Sustaining a conference for over 6 years can only testify of the rigor and professionalism with which research has been carried out within the Applied Language and Culture Studies Research Laboratory (ALCS). The dimension the conference on *Cultures and Languages in Contact* the ALCS Lab organizes every other year has acquired and the impact effect it has testify of the more advanced status it has come to occupy in the realm of scientific research. The now renown event has been attracting a number of researchers who come to El-Jadida from within different parts of the country and also from all over the world who come to El Jadida, bringing with them their own language(s) and (sub)culture(s) to debate areas relating to applied language and culture studies. The conference therefore engenders real situations of cultures and languages in contact wherein people from different (sub)cultures, speaking different languages meet on a stage to debate matters academic, relating to applied language, literature, culture and translation studies.

The collection in this volume consists of reviewed articles delivered at the fourth edition of the conference on *Cultures and Languages in Contact* organized by the ALCS Lab on 14 and 15 December 2016. The collection is thus a varied set of articles touching on aspects relating to (a) applied language studies such as English language teaching, language contact and language use; (b) culture studies such as identity politics, colonial and post-colonial discourse; and (c) aspects relating to the interface between language and culture such as language and gender as well as translation studies. Sometimes, it is difficult to draw a demarcation line between the different disciplines involved, a fact which shows the interdisciplinarity of the areas debated at the conference.









Cultures and Languages in Contact IV

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Cultures and Languages in Contact IV

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Cultures and Languages in Contact IV







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Bicultural Identity and Literacy Practices

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Abstract

There is a great deal of research exploring the relationship between second language acquisition and identity (e.g. Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000, Norton 2000). Much of this research has raised issues of identity and power, specifically how the opportunities for literary practice in a second language are socially structured (Habermas 1987). There has been no research, however, into the role of second language acquisition and the (re)-construction of second language user identity. Identity formation is supported by new developments in second language acquisition (SLA) theory, namely Sfard's participation metaphor (PM), which has emerged in SLA literature as a complement to acquisition metaphor (AM) and views SLA as a process of 'becoming a member of a certain community' (Sfard 1998). Participation for bilingual adults is not just about aligning themselves with the requirements of a new discourse community, but it is a profound struggle to reconstruct the self. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to show how dual cultural identities operate within bilingual individuals and what kind of changes occur in their native cultural and linguistic frameworks when they are extended to include another cultural and linguistic framework. These frameworks might complement or oppose each other, but eventually they enrich the individual's identity.

0. Introduction

appropriately applied in interpersonal Language only communication when it is deployed from some common social standpoint or culturally sanctioned subject position, which determines how people order their thoughts and ideas into a meaningful argument. The research into language socialization shows how people are simultaneously socialized "into and through" language and discourse to become familiar with their community's ways of thinking. feeling. and being in the world (Howard 2014). Consequently, the language use reflects the way in which individuals'

identities are influenced by the discourses and social practices in which they participate.

In varying degrees we all are expected to assume certain attitudes, values, and beliefs typical of our discourse communities for making appropriate meanings with conventional linguistic forms. Identities can be conceptualized in this context as being formed by the orientational standpoint we take, toward others and ourselves, and expressed in speaking and writing in the rhetorical style typical of our discourse community. Language competence in this sense is a compilation of different imposed, assumed and negotiable identities as a language itself is an ensemble of different overlapping voices, referred to by Bakhtin (1986) as 'social languages and speech genres.'

The primary focus of this paper is on the relationship between second language acquisition and identity construction and is based on the premise that the identity of a bilingual language user is not a unitary concept which can be divided into clear-cut categories of first language (L1) and culture, and second language (L2) and culture. Two languages and two cultures condensed in one psyche provide opportunities for unique reflections; however, cross-cultural life also constantly questions, challenges, defines and redefines various aspects of bicultural identity which often leads to major personality change.

