much was revealed about this lived experience of the refugee, particularly with respect to the impact of the experience.

Sample

Data for this study came from a small number of memoirs by refugee authors who are professional writers. Guidelines for the type of sample and my sample criteria are described below.

Nature of the Sample

In the main, qualitative research encourages smaller samples that allow for focused and deep examination of the subjects of study. Patton (2002) describes these as "information rich cases," or cases "from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful* sampling" (p. 46). The size of a sample in qualitative research is not bound by a statistical formula, but

rather by whether sufficient information can be gathered to draw meaningful conclusions. Merriam (2002) states, "it is important to select a sample from which most can be learned" (p. 12), and Patton believes "there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p. 244). Patton cites Lincoln and Guba who

> recommend sample selection "to the point of redundancy....In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion. (p. 246)

In a similar vein, a Grounded Theory approach would aim for achieving a level of saturation, a point at which no new data appears to be emerging. Given the fact that the process is an iterative one, i.e., not static, the final sample does not emerge until the analysis is well underway. Strauss and Corbin (1990) posit this as "one of the most basic and fundamental canons of the grounded theory method; sampling on the basis of the evolving theoretical relevance of concepts" (pp. 178-179). Polkinghorne (2005) reminds us: "The use of multiple participants serves to deepen the understanding of the investigated experience; it is not for the purpose of making claims about the distribution of the experience in a population" (para. 29).

With these guidelines I gathered a sample of five memoirs, four of which were written in English and one was an English translation from the original Spanish. These memoirs provided sufficient data for an acceptable level of saturation and redundancy as is required for a qualitative study. The sample included three men and two women. While all the memoirs were available in English, the authors did not come from primarily English speaking countries: two are Asian, one is South American, and the remaining two are European, one of whom had spent a considerable number of years

living in Asia. Given this level of gender and ethnic diversity, I believe my sample contains an acceptable level of variation within the particular parameters that I will describe below.

Criteria for Selection

My interest in the narratives of refugees has led me to use formal narratives as my data, specifically, selections from memoirs written by refugee authors. As a way of enriching the data to its fullest, I concentrated on memoirs written by lettered authors, that is, authors for whom writing is a specific part of their lives and identity. My assumption was that professional writers are more inclined to be highly reflective in their work, as well as less encumbered by a lack of ability in the craft of writing that might limit less seasoned writers. It also allowed me to circumvent the limitations that many foreign refugees experience with respect to a spoken command of a second language. Writers are able to craft their comments to their own satisfaction, and therefore can provide a level of articulation that might be lost if they were to rely on the spoken word.

Given my interest in refugees who are in a later phase of resettlement, I elected to focus on refugee writers who have been out of their country of origin for at least 15-20 years. I believe this allows for a period of temporal distance from the initial expulsion so as to provide time for reflection. As Jill Ker Conway, in a commentary on memoir, wrote

> I think you have to be at least twenty years away from what you write about to have the necessary detachment. Many memoirs or autobiographies get very cluttered in their later chapters because people don't know what was really involved. It takes more time to know what the shape of your life has been like. (1998, p. 59)

Given my own limitations in language ability, I selected only those writers whose work appears in English, either in its original form or as a translation. I am mindful

however, of Polkinghorne's (2005) admonishment that researchers need consider varying degrees of language ability in their analysis. He said that investigators

> should be attentive to the possibility that the meaning of expressions given by participants whose first language differs from that of the researchers need to be clarified. Researchers are required to understand that translations of gathered data from one language to another may distort meaning. (para. 19)

Data Collection And Analysis

The data for my study was found in a gathering of pieces of memoir by refugee writers who met the aforementioned criteria, i.e., time since forced migration and language, with an attempt to provide variation as to gender, nationality of origin, and age. Sources were sections of books or journal pieces, approximately 10-20 pages in length. The length of the memoir pieces was critical given that they were analyzed in depth and compared for variations and similarities. My belief is that they were comparable in length to transcribed interviews found in other qualitative studies. In the case of established authors, some information about the person was public knowledge or available from other sources; when appropriate such sources were drawn upon and cited. However, my intent, as far as the analysis was concerned, was to confine myself to the specific sample of data, the memoir.

Guide for Reviewing the Data: Dollard's Criteria

In keeping with the nature of qualitative research wherein themes are allowed to emerge, it is not appropriate to have forced categories with which to evaluate the material. However, it is useful to have some guides to help in a meaningful narrative analysis, and to that end I adopted a form of Dollard's (1935) seven criteria for judging a

life history as suggested by Polkinghorne (1995). These criteria, enumerated below, provided a template as I began to review my data.

1. The Cultural Context of the Material: The embedded contextual values and meanings in a writer's work are important to consider in order to assure optimal understanding of his unique experience. This could be especially critical in refugee literature which is always cross-cultural and often impacted by differences in language of origin.
2. The Embodied Nature of the Author: In developing an understanding of the subject as an individual, it is also helpful to be able to understand how their literal humanness e.g., age, gender, height, etc., plays a part in the outcome of their life. "Who one is" is a compilation of many factors, and one's inherent physical nature, aspects of which are not generally within one's control, are factors in the story and outcome of one's life.
3. The Relationship of the Author to Other Individuals: Given our nature as social beings, the presence or absence of significant others is an important factor in the way one lives, who one is, and the choices one makes. In addition to one's culture and physical makeup, the impact of others is an important element in our actions and in our development as individuals; knowledge of these facts deepens our understanding of a subject.
4. The Choices and Actions of the Author: Beyond the aforementioned categories over which we have little control, there are elements of one's life that involve volitional choice. This choice is determined by numerous factors,

but one's life choices are an intriguing aspect of who one is, and most certainly an interesting part of one's life story.

5. The Historical Context of the Author: The impact of events in the world, how they affect an individual and those around him are also an important element in one's identity. Given the political nature of the refugee experience, this is an element that is always a factor; yet is unique to the individual as well.
6. The Generation of a Story from the Author's Narrative: In a narrative analysis it is necessary to have an adequate amount of information so as to create a story that has a plot, characters, outcome, and a definable arc. Understanding a person's life and the many elements that have impacted it is essential to an adequate narrative.
7. The Adequacy of Information about the Subject: This final category rests in the ability of the researcher to find and create a meaningful story about the author so as to adequately demonstrate the motivation, responses to life, and outcomes of that individual. It is incumbent on the researcher to create this narrative, dependent, of course, on an adequate narrative by the author.

Procedure for Data Analysis

My analysis of the selected memoirs was guided by a combination of qualitative approaches, specifically, a constant comparative method as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and a narrative analysis as described by Polkinghorne (1995). This began with numerous re-readings of the memoirs that were initially selected, while keeping notes of my impressions, questions, and comparisons among the texts. This is the beginning of a coding process. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) note:

> Two analytic procedures are basic to the coding process, though their nature changes with each type of coding. The first pertains to the *making of comparisons* and the other to the *asking of questions* . . . the constant comparative method of analysis. (p. 62)

As this process of questioning and comparing continued with more material, other themes and questions emerged, creating thematic categories and eliciting new and further questions. As themes were illuminated for each memoir, I framed the individual memoirs into a form of narrative using my aforementioned *guide for reviewing the data* as a frame. From these individual narratives I cross-analyzed data to look for similarities and differences; that is, to compare and contrast themes. As this proceeded, a new narrative reflecting aspects of the collective group of memoirs emerged, illuminating the themes related to the experience of being a refugee over time. My analytic process combined the "constant comparative method of analysis" procedures of Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 62) with a "narrative analysis" as described by Polkinghorne (1995, p. 6). I applied coding techniques from the former to go through the data and used the reassembling process described by the latter to create a two-pronged analysis: first as series of case studies specific for each individual author/memoir and second as a cross comparison aimed at looking at the common and variant features of the experience I studied.

The actual procedure in my analysis involved numerous readings of the material in order to familiarize myself not only with the facts of the memoir, but also with the narrative voice and style of each author. During this process I kept notes of my impressions and thoughts, both as data, and as a guide for subsequent readings of the same and other additional memoirs. This also led to altering my selection of further memoirs as certain concerns or curiosities emerge. In keeping with a Grounded Theory

approach I used a coding process where data was broken down, categorized, and examined in detail for the concepts it might present, or for the intrinsic differences or similarities that it might illuminate. Strauss and Corbin (1990) proposed three types of coding: open, axial, and selective, and these are used concurrently rather than in any particular order. In my reading I went back and forth between these types of coding, as new questions and concepts arose out of the coding process and required different analysis.

While this process is non-linear and dynamic, it usually does begin with open, then axial, then selective coding. Following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) suggestions, I began with a line-by-line reading of the memoirs: the first round of open coding. In this process, "the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomenon as reflected in the data" (p. 62). As this proceeded, I also engaged in the parallel process of axial coding, which resembles open coding but is focused on making connections *between* categories. These categories were then refined and developed until I arrived at a set of core categories. These procedures involved returning to the memoirs for reexamination until I was satisfied that my final categories represented my interpretive reading of the data.

In keeping with a narrative analysis, this process was first repeated for each author's memoir. The data was then put into a narrative form, a procedure wherein one organizes data into a developmental account or narrative. For this, the data for each subject memoir was synthesized into a whole, rather than dissected into parts. Thus, following the coding procedures listed above, I linked the various themes and categories

into a storied form to describe the experience of each memoir author. Certain elements that do not contradict the other data or that were not significant to the narrative were left out, in a process Polkinghorne (1995) calls "narrative smoothing" (p. 16). In this way the final story or narrative for each author brought some meaning and order to the data which was otherwise not evident. The use of my aforementioned *guide* was also a way of helping to create a narrative, given that the criteria represented some elements that a narrative should contain. I sought a storied outcome of narrative inquiry, and I served as the narrator offering the story in my own voice. After such a narrative analysis was completed for each memoir author, I addressed a comparison across the cases, using a similar coding process, from which a new narrative was formulated, that told a story that incorporated all of the memoirs. This entire process is described by Pak (2005) as "the within-case analysis then a cross-case analysis" (p. 96). It is only after these multi-layered analyses that one can arrive at some generalizations and explanatory hypotheses.

Presentation of the Data

The data is presented in two chapters. In Chapter 4, I describe the results of the analytic processes, that is, the categories and subcategories of themes that emerged from the analyzed memoirs in the form of a narrative for each individual author. I also give a brief biographical description for each. As the biographical material was gathered from previously published documents there was no need to disguise the authors, as might be the case in an interview-based study.

In Chapter 5, I present the implications of my findings, addressing the significance as well as limitations of the data, and how this relates to my research

question as well as to the social science literature. I have also made some suggestions for future research.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are the standard assessment measures in traditional quantitative research. Reliability is seen as relating to the relationship between something being measured and the instrument being used to measure it, so that its results could be seen as dependable. In other words, the question "Can the results be reproduced by other researchers?" is also an aspect of scientific reliability. Validity relates to the quality of being credible, of showing that one's findings can be supported by the data, and that there is evidence of sufficient rigor in the method. These concepts are important aspects of quantitative research, and yet they do not hold the same position in the evaluation of qualitative research.

According to Patton (1990), "The validity and reliability of qualitative data depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher" (p. 11). Polkinghorne (1988) states: "Reliability in narrative study usually refers to the dependability of the data, and validity to the strength of the analysis of the data" (p. 176).

Beyond the traditional evaluation concerns, Strauss and Corbin (1990) emphasize meeting criteria for doing "good" science: significance, theory-observation compatibility, generalizability, reproductibility, precision, rigor, and verification . . . and creativity" (p. 31). Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) has posited a criterion of fidelity, a concept that acknowledges subjectivity, while at the same time supporting the idea of a standard for integrity and mutually agreed upon "believability" (p. 25).