1. An identity approach to second language acquisition

Individuals participate in several communities of practice (Wenger 2000) and in each community they encounter new linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours. These social encounters require individuals to adjust themselves and their linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours to suit the social situation's demands (see Giddens 1999:416). When the individual is attempting to become a participant in a social context which involves having to function in a language other than his/her native tongue, these adjustments can involve considerable effort. The social situation of having or wanting to acquire a second language, be it in a formal, institutionalised way i.e. formal instruction in the L2, or an informal way, say as an immigrant in a host country, means that the individual is a participant in a complex, dynamic and non-linear process involving a wide range of interacting and possibly conflicting variables, and this participation in different discursive practices contributes to the (re)construction of the learner's identity. However

identity is not singular but multiple, and these multiple identities are in constant interaction and possible conflict with one another. Therefore, identity both constitutes and is constituted by social interaction and is multiple and evolving in nature. As Bakhtin points out, for every social activity there is a particular genre which limits and constrains the linguistic choices and behavior, and it is these genres that allow for mutual understanding (Bakhtin 2003: 282-283). However being ontologically multiple does not mean identity is fragmented; as Wenger says, identity "[i]s neither unitary or fragmented. It is an experience of multimembership [...] at once one and multiple" (2000: 242). In second language learning situations, the social interactions that the learner experiences with 'others' will affect the way the L2 learning process is accomplished. A theory of SLA needs to address the multiple positions from which second language learners 2LL can speak with respect to his/ her social interaction with the target language community and in doing so it needs to examine issues of marginality and relations of power. A 2LL's opportunities to practice the target language, which is essential to the SLA process, are "socially structured in both formal and informal sites of language learning" and often these sites can be sites of "struggle" (Norton & McKinney 2011:73-74).

In second language acquisition studies, research has traditionally moved from a focus on external factors such as instructional methodological issues and quality of input to affective factors such as learner motivation, aptitude and learning strategies. However, Norton and McKinney point out, much of this research has been carried out with the idea that 2L learners are able to choose when, where, how and with whom in the target community they can interact (ibid.). These factors may liberate or constrain the process of acquiring a second language and the development of the learner's own identity, as in using the target language they are involved in (re)creating or developing their sense of self in relation to the target language social contexts they encounter. As Norton and McKinney point out, "Language learning engages the identities of learners because language itself is not only a linguistic system of signs and symbols, but also a complex social practice through which relationships are defined, negotiated and resisted" (ibid. 77). As Bakhtin has pointed out, speakers of a second language need to

struggle to appropriate the voices of others and to use their new voice for their own purposes (1981). However this struggle to find or appropriate a voice is as much a social struggle as a linguistic one. Here we see the concept of what Bourdieu calls 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' speakers (1977:648), how language learners are positioned by others, as opposed to them having agency to position themselves in the target language's institutional and social contexts. This concern with the social contexts in which second language users participate is concerned not only with how language can define institutional practices, the typical genre, but also how language serves to construct the 2L learner's sense of him/herself. For Weedon, language "is the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (1997: 21).

So we argue that SLA acquisition as both a cognitive and individual process and also a matter of relations between speakers in specific sociocultural contexts. And this observation raises questions as to how those social relations are constructed, the power relations involved and the constraints or freedoms those relations allow the 2L learner in his/her interactions in the target language community. 2L learners have different amounts of contact with the target language community, in different formal and informal situations, which will result in different intensities of participation. 2L learners need to "negotiate language as a system and as a social practice" (Norton & McKinney 2011:81) which may be inclusive of them or may marginalise them, preventing participation (see Wenger 1998). We argue that traditional views on affective factors in 2LA, such as motivation, do not adequately account for or predict the levels of participation in the target language, but more importantly, it is the social positions attributed to the participants that is a major factor and here we need to consider issues of power and inequality. As Norton argues, "speech, speakers and social relations are inseparable" (Norton 1997: 410). Learning a second language is therefore also an ongoing process of identity (re)construction.

As we have seen, there has been considerable research exploring the relationship between second language acquisition and identity and this research has often raised issues of identity and power, specifically how the opportunities for literary practice in a second language are socially structured (see Habermas 1987).

2. Dynamics of bilingual identity

The complexity of bilingual identity has been recently addressed in the biculturalism literature by considering an individual difference variable which captures the phenomenology of managing one's dual identities. For example, Benet-Martínez and Haritatos's (2005) findings show that bilingual identity is not a unitary construct because it comprises two different and psychometrically independent components, which are divided into two categories:

- cultural *blendedness* versus compartmentalization the degree of dissociation versus overlap perceived between the two cultural orientations (e.g., "I see myself as a Chinese in the United States" vs. "I am a Chinese-American")
- cultural *harmony* versus conflict- the degree of tension or clash versus compatibility perceived between the two cultures (e.g., I feel trapped between the two cultures" vs. "I do not see conflict between Chinese and American ways of doing things"). Q.-L. Huynh et al. (2011: 830)

Since cultural blendedness and cultural harmony are influenced by different contextual and personality variables, they function separately. Lower blendedness is related, for example, to lower openness to new challenges or higher barriers to second language acquisition; whereas lower cultural harmony is shaped by interpersonal traits such as higher neuroticism or greater perception of discrimination. Therefore, bicultural individuals may have any combination of the above cultural components. However, much more research is necessary to understand how other factors (apart from individual difference variables) including increasing cultural diversity and global interconnectedness, influence the construction of bilingual selves.

3. The integration of bicultural identities

Identity formation is supported by new developments in second language acquisition (SLA) theory, namely Sfard's participation metaphor (PM), which has emerged in SLA literature as a complement to acquisition metaphor (AM) and views SLA as a process of 'becoming a member of a certain community' (Sfard 1998). Typical of traditional learning is AM, characterized by such terms as

'having' and 'knowledge' (ibid.), whereas PM connotes such expressions as "doing", "knowing" and "becoming part of a greater whole" (ibid.), which imply "the ability to communicate in the community and act according to its particular language of norms"(ibid.). Applying this approach to L2 learning shifts the focus of attention from language structure to language use in context which makes us consider the meaning of concepts such as 'affiliation' and 'belonging' in the process of identity reconstruction while crossing linguistic and cultural borders. Participation for second language users is not just about aligning themselves with the requirements of a new discourse community, but it is a profound struggle to reconstruct the self. Inspired by this observation we aim in this paper to show how dual cultural identities operate within bilingual individuals and what changes occur in their native cultural and linguistic frameworks when they are extended to include another cultural and linguistic framework. Second language users usually move between different social and cultural identities, some of which are more important than others; some of which they identify with and some of which they reject. Their linguistic choices influence the subject positions they occupy in discourse practices. The plural 'positions' reflects the idea of people interacting simultaneously with several social groups, which means that identity construction entails continuous self-identification and ultimately self-reconstruction.

Such a dynamic view of identity is captured in a social constructionists' approach, which conceptualizes identities as an interactional accomplishment, constituted and negotiated in discourse (Davis & Harré 1990), and in poststructuralists' thought, which traditionally emphasizes ways in which particular identities are legitimized or devalued in the context of political economies (Bourdieu 1991). Drawing on those theoretical assumptions, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) have proposed their own framework which combines the social constructionist focus on discursive construction of identities and the poststructuralist emphasis on the role of power relations in identity formation. The framework differentiates between three types of identities: *imposed identities* (which are not negotiable in a particular time and place), *assumed identities* (which are accepted and not negotiated), *negotiable identities* (which are contested by groups and individuals) (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004: 21). Since the

problem of the mechanisms of identity formation has not yet been resolved, Pavlenko and Blackledge's framework is an important contribution to the field in that it raises relevant questions of the differentiation and correlation between different identities. Following this framework we argue that identities are social, discursive and narrative options made available to authors within a particular sociocultural and political context, and constituted by individuals in their struggle for affiliation and belonging. This struggle frequently involves a fundamental shift in both individual² and collective³ aspects of their authorial self in "an attempt to self-name, to self-characterize, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives" (ibid.p: 19).