Integrity is a matter of utmost concern in qualitative research, and in many ways sets up even more stringent criteria than is traditionally found in quantitative research. I believe that the qualitative method provides the proper assurances through its systematic approach to warrant confidence in my findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

My analysis of the memoirs selected for this examination of the refugee experience over the passage of time began with a search for lettered writers, that is, writers of note for whom writing is a significant professional activity and a major part of their identity and who fall within the specific criteria established in Chapter 3. To restate these criteria, I have limited my selected authors to those who have been out of their country of origin for at least 15-20 years. In addition, the pieces of memoir were all written *after* the authors had been out of the country for the requisite 15-20 years. The five memoirs I have chosen have also adequately met the seven criteria for judging a life history as described by Dollard (1935) and presented in Chapter 3. While some or all of these parameters prevented me from using some extraordinary memoirs by refugees, I believe that I have collected a number of meaningful and information-rich pieces to serve as my data. The annotations for my data will include page and line numbers and, when appropriate, the left (a) or right (b) column on the page of the memoir to more specifically locate the source data within the text. To allow the narrative to flow more easily, I have not included the date of the text in these annotations because my analysis draws on only one work from each of the authors in my study. These works are listed with their publication dates immediately below and are easily located in the reference citations.

My narrative analysis of the memoirs will begin with Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands* (1992) and proceed in the following order: Ruth Jhabvala's "Disinheritance" (1979), Andrew Lam's "Child of Two Worlds" (2005), chapter thirteen from Vladimir Nabokov's memoir, *Speak, Memory* (1966) and a selection from Isabel

Allende's memoir, *Paula* (1996). Each narrative will begin with a brief description of the writer with respect to their country of origin, their exile status, professional accomplishments, and relevant life events. In keeping with the method of narrative analysis, each narrative is organized by unique themes that emerged from my study of the memoir in question.

Salman Rushdie: *Imaginary Homelands*

Salman Rushdie is a British Indian novelist who has authored numerous novels and essays in his writing career. He has also garnered many literary awards including the Booker Prize in 1981, the James Tait Prize in 1993, and the Best of the Booker Award in 2008 (Fenwick, 2005).

Rushdie was born in 1947, just two months before India gained its independence from Great Britain. He was the only boy in a family of four children, and his parents were highly educated, liberal orthodox Muslims. He was educated in the British school system in Bombay (Mumbai), until he was sent to England at age 14 to attend the prestigious Rugby School. While he was there, his family was forced to leave India for Pakistan, due to the ongoing fierce ethnic and religious tensions evolving as a consequence of the partition of the country into two states. After graduating from Cambridge, he lived for a time in Pakistan before settling in England where he began his writing career. Rushdie's strong attachment to India is evidenced in his writing, his political interest in South Asia, as well as in his support of and identification with contemporary Indian writers. It is a major aspect of his work as an author and social commentator (Ghosh-Schellhorn, 2003).

His memoir, *Imaginary Homelands,* was first published in 1982. The essay was a contribution to a seminar on Indian writing held in England that year. It was re-published

in 1992 in a collection of essays, also entitled *Imaginary Homelands*. This was during the period in which he was living under the threat of a religious *Fatwa* calling for his death due to objections to his novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988). The title of this essay reveals his focus on the role of memory in his experience of the loss thrust upon him by exile, and how, for him, imagination has both embodied and allowed him to transcend that experience of loss. The analysis of this memoir will be organized within the following themes: *Home and Homeland: "shards of memory," Embracing Memory: "the past is home," A Dual Identity: An Expanded Perspective, Tasks for the Exiled: A Sense of Duty, Acknowledging Guilt, Maintaining Optimism, Cultural Transplantation: Identifying with a Culture of Exiles.*

Home and Homeland: "shards of memory"

Rushdie acknowledges two homes: India ["my India" (p. 10, line 27)] and England, his second home, to which he became attached at a young age. Both homes are evoked through childhood and youthful memory. Rushdie's fidelity to India and to his literal family home in Bombay is apparent from the very outset of this essay. He begins by describing the photograph that hangs in his office—a photograph of his childhood home that his family had to abandon long ago. In reflecting on this photograph, he muses that his home is a "lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time" (p. 9, lines 11-12). It is from this position that he begins his proposition that home, certainly the *home* that is being remembered and longed for, is shaped by and arises out of memory—in fact not full memory but, as he puts it, "shards of memory" (p. 12, line 3). He proposes that memory is never complete, that the memories of authors like him, who write from outside the homes they have left, never create a complete picture. The homeland that Rushdie

describes is not geographically based but instead is contained in small memories such as the clothing people wore, signs along the roadside, or old songs from particular films. It is as if his country were made up either from his imagination or his memory, and yet, in either case this country is real. As he states, "My India was just that: 'my' India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions" (p. 10, lines 26-28).

Also significant is that Rushdie, despite being born in India, has an intense attachment to England, his other home. This attachment is also made up of images and memories from many sources, even from old radio programs he listened to as a boy in India. His arrival in England at the young age of 14 may be an important factor here. It was "a dream-England" (p. 18, line 18), an England to which he was eager to go, even when he had a country of his own.

Embracing Memory: "the past is home"

The impact of losing his ancestral home, albeit a home contained in memory, seems a significant factor in the intensity of his memories of and his attachment to India. As Rushdie says, "It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt" (p. 10, lines 8-11). What follows though, is an acknowledgment that the experience of exile, or as Rushdie puts it "physical alienation" (p. 10, line 18), does not allow one to reclaim with precision what is lost, forcing the exile to "create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (p. 10, lines 14-16). Rushdie seems to be saying that this mourning of an idealized *paradise lost* creates even deeper attachments—

attachments to lost potential, to experiences that were denied—and the loss, therefore, is felt to be even greater.

Rushdie spends a great deal of time discussing memory, arguing that a fragment of memory "may actually be as valuable as the one which is supposedly unflawed" (p. 11, lines 4-5). He recreates images of tremendous accuracy from his time in India. He recounts successfully spending months trying to conjure up memories from the 1950s and 1960s in his effort to write his prize winning *Midnight's Children* (1981). However, he argues that it is not that he has an extraordinary ability for recall, but as these are fragmentary memories, they take on greater meaning. He compares them to fragments of archeological significance, and says, "fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols and the mundane acquired numinous qualities" (p. 12, lines 4-6). I, however, wonder if what is being alluded to is a wish to reclaim as much as possible of that which is lost. As with someone who has been robbed, the value of what was not taken, that which one still retains, is often greater after a tragic loss.

Rushdie also argues that while all of us have experienced loss, because "the past is a country from which we have all emigrated" (p. 12, lines 11-12), those who are exiled experience this in a uniquely intense form. He contends that, for the dislocated, the loss is more intense, that it is "made more concrete for him by the physical fact of discontinuity, of his present being in a different place from his past, of his being 'elsewhere'" (p. 12, lines 16-18). As he wrote, again in reference to the photograph of his cherished Bombay home, "it reminds me that it's my present that is foreign, and that the past is home" (p. 9, lines 10-11).

A Dual Identity: An Expanded Perspective

Despite his focus on what has been lost, Rushdie makes a case that this experience gives an exile the capacity to speak of issues that have universal significance. He also contends that there is wisdom gained in the experience of loss: the confidence that one can manage without the support of absolutes. As he states, "Those of us who have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truths, all certainties, have perhaps had modernism forced upon us" (p. 12, lines 36-38). He suggests that the very distance from one's lost home allows for an expanded perspective of that home. He raises the questions: "Can they do no more than describe, from a distance, the world that they have left? Or does the distance open any other doors?" (p. 13, lines 30-31). In answer he posits that a benefit can come from both geographical and temporal distance.

For Rushdie paradoxes and dual-edged themes lead to the development of a dual identity: "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools" (p. 15, lines 31-34). He sees this as an advantage for a writer, but one could argue that it benefits anyone who is dislocated. He writes: "If literature is in part the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality, then once again our distance, our long geographical perspective may provide us with such angles" (p. 15, lines 35-38). Still later he reiterates his position that the dislocated writer is "capable of writing from a kind of double perspective: because they, we, are at one and the same time insiders and outsiders in this society. This stereoscopic vision is perhaps what we can offer in place of 'whole sight'" (p. 19, lines 16-20).

Tasks for the Exiled: A Sense of Duty

Rushdie presents a case for writing as a political or subversive act, or as he puts it, "redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it" (p. 14, lines 1-2). What this suggests is the opportunity for a refugee, living at a distance, to impact change in his former land by keeping memory alive or even presenting a competing perspective to the official version. What is also alluded to is the impact of finding oneself the subject of political injustice, again, of being cast out. Rushdie seems to present this political arena as if it were quite natural to the dislocated writer. I wonder if it is linked to a desire to make one's self whole, to strive for some atonement as a part of a process of recovery; or perhaps simply, out of this experience there develops an intense identification with others who have suffered, thereby producing a desire to help.

Rushdie, however, does not focus on reclaiming the past, but rather addresses the need for Indian ex-patriots to claim what they are due in the present. He writes, "We are here. And we are not willing to be excluded from any part of our heritage" (p. 15, lines 16-18). Rushdie does not make the connection that loss in the past might make one vigilant about the present, but the thirst for justice is present in his message. Again, the past is an asset, a perspective gained, as well as a wound.

Acknowledging Guilt

With this reference to the validity of the perspective of those who live outside of their homeland, Rushdie acknowledges yet another aspect to the experience, and indeed, specifically refers to himself. He speaks of a sense of guilt in leaving one's home country, and believes this guilt impacts one's perspective because of the "guilt-tinted

spectacles" (p. 15, line 24) through which the original homeland is seen. He critically questions his right to speak out at all with respect to events in his lost homeland:

> But is this a proper function of those of us who write from outside India? Or are we just dilettantes in such affairs, because we are not involved in their day-to-day unfolding, because by speaking out we take no risks, because our personal safety is not threatened? What right do we have to speak at all? (p. 14, lines 27-32)

Rushdie further states, "I suspect that there are times when the move seems wrong to us all, when we seem to ourselves post-lapsarian men and women" (p. 15, lines 26-30). He uses the term related to the archetypal exiles of Judaism and Christianity, Adam and Eve, as if to describe the expatriate as *ipso facto* shameful and perennially desirous of the lost home. The two competing themes of righteousness and shame appear linked in Rushdie's view.

Maintaining Optimism

Rushdie offers a sense of optimism regarding the changes into which loss plunges the exile. He focuses on the transformation of language as an important function of the exiled writer. In his essay Rushdie refers to his own body of writing, specifically *Midnight's Children* (1981), and argues against comments that his work has a despairing tone, contending to the contrary that his story is optimistic: "But the story is told in a manner designed to echo, as closely as my abilities allowed, the Indian talent for non-stop regeneration" (p. 16, lines 26-29). That the experience of leaving and loss provides opportunities for transformation is further developed as Rushdie speaks of the use of English among Indian writers. He argues that the language is being remade to suit the purposes of Indian writers, further suggesting that this relationship to the language may be yet another way of gaining freedom, a political act that rights a societal wrong: He says, "To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free" (p.

17, lines 23-24). To that end, he argues that despite some linguistic losses, when one uses another language, something can also be gained: "It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained" (p. 17, lines 32-34).

Cultural Transplantation: Identifying With a Culture of Exiles

While Rushdie's remarks are addressed to expatriates of all sorts, both exiles and immigrants, they are clearly comments that come from his own experience as a refugee. As he considers the relationship carried by a dislocated individual—between old culture and new culture—he asks, " How are we to live in the world?" (p. 18, lines 7-8). He speaks of the struggle between maintaining one's culture while living in another, warning against what he called "the adoption of a ghetto mentality" (p. 19, line 25). He also wonders "How can culture be preserved without becoming ossified?" (p. 17, lines 37-38), and while he does not provide ready answers, he declares, "these are some of the issues with which each of us will have to come to terms" (p. 18, lines 10-11).

Perhaps to the unanswerable question regarding how to relate best to the new culture, Rushdie suggests as an answer the historical link with those others who have experienced displacement. Beyond the specifics of being South Asian, Rushdie sees a great cultural tradition and link to others who have undergone similar experiences. He suggests that there is "the culture and political history of the phenomenon of migration, displacement, life in a minority group" (p. 20, lines 21-22). He identifies with other exiles, for example "the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews . . . the history of immigrant Britain" (p. 20, lines 23-25). As a writer he also admires American immigrant authors who "created great literature out of the phenomenon of cultural transplantation, out of

examining the ways in which people cope with a new world" (p. 20, lines 27-29). Through this solidarity and identification with others in similar circumstances, one can perhaps find an identity and sense of grounding, despite the experience of uprooting. Again, out of loss Rushdie finds transformation and possibility.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala: "Disinheritance"

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is a German-born writer who has authored many novels, short stories, and screenplays during her career. She was awarded the Booker Prize in 1975 for her novel *Heat and Darkness*, and has also received two Academy Awards for Best Screenplay: the first, in 1986, for the movie *A Room With a Vi*ew, and the second, for *Howard's End*, in 1992.

Jhabvala was born in Cologne in 1927, the younger of two children. Her Jewish family was well-regarded and well-assimilated, and her maternal grandfather was the cantor for the largest synagogue in the city. She fled from Germany with her parents and brother in 1939 and settled in London, where she was schooled and eventually received her master's degree from Queen Mary College in 1951. In that same year she married Cyrus Jhabvala, an Indian architect, and moved to India, where she lived until moving to the United States in 1975 (Crane, 2001).

Her essay "Disinheritance" was published in *Blackwood's* in 1979. It was initially presented as an address upon her winning an award given by the Scottish Arts Council, The Neil Gunn International Fellowship, in 1978. For Jhabvala, as her title suggests, the experience of disinheritance overarches the description of her exile. Jhabvala describes the disinheritance that she has experienced through a great deal of her life. For example she begins by contrasting herself to Neil Gunn, the Scottish nationalist saying, "For he

had everything, as a man and writer, that I have lost. He had a heritage—an inheritance, whereas I have only disinheritance" (p. 4, lines 28a-31a). My analysis of this memoir is organized within the following themes: *Losing Memory and Identity, The Cuckoo: Blending In, Remembering and Becoming and Reconnecting, "Becoming Myself Again," Homesickness and Homecoming, Writing, a Grounding Principle, and A Developmental Path.*

Losing Memory and Identity

Perhaps feeling that memory is more precious than traditions and a national identity, Jhabvala describes loss of memory, "both childhood and ancestral" (p. 4, lines 4b-5b), and a deeply felt lack of a personal identity. She writes:

> I feel disinherited even of my own childhood memories, so that I stand before you as a writer without any ground of being out of which to write: really blown about from country to country, culture to culture till I feel—til I am—nothing. (p. 4, lines 9b-15b)

The period from ages six to twelve, the years just prior to her flight to England, were not thought about nor talked about. She admits, "To tell you the truth, I've never even mentioned them. Never spoken about them to anyone. . . . I suppose they are the beginning of my disinheritance" (p 6, lines 13b-28b).

The Cuckoo: Blending In

Jhabvala's disinheritance in her early years is presented with limited complaint; her account of her initial adjustment to the move to England gives the impression that it was done without regret or grief. She describes a near seamless adaptation to her new country and language saying, "I took to England, and English, immediately" (p. 6, lines 31b-33b). The world of English literature became her new foundation, and as she

gratefully put it, "Not really having a world of my own, I made up for my disinheritance by absorbing the world of others" (p. 7, lines 24b-27b). She describes her adaptation as having a "cuckoo or chameleon quality" (p. 5, lines 15a-16a), and, "It's as if I had no senses of my own—besides no country of my own—but only theirs" (pp. 7-8, lines 41b-1a). It was this ability to absorb, to blend in, and perhaps to usurp a culture and identity that allowed Jhabvala to adjust to England as well as to live in India. It also appears that her initial strategy for adjusting to new environments did not include much consideration of the losses that preceded her relocation.

Remembering and Becoming and Reconnecting

Her essay, however, also describes a developmental path, and while she approached her time in India in the same fashion as her time in England, there were differences. Her initial posture in India was open and full of awe, and at this point she was also fortified by her newfound English identity. The sensuousness of India, its abundant nature and expansiveness, were all, as she put it, "stunning, overwhelming, beyond words" (p. 8, lines 5b-6b). In contrast to her previous lack of memory about her childhood, she speculated that her affection for India was, in part, "in reaction to the bleakness and deprivations of my own childhood—Nazi Germany and then wartime blitzed London" (p. 8, lines 14b-17b). She also wondered if India re-connected her to an Oriental aspect of herself that related to her being Jewish, or as she put it "to buried ancestral memory" (p. 8, line 24b). In her initial years in India she experienced a period of reawakening of memory and identity recovery—not a nationalistic identity, but a personal identity. She was living and writing as if she weren't European at all: "I was pretending to be writing as an insider, as if I didn't know anything else" (p. 9, lines 16b-

18b). Thus by taking on an insider's identity she created a space for the development of her identity—a space that allowed for the incorporation of her past into her present. This is the "cuckoo quality" (p. 7, lines 35a-36a) that she has alluded to—a nest is taken over by an outsider to allow for the birth of a new life. Yet, like the hatchling that is unaware that he is usurping another's nest, Jhabvala, as noted above "didn't know anything else" (p. 9, line 18b). What is also striking about her adoption of this new homeland was the uncritical acceptance it involved. India was idealized in such as fashion as to deny any flaws:

> At the time I loved everything there: yes—to my shame I have to say—even the beggars, the poverty, they didn't bother me then; they seemed right somehow, a part of life that had been taken out of the West. . . . It was life as one read about it in the Bible; whole, I thought; pure I thought. (pp. 8-9, lines 36b-6a)

The love of her new land was much like adolescent love—a love that becomes all-enveloping and fiercely loyal, and which leads to a loss of identity and a period of immersion into the identity of another person, or as she wrote: "total abandonment and identification" (p. 14, lines 38a-39a).

"Becoming Myself Again"

After her first ten years in India, "ten years of delight and immersion and more (much more) than acceptance" (p. 9, lines 37a-39a), Jhabvala began to gain, or perhaps regain, a sense of identity that had been previously missing during those early years in India. The identity that she was referring to was a distinctly European sense of self, or as she states, "I won't call it disillusionment. I don't think it was that; it was more the process of becoming myself again. Becoming European again" (p. 9, lines 41a-1b). She began to write about India from a European view and began to see things "as perhaps I should have seen them from the beginning" (p. 9, lines 8b-9b). Gone was the uncritical

infatuation of her first years in India. Where she previously saw beauty, she now saw poverty and injustice. Where previously she saw spirituality she now saw a loss of self-identity. What occurred her last twelve years in India was, in her words:

> a perpetual struggle with India: not to love it too much nor to hate it too much . . . to keep my own personality and not become immersed, drowned in India; to remain European—and yet at the same time to remain open to India and not close up and wither away. (p. 11, lines 6a-16a)

In contrast to her earlier strategy of blending in, or taking on the identity of her host country, it was as if she now needed to reclaim an aspect of herself that was from somewhere else—she could no longer fill her emptiness with the surrounding culture. The adopted nest was no longer sufficient to help the cuckoo to thrive.

Homesickness and Homecoming

For Jhabvala the aforementioned struggle proved too difficult, and she experienced "a terrible hunger of homesickness that I cannot describe it was so consuming. Not for a specific home; I didn't have one . . . but for Europe" (p. 11, 20a-24a). The Europe that she hungered for was one that reflected her image of her self—physically, culturally and linguistically. Her solution was to leave India for New York City. She tells us that in New York she experienced a "homecoming": "I felt a sense of homecoming. It is the most European city I can think of, with every kind of pocket of Europe inside it" (p. 12, lines 41a-2b). It was in New York that she met people who had long been lost to her, or as she wrote:

> And literally I met the people who should have remained in my life—people I went to school with in Cologne, with exactly the same background as my own, same heritage, same parentage. (p. 12, lines 8b-13b)

Even the countryside had an appeal, which she associated with her childhood memories. Though she did not experience a literal familiarity with the landscape she felt

a strong attachment to it. As she stated: "There is all the simplicity of a childhood landscape that perhaps I never even knew, but only dreamed or read about in German fairy tales" (p. 13, lines 29a-34a). Perhaps like her allusion to "buried ancestral memory" (p. 8, line 24b), what had appeared lost or disinherited had been merely *buried* and was now recovered.

Despite her sense that New York held the old European world she now sought, she acknowledged there were also comparisons to India that made it resonate with her. She cites the similar size and scope of the United States and India and parallels in human suffering that one finds in both New York and large Indian cities, and she experienced "something bizarre about New York that appeals to me as strongly as did the bizarre in India" (p. 13, lines 5b-7b). These more recent experiences and how they stirred her were also part of her finding a home, and in fact, they needed to be reclaimed as part of her *inheritance* as well. The appeal of New York was not that it was perfect, but that it included so many aspects of life that she found compelling and fascinating—even negative aspects. Of New York she wrote, "You need the violent stimulation that only a big course country with terrible things happening in it can give you" (p. 14, lines 17a-20a). Jhabvala seems to be saying that she no longer needed to live in an idealized country, and that New York represented an opportunity to experience life in a more complex and authentic way—perhaps more in keeping with her own complexity.

Writing, a Grounding Principle

Despite the various geographical homes that Jhabvala finds in her life, the one constant that she refers to is her writing. From childhood she saw herself as a writer, or as she described, "I was writing furiously all through my childhood. It doesn't seem worth

mentioning—one is just born that way: destined. One doesn't' choose to become a writer" (p. 6, lines 34b-39b). Her transition to English, for example, was only a change of language, not a change in the way that she saw herself in relation to her role as a writer—her "destiny" (p. 7, line 4a). While it was the loss of home and childhood memories, "my ground of being" (p. 7, line 21a), that she saw as her disinheritance, Jhabvala never lost her ability to write, and it permitted her a way of relating to each new environment in which she found herself.

Her sense of destiny not withstanding, Jhabvala is at times critical of how she positions herself in her writing. She recalled, "I was pretending to be writing as an insider, as if I don't know anything else" (p. 9, lines 16a-19a), or writing as if "it wasn't the sort of person I really was myself" (p. 11, lines 6b-8b). She summarized her writing in India by saying, "So I exited from India on a double lie—one that took me twenty-four years to manufacture" (p. 11, lines 24b-26b). But nonetheless Jhabvala continued to write, and in the end her identity as a person and her identity as a writer became more integrated. As she put it, she left India "to find a new nest or world both as a person and a writer (it is no longer possible for me really to disentangle the two ["the two"—referring to her having a sense of self as well as an identity as a writer])" (p. 12, lines 8a-11a). It appears then that her identity as a writer gave her the constancy that allowed her to move from country to country, without the inheritance of culture and country. Her *ground of being* may have been provided by her role and sense of destiny as writer, irrespective of her location.