The way language users draw on these more or less compatible identity options becomes even more complex in the case of adult bilinguals because their native socio-cultural framework is broadened to include another cultural and linguistic framework. These frameworks sometimes complement and sometimes oppose each other, leading to the construction of vague meanings, and frequently identity conflict. This linguistically spurred conflict is the key incentive for identity change because language is one of the most rooted elements of our identity and one which is easily identifiable by others. Like many other aspects of our identity, we take it for granted and we only reflect upon it when we feel our linguistic identity is being threatened. This was the case of Polish-English bilingual, Anna Wierzbicka, who experienced the profound reconstruction of her identity which took place in the act of her linguistic and cultural border crossing from Polish into English culture. Wierzbicka documented her atypical experience of an adult who attempted to become a native user of her second language in her work *The Double Life of a Bilingual: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Wierzbicka 1997). In writing this she investigated her passage to the mastery of the English language and consequently the process of her identity reconstruction. Her experience differs from that of being raised as a

² The 'Individual self' is that aspect of the author's self which is a product of their mind, cognition, personality and life history (Lehman 2014a).

³ The 'Collective self' is that aspect of the author's self which is a social construct, constituted in the act of the writer's alignment with the conventions of dominant practices and discourses located in a particular institutional and cultural context (ibid.).

bilingual and from the experience of those adult learners who aim to achieve a certain degree of linguistic proficiency. According to Lantolf and Pavlenko (1998), people are agents in charge of their own learning, and most frequently they decide to learn their second language 'to a certain extent', which allows them to be proficient, even fluent, but without the consequences of losing the old and adopting the new ways of being in the world. Wierzbicka's unique story of language learning has important implications for reconceptualizing the notions of agency and power relations, and their influence on identity change in the process of the recovery of the self in the second language. In what follows, drawing on Pavlenko and Blackledge's framework we will analyze Wierzbicka's identity reconstruction as involving imposed, assumed and negotiable elements.

The imposed (or non-negotiable) aspects refer to those identity constituents which individuals cannot resist or contest and which are located within particular discourses and ideologies of language including power relations inscribed in them. They can be linked to a phase of identity loss proposed by Pavlenko which may feature all, in more dramatic cases when individuals decide to cross cultural and linguistic borders to 'the point of no return' (Pavlenko & Lantolf 2014: 162) or some, if they decide to learn their second language 'to a certain extent', of the following stages: loss of one's linguistic identity, loss of all subjectivities, loss of the frame of reference and the link between the signifier and the signified, loss of the inner voice, and first language attrition (see Pavlenko 1998).

In Wierzbicka's case, her imposed identity was formed by the loss of those identity constituents which were influenced by a wide range of conceptual distinctions including philosophy of life, expression of emotions, social practices, interpersonal relationships and time orientation. According to Wierzbicka, the Polish philosophy of life appears to be best expressed in:

[t]he common Polish word los⁴, whose primary meaning is 'a lottery ticket', and a secondary one, 'a

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⁴ Polish words in all the quotes included in this article have been italicized by Anderson & Lehman, while the English referents are in single quotation marks.

fate/destiny', but seen somewhat in terms of a lottery: unpredictable, uncertain and risky. (op.cit.p: 116)

Polish understanding of *los* is characterized by lack of predictability of future events and hence limited influence on what happens in life. In Anglo-American culture, the concept of self-determination negates much of the influence of fate and destiny on human life. Lack of success is one's own fault, not a matter of blind fate.

Another conceptual distinction that has no equivalence in English refers to emotions. It has been convincingly evidenced in Wierzbicka's words:

[I]n Polish, I used to say often strasznie się cieszę, strasznie się martwię, or okropnie się denerwuję, but none of these things were really sayable in English. First, the English equivalents of the Polish intensifiers strasznie and okropnie ('terribly') would sound English-language conversation. excessive in an Second, the Polish durative reflexive verbs suggested an ongoing emotional process, and an active attitude (similar to that reflected in the atypical English verb to 'worry', and in the archaic verb to 'rejoice'), and so they were quite different from the English adjectives describing states such as 'happy' or 'upset'. And third, the lexical meaning of the Polish words in question was different from any corresponding English words: cieszę się was closer to the archaic 'rejoice' than to 'happy', martwie sie combined something like 'worry' with elements of 'chagrin' and 'sorrow', denerwuję się suggested a state of great agitation and 'fretting' (but without the negative connotations of the latter word) as well as something like 'being upset, and so on'. (ibid. p: 115-116)