A Developmental Path

Jhabvala's essay, perhaps more than the others in my study, traces a rather linear path from childhood to adulthood, but more than that, she presents her refugee life as a developmental process. She underscores her strategy for adaptation (the cuckoo quality), and her distanced writer's eye, but she also presents her life as an unfolding of a perspective over the years. Her story acknowledges how she acquired certain attitudes and ideas, what identities she borrowed over time, but more importantly she alludes to the possibility of ongoing growth in her life and worldview. In her belief, life goes in twenty year stretches, and she asserts that one has to give one's self the opportunity to have these periods of time to develop and grow. As she concludes her essay, she writes: "one has to go on—learning, being—throughout however many twenty-year stretches in however many different countries or places—actual physical ones or countries of the mind—to which one may be called" (p. 14, lines 36b-42b). Perhaps this also allows her to live with a minimum of lamentation: she embraces her life and continues to draw wisdom and optimism from it.

Andrew Lam: "Child of Two Worlds"

Andrew Lam is a Vietnamese-born American writer who works as a journalist, editor, and radio commentator. He has received several academic fellowships, including the Rockefeller Fellowship at UCLA in 1992, and the John S. Knight Fellowship at Stanford University in 2001. In addition, he has received numerous awards for journalism such as The World Affairs Council's Excellence in International Journalism Award in 1992 and the Asian American Journalists Association National Award in 1993 and 1995. In 2006 he received the Pen American "Beyond the Margins" Award for his book

Perfume Dreams (2005), from which I have selected the chapter, "Child of Two Worlds" (National Public Radio, 2009).

Lam was born in Vietnam in 1964, the son of a general in the army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). He left Vietnam with his family after the fall of Saigon in April of 1975, and they eventually settled in Northern California. He graduated with a degree in Biochemistry from the University of California at Berkeley, and also received a Master's in Fine Arts from California State University, San Francisco. He continues to live in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The titles of his 2005 memoir, *Perfume Dreams,* and of the chapter used in this analysis, "Child of Two Worlds," combine to represent an overarching theme of how memory and family hold him in the world of his origins while at the same time he moves actively into the world of his family's exile. As his adaptation to his new world leads to conflict with the old, he experiences guilt, which he expresses with irony. Both worlds continue to hold him and he seems to have garnered a richness and depth from this configuration. The analysis of the selection from Lam's memoir will be organized within the following themes: *Devotion to Homeland*, *A Sense of Desertion*, *Family Loyalty: Bound to "a shared narrative of loss and misery," Inside World/Outside World: "put on a poker face," Surrendering to a New Paradise*, *Reconciliation: Gaining His Own Voice*, *A Home Without B*orders, and *Memory as Transformative.*

Devotion to Homeland

Lam begins with a memory of a traditional Vietnamese birth ritual, the burying of an infant's umbilical cord in the garden, a literal combining of human life with the earth. Like Rushdie who evokes thoughts of his boyhood home, Lam feels a deep connection to

the physical embodiment of home and the homeland: "I was not entirely convinced that the outside world existed. Vietnam, the tropical garden, was all there was" (p. 3, lines 13-15). Even the title of his memoir, *Perfume Dreams*, elicits images of an enchanted and magical homeland. He describes his boyhood, which took place with the backdrop of the ongoing war, as full of nationalistic feelings and schoolboy patriotism. Recalling the South Vietnamese anthem, he says, "I believed in the lyric, its every word, felt that shared patriotic fervor among my young, bright eyed peers" (pp. 3-4, lines 23–1). In losing his homeland his devotion was intensified: "Places and times, when they can no longer be retrieved, tend to turn sacrosanct. Home forever lost is forever bathed in a certain twilight glow" (p. 4, lines 28-30). What was bred in the bone was intensified by loss.

A Sense of Desertion

Unlike Jhabvala who did not express political conflict in her memoir, Lam's background was filled with inner patriotic devotion set within the outer political conflict. This led to a painful difference in his departure, or as he put it, "For all the umbilical cords buried, for all the promises made, we did the unimaginable: we fled" (p. 4, lines 10-11). His adolescent abandonment of ancestral culture is revealed, with an expressed sense of irony and guilt: "For at the end of the Vietnam war many of us did not die protecting river and land as we, in our rituals, games, poetry and songs, had promised ourselves and our ancestors' spirits" (p. 4, lines 7-10). This stood in sharp contrast to his mother's ongoing devotion and grief over her lost home. His reaction was to distance himself, concluding, "That country…is cursed. *That* country, mind you. No longer mine" (p. 5, lines 27-29).

Family Loyalty: Bound to "a shared narrative of loss and misery"

Throughout the Lam memoir, in contrast to those of both Rushdie and Jhabvala, is a devotion to and focus on his family, which appears to intensify his personal conflict with respect to his distancing. Reference to his mother's keeping traditional customs, which were "sacred and very old" (p. 3, line 12), runs throughout his memoir. Her embodied connection to the land and to the seasons, maintained a link with the homeland and the people who had been lost, "as if to bind me to that shared narrative of loss and misery" (p. 5, lines 23-25). His mother's disapproval of his increasing assimilation into his new culture was very powerful. For example, Lam recalls her saying; "You've become a little American now, haven't you? A cowboy" (p. 6, lines 3-4). Her admonition was that he was not only losing his cultural identity, but that he was becoming a selfish person who has left the traditional communal/family life. His mother's reproach "smarted, but she wasn't far from the truth" (p. 6, line 9), and as he explained, "Her complaint against America was that it had stolen her children, especially her youngest and once most-filial son" (p. 6, lines 11-13). His abandonment was a blow to both his mother and his motherland.

Focus on loyalty to this communal/family life broadens out to a connection between Lam's family in the United States, and his extended family in Vietnam. News about relatives who were left behind, perennial requests for financial assistance and sponsorship to America were a part of any letter received from far away relations.

Inside World/Outside World: "Put on a poker face"

This binding to the fate of his extended family also became another reason to distance himself from this culture, to "put on a poker face" (p. 5, lines 25-26), as he felt

helplessness in the face of their suffering, which was difficult to bear. The child he described as himself attempted to forget his Vietnamese roots in self protection, or as he put it, to "pretend amnesia to save himself grief" (p. 5, line 36). For Lam, this amalgam of old and new world, collective and individual world, created a bipolar world: "For the refugee child in America, the world splits perversely into two irreconcilable parts: Inside and Outside" (p. 6, lines 17-18). The inside world remained related to the past, to family, to tradition, and to many losses. As Lam wrote, "And so Inside, I, their refugee child, felt the collected weight of history on my shoulders and fell silent" (p. 6, lines 36-37).

The Outside meant freedom and possibility and being released from the past. He felt like his past was something that belonged to someone else. Attached to this Outside was also a new language, and in this he found great freedom. He wrote, "Speaking English I had a markedly different personality than when speaking Vietnamese . . . a newly invented self" (p. 7, lines 21-27). Speaking English, he did not feel the depth of sadness and loss that came with his native language; He found humor and freedom in this language that connected him to his new land.

Surrendering to a New Paradise

Lam's essay also advances forward in time some 20 years, and once again it focuses on his mother, or perhaps more precisely focuses on his mother as symbolic of the Vietnamese community. He says that she "sees herself simply as a Vietnamese living in exile" (p. 8, line 26), resisting her Americanization yet knowing that this was all but impossible. He writes, "To deny her own American conversion, Mother keeps a small garden . . . filled with scents of home (p. 9, lines 6-9). She continues to maintain a family

altar, tells Vietnamese stories to her grandchildren, and basks in the accomplishments of her children.

But she, and others also, begin to take part in the economic and cultural trappings of success in America. The paradise that was located in a land that was left behind is gradually replaced by a new home: "The drama of the initial expulsion is replaced by the jubilation of a new found status and wealth" (p. 11, lines 29-30).

As roots begin to take hold in the new world, the paradise that was the old world begins to take on a new light, and the new world begins to be viewed as the real paradise. Lam notes that the "Viet Kieu: Vietnamese nationals living abroad, especially those living in America" (p. 12, lines 25-26), are now the admired and envied sons and daughters of Vietnam. A mythology develops about the wonders of possibility in the new land, and as Lam describes America, it is the place "where multiple reincarnations may be had in one lifetime" (p. 12, lines 36-37). In an ironic twist, the desire for returning home by the expelled is replaced with a longing to come to the new land by those who forced the expulsion.

Reconciliation: Gaining His Own Voice

In the final pages of his essay, Lam shifts from the voice of others, for example, his mother and the greater Vietnamese community, to one that is specifically his own. He recalls a trip to Vietnam where he realizes that "the past is irretrievable, yet I can never be free from it. Though I can never sever myself from my childhood visions and my own sentimental longings, I have irrevocably changed" (p. 13, lines 33-36). Much of his realization is framed in the shift from boyhood to adulthood. Simple nationalism, the certainty of what was known for centuries, resentments over loss of identity and

privilege, are all tempered by what Lam cites as the "process of individualization" (p. 14, line 13). Lam sees that his past is important to his present identity: "Were it not for my own memories of the life that was taken from me, my American individuality would be shallow" (p. 14, lines 15-17). His memories continue to "inform and inspire" (p. 14, line 21) him, and despite the "trauma of his leaving" (p. 15, line 15), Lam sees that the experience of being "dispossessed" (p. 15, line 5) has allowed him to be able to manage the complex global culture that we now live in.

A Home Without Borders

In the concluding pages of his essay Lam explains that what represents home to him is no longer a geographical attachment, but more psychological and spiritual. He writes:

> My sense of home these days seems less to do with geography than imagination and memories. Home is portable if one is in commune with one's soul. I no longer see my identity as a fixed thing, but something open ended. (p. 15, lines 20-23)

As an alternative to clinging to the past Lam suggests: "If one wishes to transcend his provisional and national limits, one should not reject the attachments to the past but work through them. Irretrievable, the past must be mourned and remembered and assimilated" (p. 15, lines 29-33).

Memory as Transformative

This working through of loss, the acknowledgement of the past, and the ability to create memories, are what Lam sees as integral to his creative work. For him, memory is also a way of keeping something alive. As memory finds voice, things are no longer lost but transformed. His experience of loss—loss of country, loss of ancestral land—has evolved into a transformative experience, one that has made him who he is today. As

Lam wrote, "that old umbilical cord must be unearthed and, through the task of art, through the act of imagination, be woven into a new living tapestry" (p. 15 lines 34-36).

Vladimir Nabokov: *Speak, Memory*

Vladimir Nabokov was an internationally known Russian-born writer as well as a professor of Russian Literature. He was the author of *Lolita* (1955), and numerous other novels, short stories, and poems in both Russian and English. In addition he wrote several plays, a biography of Nikolai Gogol (1944), and also translated many works, most notably Aleksandr Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1955). Nabokov, despite his never receiving major writing prizes, continues to be regarded as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. From his 1966 autobiography, *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited* I have selected the chapter entitled "Thirteen" as the memoir for analysis.

Nabokov was born in 1899, the eldest of five children, to a wealthy, educated, and politically liberal Russian family. His father became the Secretary of the Russian Provisional Government in 1917, and despite his progressive leanings, the entire family was forced to flee in 1919, in the wake of the communist Russian Revolution. Nabokov completed his education at Cambridge where he studied Slavic and Romance Languages. He lived in many locations in Western Europe until 1940, leaving France just prior to the German occupation. He resided in the United States for many years, but eventually resettled in Switzerland, where he died in 1977 (Cornwell, 2002).

In examining Nabokov's writing, one is immediately struck with the difference in tone that he employs, in contrast to the tone used by some of the authors discussed above. For example, while Jhabvala writes in a style that is slightly distanced and neutral, and Lam in a voice that speaks of reverence and fatalism, Nabokov, even more than Rushdie,

strikes a tone of irony and droll wit. From the first sentence he playfully describes his family as "a flock of Nabokov's" (p. 253, lines 1-2), but then quickly makes clear that they "fled from Russia" (p. 253, line 2), thus beginning a narrative style that mixes humor with the tragedy. He describes his scholarship to Cambridge as "atonement for political tribulations" (p. 253, line 5), and states that his family's initial economic survival was due to "a farsighted old chambermaid" (p. 253, lines 8-9), who managed to save some of the family's jewelry. In these wry comments he makes clear that good fortune and dependence on others was key to his fate, and gives evidence of how humor can mitigate pain. Another overarching theme in Nabokov's memoir revolves around his sense of difference from others.

The analysis of this memoir selection has been organized within the following themes: *Realizing His Refugee Condition*; *Family and Loss of Family*; *Being Different*; *Longing, Nostalgia, and Shame*; *Language: Restoring His Russian Identity*; and finally, *A Legacy of Loss.*

Realizing His Refugee Condition

In contrast to Jhabvala and Lam, Nabokov's departure from his homeland was not initially seen as permanent, but rather was "thought to be a brief wait, a prudent perching pause on the southern ledge of Russia" (p. 253, lines 14-15). Closer to Rushdie's experience, the Nabokovs continued to live in a style comparable to what they had known as privileged members of Russian society. Yet there was a difference that Nabokov stresses in their new refugee status: "But now there were no banquets, no speeches, and even no fives with Wells [a reference to his father's acquaintance with the writer H. G. Wells and their having played "fives" together—a type of handball game]" (p. 255, lines

28-29). The Nabokovs were faced with ambivalence from those in the receiving country who saw the Russian revolution differently from those who had been expelled. He wrote that it proved impossible to convince previous friends "that Bolshevism was but an especially brutal and thorough form of barbaric oppression . . . not at all the attractively new revolutionary experiment that so many foreign observers took it to be" (p. 255, lines 29-33).

This concern with trying to make Westerners understand the reality of life in the Soviet Union, of wanting to be understood, flows in and out of Nabokov's narrative. He recalled lengthy arguments with a fellow student who "lumped together as 'Czarist elements' Russian émigrés of all hues, from peasant Socialist to White general" (p. 262, lines 29-31). Then seventeen years later, in a visit with this same student, he encountered a continued simplistic interpretation of Lenin's reign as "a kind of glamorous *quinquennium Neronis* [a reference to the first five years of the Emperor Nero's well organized and peaceful reign]" (p. 272, lines 15-16).

Family and Loss of Family

Nabokov's memoir devotes a fair amount of attention to his family, the "flock" that is ultimately dispersed. He recounts how his parents and three younger siblings moved to Berlin, while he and his younger brother, Sergey, went to Cambridge. He described his youngest brother Kirill with affection and admiration, as a man of intellect and culture, but he also stated that he "saw very little of him during my two decades of European expatriation" (p. 256, lines 17-18). The breaking up of families, separation from loved ones is a common loss among refugees. For Nabokov and for Isabel Allende, this is an important aspect of their narratives.

Nabokov tells us the tragic story of Sergey, who was less than a year his junior, "For various reasons I find it inordinately hard to speak about my other brother" (p. 257, lines 3-4). He admits to having avoided writing about Sergey in the first version of the memoir. He recounts that he has little memory of their childhood together, "He is a mere shadow in the background of my richest and most detailed recollections" (p. 257, lines 9-10), and adds that they were constitutionally rather different. Nonetheless, they developed a closer relationship in adulthood, until 1940, when Nabokov, once again, fled—this time due to the advancing German invasion. He was unable to say good-bye to his brother, who, he tells us eventually starved to death in a German concentration camp. There is no irony in this passage referring to Sergey: "It is one of those lives that hopelessly claim a belated something—compassion, understanding, no matter what—which the mere recognition of such a want can neither replace nor redeem" (p. 258, lines 30-33).

It is notable that while he mentions his father and his father's death, he does not specify that his father died in a political assassination attempt, and he says nothing about his mother or his two sisters. Perhaps like Jhabvala, death and loss are not dwelled upon, but remain in the margins of the story, with the reader left wondering. It appears though that over the course of the memoir the only people that deeply understood him, and the circumstances of his exile, were his family members. Unfortunately, at the time the memoir was written most of his family had passed away.

Being Different

Nabokov describes his experience as a student at Cambridge, beginning with an embarrassing initial meeting with his tutor, when he accidentally kicked over the professor's tea set. He recalled, "Thus the college period of my life began on a note of

embarrassment, a note that was to recur rather persistently during my three years of residence" (p. 259, lines 17-19).

Nabokov's feelings about Russia were not mirrored by many of his fellow Russian émigrés with whom he came into contact while in England. For many other Russian exiles their feeling about their homeland was expressed as resentment about what had been lost, especially as related to "material discomforts and losses" (p. 261, line 28). Nabokov did not devote much of his writing to lamenting his family's loss of status, but rather mourned the loss of culture, and especially language.

In contrast to those who complained of loss of privilege and wealth, many of the native-born Englishmen of his acquaintance held romanticized views of the new Soviet system, or as he recalled, "My friend knew little of Russia's past and this little had come to him through polluted Communist channels" (p. 262, lines 21-23). At the time that many British citizens viewed Lenin as a great man, Nabokov proclaimed that "all cultured and discriminating Russians" were aware of the limitations of Lenin. Unlike Jhabvala and Lam, Nabokov argued intelligently, passionately, and humorously about his lost Russia; however, in so doing he felt rejected by the political left, and yet unable to align himself with the political right. Again, his father's ideological position as a political liberal made him neither communist nor anti-communist, an uncommon position in much of the West during the twentieth century.

His attachment to Russian literature, while being somewhat admired by his peers, was a connection to something outside the mainstream, as were a number of other interests that Nabokov had. "Entomology, practical jokes, girls, and especially athletics" (p. 267 lines 6-7), were all interests that placed him outside the predominant social norm

at Cambridge. Perhaps like Jhabvala he was positioning himself outside the group, maintaining an outsider's position. For example, in describing his style of soccer playing he thought of himself as "a fabulous exotic being in an English footballer's disguise, composing verse in a tongue nobody understood about a remote country nobody knew. Small wonder I was not very popular with teammates" (p. 268, lines 20-23).

Longing, Nostalgia, and Shame

It is in describing his university lodgings that he first mentions a comparison with his previous world: "They seemed intolerably squalid in comparison with my remote and by now nonexistent home" (p. 259, lines 24-25). The detailed description of his student quarters and its mismatched items and broken furniture, even the street itself, "a staid and rather sad little street, with almost no traffic, but with a long, lurid past" (p. 260, lines 1-2), can be understood as a comparison with his long lost country. As Lam noted, the pull of lost homeland has an idyllic quality. However, some of Nabokov's discomfort appears to be rather typical for student life, for example, "I suffered a good deal from the cold" (p. 260, lines 5-6). Despite this he also enjoyed some of the less formal aspects of English fashion as compared to "the formal fashions in Russia" (p. 260, line 30). His primary difficulty appears to be in finding common ground with others; feeling different was the most troublesome aspect of losing his homeland.

For Nabokov, his college years were actually related to what he *longed* for and the connection of this longing to his lost home: "The story of my college years in England is really the story of my trying to become a Russian writer" (p. 261 lines 2-3). He strove to maintain and improve his Russian language, "the only thing I had salvaged

from Russia" (p. 265, lines 24-25). His primary feeling at Cambridge was one of "rich nostalgia" (p. 261, line 7).

Jhabvala spent many years *not* missing Europe, and Lam expressed nostalgia through his mother's words. Nabokov, on the other hand, directly stated his longing for his lost Russia:

> Emotionally, I was in the position of a man who, having just lost a fond kinswoman, realized—too late—that through some laziness of the routine-drugged human soul, he had neither troubled to know her as fully as she deserved, nor had shown her in full the marks of his not quite conscious then, but now unrelieved, affection. (p. 261, lines 8-13)

Like Lam's boyhood patriotism and his subsequent shame for abandoning Vietnam, Nabokov expresses shame in the experience of losing his country. Perhaps too, shame is why Jhabvala chose to describe herself as an unfaithful woman as she spoke of her proclivity for fitting in and reinventing herself in countries outside of her country of origin.

Language: Restoring His Russian Identity

It was also at college that Nabokov eventually gave up political interests and began to focus on literature, particularly Russian, with the same depth of passion and commitment. He said:

> My fear of losing or corrupting, through alien influence, the only thing I had salvaged from Russia—her language—became positively morbid and considerably more harassing than the fear I was to experience two decades later of my never being able to bring my English prose anywhere close to the level of my Russian. (p. 265, lines 23-29)

He gratefully expressed the opinion that Cambridge had provided him with a particular structure and environment within which he could develop his Russian identity. Or in his words, "it was Cambridge that supplied not only the casual frame, but also the very

colors and inner rhythms for my very special Russian thoughts" (p. 269, lines 27-30). By the time he left Cambridge he had found a balance with both his Russian past and the world he lived in, and he wrote, "this state of harmony had been reached at the very moment that the careful reconstruction of my artificial but beautifully exact Russian world had been at last completed" (p. 270, lines 4-7). It was as if his time at Cambridge, by allowing for his immersion in Russian language, allowed him to become Russian again.

A Legacy of Loss

At the chapter's end, Nabokov described his return to Cambridge, his first real home in exile, some seventeen years after his graduation, as another experience of loss. Instead of a warm and satisfying student's homecoming he found that "in every way the visit was not a success" (p. 271, lines 17-18). For example, the political opinions of his old friend had changed with respect to the Soviet Union of Stalin, but nothing had changed in relation to old arguments about the Russian revolution itself. During his visit Nabokov tried to muster the kind of enthusiastic spirit towards his student years that he held in regard to his Russian boyhood years, however, "all that I could evoke were fragmentary little pictures" (p. 272, lines 24-25). His recollections of this return visit to Cambridge are primarily of small, happy, or humorous, incidents, but they are neither dramatic nor exceptionally joyful thoughts. Attempts to rekindle old memories were not successful—from his favorite restaurant, to his old friend's appearance, the day reminded Nabokov "only of my own confused old nostalgia" (p. 271, line 14).

In describing the conclusion of this visit he wrote: "The dull day had dwindled to a pale yellow streak in the gray west" (p. 273, lines 11-12). It appears that the emotional

satisfaction that came with finding a new home in his youth could not be sustained. A sense of relocation was lost over the course of time, thus perpetuating a legacy of losses, and ongoing longing for a lost home.

Isabel Allende: *Paula*

Isabel Allende is a popular and internationally known author of over 16 books, as well as numerous articles and plays. She was forced to leave Chile after the fall of President Salvador Allende because of her family's political notoriety and her own activism. It was after her exile that her reputation as a writer developed, and she has been the recipient of multiple awards and honorary academic degrees from around the world. The memoir that I have chosen is a selection from her 1995 book, *Paula,* which was written and named for her late daughter. The memoir was begun when Paula had fallen into a coma and was an attempt to chronicle Allende's life in the hope that it might help her daughter restore her lost memory when she recovered.

Allende was born in Lima, Peru in 1942. Her father was a Chilean diplomat at the time, and, as would become significant years later, was the first cousin of the future president of Chile, Salvador Allende. She lived in many countries in her childhood, as well as in her early adult years, but had been living and working in Chile permanently from 1966 on. In 1973 she fled to Venezuela after the rise of the Pinochet government, and she lived there for nearly thirteen years. She then moved to the United States and currently lives in Northern California (Gomez-Galisteo, 2007).

That Allende's memoir is addressed to her daughter is in keeping with the focus of her memories on family and friends. Memories of, and nostalgia for, those lost, those left behind, and for lost relationships color her story. Relationship is an overarching

theme of this story of exile in which she speaks of the import of losing connection, and developing new relationships. Losing and regaining her professional identity and dignity, as she expresses in the phrase, "daily humiliation of a person looking for work" (p. 243, lines 20-21), is another aspect of her story of isolation, reconnection, and newfound "freedom." As with the other writers in my study, language is a medium of loss, connection, and professional identity; and memory is a nutrient. For the analysis of Allende's section I have organized the memoir within the following themes: *Ambivalence Toward the Homeland*, *Feeling Isolated and Helpless*, *A New Found Freedom*, *The Price of Relocation, Locating Stability*, and finally, *Clarifying What Was Lost.*

Ambivalence Toward the Homeland

To Allende, the *homeland* was Chile, a land that at the time of her departure was suffering under the yoke of dictatorship, and her recollections were typically not pleasant. For example, she wrote she had come from "winter, the petrifying order of the dictatorship and widespread poverty" (p. 238, lines 35-36), from a land where politics was a constant concern and preoccupation. In addition to the political strife and danger, Allende felt that her homeland held the emotional burdens of social sanctions that led one to fear shame and social embarrassment, as she put it, "coming down in the world" (p. 239, line 17). It was a land where she felt that she had to contain her sensuality—it had to be "hidden for the sake of gentility" (p. 239, line 19). Rather than longing for her country, Allende's mournful reflections on Chile during her exile were focused on the family and comrades that stayed behind, especially her mother-in-law, who, due to the loss of those that she loved, was "worn down by loneliness and sorrow" (p. 240, lines 14-15). Perhaps though, like Andrew Lam, Allende expresses the destructiveness of her own grief through

the pain of another, "worms of sadness were eating away inside" (p. 240, lines 24-25), while in this case referring to her mother-in-law.

Feeling Isolated and Helpless

In the initial phase of her exile, Allende's loss of home was expressed in her recounting the terrible isolation that she experienced in Venezuela, her new country. She said, "My roots were chopped off with a single whack and it would take six years to grow new ones nurtured in memory and in the books I would write" (p. 238, lines 26-28). The lack of control over her life, the absence of a professional identity, and the loss of her writing voice and the public life she had developed in her native country were very painful for her. As she described it, "From the modest celebrity I had enjoyed in Chile from my television and feminist reporting, I slumped to the anonymity and daily humiliation of a person looking for work" (p. 243, lines 18-20). Lack of money, in a country [Venezuela] where wealth was conspicuously spent was one of her earliest challenges. She wrote, "Without money you could do nothing, as I quickly learned after going to the bank to change the dollars I had bought in the black market in Chile and found to my horror that half were counterfeit (p. 241, lines 6-9). For Allende, as for Nabokov, the focus was not on loss of material things left behind; but rather on the absence of security in her new land.

A New Found Freedom

Unlike Lam and Nabokov, Allende was not given to romanticizing her lost country, and she experienced both loss *and* opportunity. Her initial impressions were predictably jarring: "The impact of arrival was that of having fallen onto a different planet" (p. 238, lines 34-35); but soon she began to appreciate the freedom that the new

culture provided her. She wrote, "I felt freed of the back-bowing burdens I had carried in my own country" (p. 239, lines 15-16), and later, "In Venezuela, I cured myself of some ancient wounds. . . . I shed my old skin and met the world with my nerves laid bare until I grew another, tougher hide" (p. 239, lines 21-24).

Allende's search for a *home* seems to begin with a perception that the land of her asylum offered ways of experiencing life that stood in contrast to her life in Chile. The emotional freedom she found helped to offset some of her losses. She enjoyed the absence of constant political discussion and the presence of an overt sensuality in the music. Even the tonal difference of the Venezuelan Spanish, contrasted with the "discreet Chileans with their high-pitched voices and delicate Spanish" (p. 241, lines 19-20), was refreshing. Despite these positive experiences though, she also noted that there was initial resistance to foreigners in Venezuela, and that "you must begin from zero, because the past is erased with a single stroke and no one cares where you're from or what you did before" (p. 242, lines 1-3). One's success depended on, as she put it, "audacity and good connections" (p. 242, line 7). Nonetheless, in time "the Venezuelans' natural generosity threw open the doors" (p. 241, lines 31-32), and gradually she and her husband began to develop a stable life. Over the years her new home began to become more comfortable and familiar, and more than any of the other memoirists I selected, she described finding pleasure in her new home.

The Price of Relocation

Concomitantly, however, while Allende began to assimilate, and her economic and social situation improved, her marriage became more emotionally impoverished. Initially her husband shouldered the lion's share of the income-earning responsibility, and

during that time the distance between them, both literally and figuratively, increased. The comfort that she gained in Venezuela was accompanied by the destruction of her marriage. Her husband had to accept employment "in a broiling region in the eastern part of the country" (p. 242, lines 14-15), and they began to live apart. In addition to this separation, Allende also noted the enormity of her husband's loss of home and her own part in his suffering: "he had left Chile, his friends, and the security of a good job to follow me in an unpredictable adventure" (p. 244, lines 25-27). As he tried to recreate these in a new land, the marriage could not be restored, and the task of seeking a home created another painful loss—the loss of their relationship.

Over the course of her memoir it also becomes clear that her sorrow over leaving Chile was at the heart of her pain rather than just simple marital discord, as the following quote reveals:

> While he was working in the exuberant vegetation and steamy humidity of a wild landscape, I was butting my head against the walls of the apartment in Caracas like a crazed rat, always looking south toward Chile and counting the days until our return. I never dreamed that the dictatorship would last seventeen years. (p. 245, lines 30-33)

Locating Stability

Finding stability for Allende is very much related to the losses that she experienced, professionally and personally, and it seems that her security rests in the development of her identity as a writer and in finding a life partner more suited to her personality. Over the course of time, she found success as a writer, and in time also found a new husband. And, like Nabokov and Jhabvala, she chose yet another country, the United States of America, to be her new home. Yet, despite finding a new homeland, the core of Allende's experience of re-location seems to be professional and relational: work and family, rather than any particular attachment to a country. As an example, in

describing her return visit to Chile, after achieving some celebrity as a writer and finding a new and satisfying love, she wrote: "That return is the perfect metaphor for my life. I had fled from my country, frightened and alone, one wintry, cloudy late afternoon, and returned triumphant, on my husband's arm one splendid summer morning" (p. 313, lines 3-6). The attributes that gave her courage and security are not attached to a homeland as such, but rather can be accessed no matter where one is located. Perhaps this very portability is the ultimate protection for those that have experienced forced dislocation—who cannot rely on a country for their security, as "no one cares where you're from or what you did before" (p. 242, lines 2-3).

Clarifying What Was Lost

In Allende's memoir it is at the point of her newfound satisfaction in life, as she found success and a loving husband, that she finally has the opportunity to return to the land of her birth. After thirteen years she was able to return to visit Chile, and it is in this moment that her writing turns to a clearly expressed affection for her former home and its physical and linguistic landscape:

> I cannot express the emotion I felt when we crossed the majestic peaks of the cordillera of the Andes and I stepped onto the soil of my homeland, breathed the warm valley air, heard the accent of our Spanish. (p. 312, lines 33-36)

In seeing her former husband again, in Chile, she experienced the sorrow of having lost "those perfect times of our early youth" (p. 314, line 1), in a form that seems clearer than in her recollections outside of her home country. As she describes her feeling in visiting old friends, in seeing her old home, it becomes clear that the many dissatisfactions she expressed about Chile, and the almost wholesale admiration she had for Venezuela, kept the enormity of loss she was carrying at bay. Like Jhabvala with her immersion into

India, Allende essentially denied the depth of her grief as best she could, until the proper moment.

That moment for Allende was the return to Chile, which was no longer her home. It was over time, in the restoration of her life, and the reunification with her mother country that she was able to integrate her experiences both good and bad. Coming home was:

> the perfect metaphor for my life. I have learned to see both sides of the coin. At moments of greatest success, I do not lose sight of the pain awaiting me down the road, and when I am sunk in despair, I wait for the sun I know will rise farther along. (p. 313, lines 6-9)

Relocation for Allende, as it is for the other authors, includes the development of a perspective that maintains hope and possibility, while at the same time tolerating reality and not avoiding the emotional cost. Allende alludes to this in speaking about love, and it is equally applicable to a search for a homeland: "With each love, we are born anew, and with each love that ends we collect a new wound. I am covered with proud scars" (p. 314, lines 5-6).

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

My research explored how the refuge experience is integrated over time. Much of the traditional social science perspective toward the refugee experience is focused on the early phases, prior to the time when adjustment and reflection become possible. A common interpretation and expectation of the refugee is pathology-based. Little attention has been given to the potential for recovery, emotional restoration, and maturation as time passes. To that end, I have tried to explore the potential for new outcomes while recognizing that pain and loss are involved. I wondered about the potential for growth and emotional development. I asked how the experience of exile shapes a person's identity, sense of self, and view of the world

My examination of the memoirs of selected writers—Salman Rushdie, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Andrew Lam, Vladimir Nabokov, and Isabel Allende—suggests that there is, indeed, not only recovery, but also an expansion of perspective and the development of identity and personality in ways that might not otherwise have been possible. My findings mirror the position posited by Papadopoulos and his associates at the Tavistock Clinic (2002) in that the memoirists all showed tremendous resilience and recovery over time. As Papadopoulos stated in his introduction to *Therapeutic Care for Refugees* (2002):

> Thus, although most refugees who end up in exile in other countries may never return to their geographical homeland, this does not necessarily prevent them from recovering from all adversity and being able to lead full and creative lives. (p. 5)

In keeping with this view, I found that along with the inevitable loss that exiles experience, there is evidence of new emotional and expressive freedom, as well as a way of relating to the world and life that has depth and wisdom. In contrast to a static and

damaged emotional outlook, the memoirists whom I studied expressed hope and a potential for re-invention, despite their losses. Finding a new home appears to be possible, even though what serves as home is oftentimes more located in emotional, as opposed to physical, destinations.

In Chapter 4, I presented a narrative analysis of the memoirs of the five refugee writers, all of whom provided a reflective vision of their experience after the passage of 15 years or more. Each memoir provided the writer's subjective experience as a refugee, and my findings were aimed at illuminating themes within the individual cases that might provide some insight into the impact of forced migration on the life of each individual. Many thematic categories arose out of the material, and I have explored common and variant elements. In this chapter I will present overarching themes that have emerged from comparative study across the selected memoirs. This should provide an opportunity to more deeply understand the refugee experience of these writers and, hopefully throw light on the experience of exile for refugees in general, as they adjust and recover from their expulsion from home and homeland.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of emergent themes and comments on them, as well as reference to some relevant literature as appropriate. I will offer some thoughts on the relevance of the findings to the study of social science and human behavior, and finally will comment on the limitations of my study and make suggestions for further research on the topic.

Writers in Exile: A Comparative Analysis

All of the examined memoirs contain descriptions of certain experiences and feelings that, beyond their individual and personal aspects, reveal common components.

First of all, "Home" is always a construct; always significant in its meaning for (and as a symbol of) that which has been lost, that which is missing and being sought, and that which is longed for. Predictably, no discussion of exile can omit the theme of "Loss." Though the experience of loss for these exiles is embedded within their feelings about home, it is relevant to look more closely at how these writers have referred to loss. The stories told in their memoirs reveal, sometimes directly, as with Jhabvala, a developmental process—a becoming. Though they carry a sense of loss, it seems that over the course of time these writers are not/or are no longer lost. This can be seen in their struggle with identity, embracing their sense of themselves as writers, and the confidence and success they have attained. A primary and shared experience involves their sense of expanded perspective, a view of the world beyond specific frontiers, physical and mental. However, their self reflection—a common trait perhaps for all creative people, and perhaps for all marginal people as well—reveals that they also carry with them a sense of shame and/or guilt connected with what they were forced to leave behind. One wonders if this is one of the unavoidable fates of all exiles.

These existential themes also reflect how none of these writers viewed their experience as a political issue, despite its roots in political events; they do not focus on social change, but rather upon their own internal change. Similarly, "freedom" is not expressed as a political experience, but rather as an emotional and creative state of being. Perhaps the intrinsic value of the political, like the material, is less critical after one has been lost and then finds safety and security. Attached to this is also a sense that time and the passage of adequate time is essential in the growth and personal transformation of the

authors. Change and recovery appear possible, given an opportunity and adequate time, even in the absence of any political recovery or material compensation for loss.

Home

Tied to the symbolic meaning of "home" is the longing expressed, each in their own way, by these writers. Home is that which is longed for, but what home *is* has many variations. Home is also defined by what is remembered and the nature of those memories. In the memoirs it appears, not surprisingly, that forced migration impacts a person's sense of self—one's identity. Longing for home then, involves a search for self. Aspects or components of "home" were found to include reference to family as well as to language. Language is, of course, relevant with respect to the lost language of the homeland; however, for these writers, it is also a significant aspect of their adaptation and development. Thus the theme of *Home* is a concept that is contained in many sub-themes, which will be explored below.

Longing for Home

Predictably, a theme of *longing for home* runs across all the memoir pieces, as each of the authors attends to their loss of homeland and search for a new home. What is notable though is *what* serves as the symbolic representation of home for the individual authors. Rushdie literally focuses on the home of his birth, as represented in an old photo, and which he revisited many years after his departure from India. Jhabvala describes flexibility in her attachment to a home, suggesting that she is satisfied with anywhere that she finds herself placed. Yet ultimately she longs for a home that provides her with the kind of cultural familiarity of her childhood in Cologne, and consciously chooses to move to New York City. For Lam and Allende it is their attachment to family that comforts

them, as if their lost home is embodied in their family and their relationship together. For Nabokov there is an expressed feeling of aloneness and longing, yet it is through his immersion into the Russian language that he acquires a home—as embodied in a language that sustains and comforts him.

Home as it is longed for does not take the form of nationalism and a call to liberate one's Fatherland, as perhaps is expressed in political writing such as might be found during the Cold War. Rather, it is a longing for something felt and remembered.

Memory and Home

Although "home" implies reference to a physical place, it is primarily a home of the mind, "an imaginary homeland" as Rushdie puts it: a creation of memory. What is remembered, held dear, and longed for is a complex of memories and feelings that differs for each of the authors. It is a central feature of each memoir. The longing expressed is for the memory that is held and as such may be an elusive objective. All have managed this reality in different ways. For example, Rushdie focused on the fragmentary nature of memory and on memory as an accurate depiction of what is *remembered* rather than an objective picture of literal truth. Lam on the other hand described the many rituals that his mother would continue as a way of keeping her remembered homeland alive in her new home. Allende's memories of her elderly family and friends were what represented the homeland for her. In short, it is an attachment to a memory that is being referred to when home is being recalled and desired.

Identity as a Home

It is not only a feeling for home that is longed for but also a sense of oneself. The loss of one's original home appears to bring a profound impact upon one's identity. The

search for and development of a new sense of self or a recovered sense of self becomes a recognizable quest regardless of the age and circumstances of their exile. This sought for identity is the paradise lost, which they attempt to regain. For each of these writers identity is not located in citizenship of a country. They did not seek an identity as a citizen of their lost country, but rather an identity in relation to their new-found home and the world at large. Again they seek an emotional identity rather than a political identity.

Allende mourned her loss of professional identity after leaving Chile, and it was as she developed her identity as a writer that she began to feel restored. Lam, spoke of assimilation and the development of his cultural identity as an American, while Jhabvala wrote of a gradual need to find her identity as an outsider in India, a position that allowed her "to keep my own personality, and not become immersed, drowned in India" (Jhabvala, p. 11, lines 11-13). Rushdie embraced his identity as a South Asian writer, while Nabokov's attachment to the Russian language restored his identity outside his motherland. "Home" for each of these writers became contained in their ability to reclaim an identity independent of their original home as well as of their eventual residence.

The role of writer and the act of writing became an additional source of identity, giving them meaning as well as a position in the world that was independent of any place or country. The new home, the feeling of having a home, was provided in the establishment or reestablishment of an identity. It was as if the oft-requested "Identity Papers" in the refugee world become replaced with a sense of identity. The quest for home is internal; for the writer, its expression is shared publicly through published works a well as through public acts of teaching and speaking out. Each has some public outlet

in the world of letters, in the media, and some in academia. How this may translate for the less public exile remains a question.

Home as Represented by Family

"Home" is also contained in references to family, and memories of family. From the intense filial loyalty of Lam to Jhabvala's painful remembrance of family memories lost during the war, all writers made mention of family. Significantly, Nabokov, whose ironic tone would seem to discount sentimentality, went to great pains to discuss his late brother, a topic, he tells us, he attempted to avoid in previous drafts of his memoir. Perhaps this is evidence of Loizos' (2002) contention that fitting into society may be less important for the refugee than having a group to belong to. Family, even a lost family, is generally the most significant group for most of us, and is the essence of home, both in memory and in fact.

Language as a Home

To one degree or another, and in one form or another, the importance of language as a foundational principle in the lives of these authors was evident across all memoirs. For some like Jhabvala, the acquisition of English, and the canon of English Literature were elemental in her adjustment after leaving Germany. For Lam the English language allowed him a freedom of expression that he could not find in his mother tongue. Rushdie spoke of English as part of his "heritage" (Rushdie, p. 15, line 13), and as a societal right of Indian writers in England. For Nabokov, the development of his English writing skill, and more importantly, what he termed the "reconstruction" (p. 270, line 5) of his native Russian language, were critical, and a source of great comfort to him. The case of Allende is slightly different, but implicit in her story is that she re-located to a country

where her mother tongue was the same as the host country's. The portability of language allowed her to reclaim her previous identity as a writer with less of a barrier than would have been the case in a non-Spanish speaking country. For the writers, language gave them access to memory, to identity, and to a role in their new societal home. It mirrors Lesser's (2004) contention that for the exile "something of that lost experience still exists somewhere, accessible (if at all) only through language" (pp. 8-9). Language as a source of stability, as a home base if not a home, is critical for these refugees who express themselves through their writing.

Loss

Certainly for the geographically displaced, loss is endemic to their experience, and as has been shown in the above discussion of home, reclaiming after a loss of home, in all its aspects—location, identity, language, memory, etc. —is a major part of the refugee memoirs that I reviewed. All of the writers in this study wrote about loss in their own way. Jhabvala framed her entire memoir as a story of disinheritance, of having no cultural foundation or even memory to guide her in life. Lam, in a similar way addressed the loss of land and ancient customs in his flight from Vietnam. Allende's loss was represented painfully in the deterioration of her marriage, and her subsequent divorce in the new land. Nabokov's version on this theme included the loss of family, language, and an affiliative group to belong to, as he expressed difficulty finding others who understood his experience. For Rushdie, the loss was certainly expressed in his sentimental attachment to his family home as well as his lost country. This theme is also in evidence in Rushdie's focus on social justice for South Asians, as well as his insistence on their heritage—that is, their claim to the English language.

Although loss is a common theme, there is an absence of unsatisfied lamentation. Contrary to Edward Said's (2000) contention that "exiles look at non-exiles with resentment" (p. 180), the losses that these writers experience do not define their expressed outlook on life. In keeping with the more contemporary perspectives in the literature I reviewed, for example, Muecke (1992) and Papadopoulos (2002), and heeding Falicov's (2000) admonition, these memoirists cannot be stereotyped as "helpless victims" (p. xvii), and their resiliency is evident throughout the stories.

An Expanded Perspective: Insider/Outsider

One of the striking themes in this selection of memoirs is that of the refugee authors' experience of themselves, as Rushdie put it, as "having a kind of double perspective . . . we are at one and the same time insiders and outsiders" (Rushdie, p. 19, lines 17-18). This position was acknowledged across cases, and was held, not as a liability, but as an advantage. For Jhabvala this ability to straddle cultures came later, as an aspect of her identity development, while for Lam, it was an outgrowth of family loyalty—that is loyalty to the past, while living in the present, which he contends has allowed him to have an identity that is no longer a "fixed thing, but something open-ended" (Lam, p. 15, lines 22-23). Due to his political affiliations that left him acceptable neither to the left nor the right, Nabokov, too, found himself in a middle ground, while Allende suggests that as a result of her experiences, she is "able to see both sides of the coin" (Allende, p. 313. lines 6-7). Refugee writers are what Hill (1994), in her discussion of liminal identity describes as individuals who "possess a consciousness that is an integration of the differences between the two races or cultures" (p. 2). These writers have the experience of being on the threshold of two cultures, allowing them to develop a

perspective that offers greater comfort with multiple interpretations and ideas. Throughout the memoirs the authors describe being transformed by this position, and perhaps as Rushdie stated they are more able to "accept the provisional nature of truths, all certainties" (Rushdie, p. 12, lines 37-38), and in doing so are more able to describe their world from a perspective that tries to express their personal version of the truth rather than claiming to present some fixed truth.

Guilt/Shame

Despite the resiliency and optimism of the authors, there is also evidence of difficult personal feelings; self-assessments that were not easily resolved reveal evidence of internal conflict and regret. Rushdie, for example, questions the appropriateness of Indian writers criticizing politics in India from countries where their personal safety is not threatened. While he ultimately concludes that it is valid and important to write in spite of this limitation, he declares that "The Indian writer, looking back at India, does so through guilt-tinted spectacles...that there are times that the move seems wrong to us all" (Rushdie, p. 15, lines 23-27). Lam writes very directly about guilt, in saying, "we did the unimaginable: we fled" (Lam, p. 4, line 11), but it is about his developing an American identity that he expresses the most intense feelings of disloyalty and shame—for abandoning his culture and his family.

While Jhabvala emphasized her ability to blend in and to take on a new culture, she also questioned the correctness or moral validity of this approach, as well as its limitations, describing it as promiscuity and faithlessness, and wondering if she could ever really attach herself to a country or culture. Allende spoke of feeling humiliation as she tried to find work in her new country, while Nabokov, experienced a loss of status,

realizing that there would be no quick return to Russia, that his position in society had changed from his previously held privileged status. In addition, perhaps as an outgrowth of survivor's guilt, Nabokov expressed awareness of the suffering of those who had remained in Russia, as he recounted attempts at trying to convince his acquaintances that the communist regime was not just some noble experiment, but rather a cruel dictatorship.

The presence of such conflicted feelings mirrors the comments of the exiled writer, Czeslaw Milosz (1976) who wrote:

> Exile is morally suspect because it breaks one's solidarity with a group. . . . His moral torment reflects his attachment to a heroic image of himself and he must, step by step, come to the painful conclusion that to do morally valid work and to preserve an untarnished image of himself is rarely possible. (p. 282)

To their credit, these memoirists did not shy away from exposing their shortcomings and failings, which are often the source of guilt and shame. They all attempted to address their limitations and did not present themselves as "heroic," but rather, and perhaps in concert with their ability to hold two perspectives, they could write of themselves as multidimensional and complex.

An Absence of Nationalism

These memoirists were chosen for my study because they were authors who were also refugees, not refugees who were authors—that is, not authors who focused on refugee issues. They were not political activists. I make this distinction because it may serve to explain the minimal amount of overt political tone to the writing. Unlike propaganda, there was no call to arms for resistance or regime change, nor was the primary intent political commentary. To be sure, Rushdie addressed some contemporary political issues in India, but he did not address the source of his exile, The Partition, in

any especial way. Nabokov recounted his political discussions with friends, Lam referenced some contemporary economic issues in Vietnam, and in an ironic twist, Allende, whose writings traditionally are more romance-based, turned her passions to anger at the Pinochet regime. But overall, the tone of all of the writings was personal and reflective of personal experience; there was an absence of flag waving and political posturing—a minimum of writing about the political and military aspects that accompanied their expulsion. Their main object of concern was for individuals who might have suffered as a result of the political events—family and friends, particularly, but non-political figures in the main. It is as if the refugee experience humanized the writers, creating an attention to humanity, to the universal, rather than to national concerns.

Freedom

In keeping with this absence of a nationalistic valence to the memoirs, it is also notable that while all the writers either explicitly or implicitly touched on the concept of freedom, none focused on *political* freedom. Again unlike literature that focuses on the political or civil liberty, the writers, to a person, discussed freedom in other ways. Allende focused on personal freedom to be emotionally unconstrained after she left Chile. Lam described how he found freedom from the constraints of his family traditions outside of his home, and Jhabvala spoke of the freedom to take on whatever role she wished. But none of the writers spoke of some gained sense of political freedom, or deep appreciation for regained rights. As I noted earlier there was certainly an awareness of those who were experiencing a loss of freedom; for example, Nabokov's references to the Soviet death camps or Rushdie's focus on racial discrimination. On the whole however,

the freedom that was found was a personal freedom, emotional and creative freedom that all of the writers appreciated and cherished, rather than political liberty. Again, it may be the nature of the writing—personal reflection rather than political activism—but the relative absence of focus on political freedom, just like the absence of nationalistic sentiment, was consistent in all the memoirs. Perhaps this also reflects the possibility that forced migration is a personal crisis for the individual, rather than an ongoing collective crisis for a hosting society.

The Impact of Time

As I wrote above, these were not political or even human rights texts, so this may be an outcome of the specific and narrow parameters of my memoir choices. However, I would propose that there is something in the passage of time from the initial expulsion to the time of the writing that allowed for the development of a certain perspective, perhaps as I have noted above, a human perspective rather than a political perspective. Particularly reflected in two of the authors is an example of how time is a factor in the refugee experience. Jhabvala recounted a rather seamless adaptation into England, and then into India, feeling as if she had found a culture and a home. Nonetheless it was after nearly 20 years that she realized that she was longing for a particular cultural milieu, one that replicated her childhood in Cologne. Similarly, Allende's narrative initially speaks rather idealistically of her adopted country, Venezuela, and is generally critical about her homeland. However, she later tells us that when she finally was able to return to visit Chile, nearly 13 years later, she began to re-experience a deep affection for her home country.

These two dramatic examples, and the thoughtful tone of each of the memoirs, all of which were written over the passage of some time, seem quite related to Papadopoulos' (2002b) conceptualization of "frozenness" (p. 32), where one limits energy in an attempt to create an environment conducive to healing. For the refugee, there must be a period of turning inward, of not feeling, in order to recover. The passage of time, the creation of a context wherein one limits one's emotional reactions and becomes reflective, may be what these writers experienced in order to develop the depth of perspective they all had. As Papadopoulos (2002b) described:

> This temporary withdrawal can provide unique vantage points from where to review and reassess their lives, their past, present and future; it may also assist them by allowing them to digest the impact of their losses, by creating the respectful stance to mourn the dead, but enabling them to regroup and direct their energy more appropriately. (p. 33)

I suggest that this withdrawal occurs in the passage of time, and that it is a key element in the refugees' ability to reflect upon their experiences and its impact on their lives.

Relevance of the Findings to the Literature

As I stated in Chapter 2, there is little in the social science literature that speaks to the longer-term experience of the refugee, so my inquiry into this theme could be a useful beginning exploration. At its core, my study hearkens back to the debate which rests on the question: Are recovery, and even creativity and growth, possible outcomes? Ornstein (2001) challenges Krystal's (1997) conclusion that there is an inevitable lack of ability for personal recovery among Holocaust survivors. Ornstein's position is that individual strengths and limitations are the critical factor in recovery. A similar debate exists between "psychiatric approaches" (e.g., Wicker & Schoch, 1988; Westermeyer, 2000), as well as theories of loss and trauma (e.g., Boehnlein, Kinzie, Rath & Fleck, 1985; Kinzie

& Jaronson, 2001; Kroll, et al., 1989), and the more contemporary perspectives (e.g., Muecke, 1992; Papadopoulos, 2002a, 2002b). The latter perspective proposing that recovery, growth, and indeed, an expansion of perspective and creative potential stand as alternatives to the negative prognosis that is often anticipated. The memoirists in this current study all give evidence of the possibility of positive outcomes in the face of tragic situations. This position is also reflected in one of the few studies I found that focuses on the refugee years after exile. Anthropologist, Boone (1994) studied Cuban refugee women 30 years after their departure from Cuba. In their reflections on their experience they saw positive outcomes, as Boone wrote: "One of the most striking qualities of the 'self' that women described was breadth. They said that they had 'expanded their view,' 'reworked their values,' and 'have a broader outlook'" (p. 198).

My authors also experience themselves as different, as recovering, and seeing the world in a way that was not possible before their migration. While the experiences noted in my memoirs are not end-of-life reflection, but rather middle-phase-of-life writings, they closely mirror Erikson's (1963) eighth age of man: "Ego Integrity vs. Despair" (p. 268). The ability of the memoirists to reflect, to integrate their losses as well as their opportunities, and to see an outcome that is neither overly pessimistic nor bitter is at the heart of what Erikson proposes that one should achieve in the final years of one's life. He stated:

> Only in him who in some way has taken care of things and people and has adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments adherent to being, the originator of others or the generator of products and ideas—only in him may gradually ripen the fruit of these seven stages. I know no better word for it than ego integrity. (p. 268)

The authors in my view, have been able to achieve this ego integrity, albeit after having been forced to experience trials and losses that could lead to despair, and in so

doing having experienced a level of maturity and perspective that enables them to view and live life in a unique and creative way.

Looking beyond the representation of refugees in the social science literature, I believe that my findings call into question the way that our view of the refugee is presented in the literary tradition in general, or as I termed it, the World of Literature. Contrary to the traditional model evidenced in, for example, Judaic and Christian scriptures, or the writings of Homer, my memoirists did not express ongoing lamentation or a longing for return to some promised land. Napran's (2004) comment about Ovid and his "creation of the 'myth of exile'" (p. 2), is perhaps just that; a myth regarding exile in a particular form–one in which longing for one's lost home is expressed in a form that can never be fulfilled. Ha Jin (2008), in *The Writer as Migrant*, refers to Milan Kundera's contention that "Homer glorified nostalgia" (p. 71). What appears to be nostalgia and longing for home, is perhaps a classical expression for a longing to experience one's self in a way that is truthful and genuine. The classical literature, having been written in a time that did not reflect on the individual to the same degree as the collective, is in my view expressing the longing for a relationship to the self in the acceptable form of its time: to the external source of identity, one's homeland. My authors have expressed a focus on their identity and their relationship to their own development that was symbolically expressed in traditional writing. As Ha Jin (2008) framed it, migrants, a term that to him includes exiles "find their real homeland actually exists within their own beings" (p. 74).

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

My study, from the outset, was exploratory; an attempt to begin to examine an aspect of the refugee experience that the literature suggests is under-explored. It is then, due to the paucity of available data, and by its nature as exploratory, limited in scope. Any continued exploration of this research question would call for an expansion of data and sample size.

Beyond the need for more data, there are specific limitations to be considered in this sample of authors, and, in fact, some of the issues arise out of my selection of lettered authors as the focus of my research. To begin with, this cohort of memoirists was comprised of educated, lettered individuals. That their comments and perspective are limited to a certain social class of refugees may need to be considered. Gathering meaningful data from a more heterogeneous group might yield different insights that could be more applicable to refugees in general. Similarly, I might have arrived at different information had I chosen authors who were successful writers *before* their forced displacement. As it was, four of the five authors I studied developed their careers after leaving home, and even the lone exception, Allende, did not achieve significant notoriety in the world of literature until after she left Chile. Focusing on a different group of professional writers, for example, might have included the complication of losing one's ability to pursue one's craft in the adopted country because of lack of ability in one's new language. This would be a major loss for a writer, and as such might have tremendously complicated their life choices and experience over time.

The use of memoir rather than works that address particular refugee questions, may have also limited the information that I was able to gather. I was also limited to what

the authors wrote, with no ability to request clarification or expansion on their comments, as, for example, could be accomplished in an interview. This is a limitation shared with any type of document analysis—that is, that the data is static. Nevertheless, there may have been many questions and themes that were not explored due to the finite and static nature of the data.

Further research would need to expand the sample size, and perhaps begin to directly interview refugees in the later phases of resettlement. This could be done in a variety of ways, but I would caution that it would need to be done in a manner that avoids pathologizing the interviewees. Issues of language and accuracy of interpretation would need to be addressed. In addition, with an expanded sample my concern with class bias/prejudice would remain, given the typical economic difficulties of many refugees. My hope however, is that exploration of these issues will continue in a spirit that honors the potential of refugees, and assumes the potential for us all to recover and to thrive as we continue our development in life.

APPENDIX

PROTECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS APPLICATION

(Submitted by candidate to the Institute Office if the Dissertation Committee has determined that the research proposal requires it. Most do.)

Title of Research Project An Exploratory Study of the Refugee Experience Ou
the Passage of Time Through a Narrative Analysis of M

Principal Investigator: SYLVIA SUSSMAN, Ph.D.
(print name and degree)

Investigator: Mario L. Starc
(print name)

I have read the *Guidelines, Ethics, & Standards Governing Participation & Protection of Research Participants* in research projects of this Institute (in Appendix D of the *Student and Faculty Handbook*), and I will comply with their letter and spirit in execution of the enclosed research proposal. In accordance with these standards and my best professional judgment, the participants in this study (check one)

X Are not "at risk."

_____ May be considered to be "at risk," and all proper and prudent precautions will be taken in accordance with the Institute protocols to protect their civil and human rights.

I further agree to report any changes in the procedure and to obtain written approval before making such procedural changes.

[signature] 3/7/08
signature of Principal Investigator/date

[signature] 3/7/08
signature of Investigator/date

Action by the Committee on the Protection of Research Participants:

Approved X Approved with Modifications_____ Rejected _____

Mary Coombs 5/19/08
Signature of representative of the Committee on the Protection of Research Participants/date

Approved
Judith Kay Nelson, Ph.D. 5/20/08
(signature of Dean & date)

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