Social practices related to Wierzbicka's Polish-speaking and English-speaking aspects of her life were also different. For example:

speaking Polish in Australia I couldn't find Polish words for such common-place new realities as 'babysitters' or 'parties'; whereas common Polish words such as, for example, *imieniny* ('nameday celebrations') disappeared from my life together with the social rituals which they stood for. (ibid. p: 115)

Like many other newcomers to the Anglo world, she had to reconceptualize her relationship-related notions. For example, she was amazed by the elasticity of the English concept of 'friend', which pertains to a wide variety of relationships, from deep and close, to quite casual and superficial. The following explanation provided by Wierzbicka illustrates this difference clearly:

[T]his was in stark contrast to the Polish words przyjaciel (male) and przyjaciółka (female), which could only stand for exceptionally close and intimate relationships. What struck me even more was the importance of the concept embodied in the Polish word koledzy (female counterpart, koleżanki) as a basic conceptual category defining human relations quite unlike the relatively marginal concept encoded in the English word 'colleague', relevant only to professional elites. It became clear to me that concepts such as koledzy, (koleżanki -plural) and przyjaciele (przyjaciółki -plural) organized the social universe quite differently from concepts such as 'friends'. (ibid.p:117)

Living in Australia, Wierzbicka was forced to modify ways in which she used to perceive and manage time in her native culture.

[t]ime was structured differently in Polish and in English. In English, the structure of the day in general seemed determined by the structure of a working day, with a lunch-break time in the middle, and two equal halves before it ('morning') and after it ('afternoon'). In Polish, on the other hand, the day was seen as a whole, extending from the end of one night and the beginning of another, with an *obiad* ('dinner') roughly in the middle, and with a 'morning' (*rano*) seen as a first part of the day, extending till no later than 11am, and with an 'afternoon' (*popoludnie*) starting after the *obiad*, that is, roughly after 3.30 or 4pm. (The very

important Anglo concepts of "AM" and "PM" had no equivalents in Polish at all, and played no particular role in Polish culture). (ibid. p: 115)

Another area of Wierzbicka's identity reconstruction involved the assumed elements of herself. The assumed elements (or non-negotiated) aspects of identity are those constituted in the process of imaginative production of identity (Hall 1990), with which individuals are comfortable and view as core parts of their identities. Those aspects are usually the ones most valued and legitimized by the dominant discourses. In our view, they correspond to the four stages of recovery and (re)construction outlined by Pavlenko which include: appropriation of others' voices, emergence of one's own new voice, often in writing first, translation therapy: reconstruction of one's past, and continuous growth 'into' new positions and subjectivities (see Pavlenko 1998).

The ability to grow into new positions and subjectivities is made possible due to L2 user's identification with imagined communities, which "[r]efer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination" (Norton & McKinney 2011: 76) and with whom we feel affiliated with and are not interested in contesting. Anderson, who first proposed the term "imagined communities", argued that nations are imagined communities "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1991: 6). Adopting the basic premises of Pavlenko and Blackledge's model, we view imagined communities as valuable resources to provide insights into imagined identities constituted by the assumed, unquestionable and negotiable aspects of self. In Wierzbicka's case, Australian society became her imagined community as she was getting engrossed in the study of Australian English and the Australian ethnography of communication. Her successful participation in this community involved not only rhetorical adjustments but also contributed to important changes in her personality.

[I] had to learn to 'calm down', to become less 'sharp' and less 'blunt', less 'excitable', less 'extreme' in my

judgments, more 'tactful' in their expression. I had to learn the use of Anglo understatement (instead of the more hyperbolic and more emphatic Polish ways of speaking). I had to learn to avoid sounding 'dogmatic', 'argumentative', 'emotional' Students' course assessment questionnaires have often thrown light on my cultural dilemmas. Thus, while often very positive and praising my enthusiasm, for a long time they also often included critical accents referring to my , 'intensity', 'passion' and 'lack of detachment' [...]. But these weren't just changes in the patterns of communication. There were also changes in my personality. I was becoming a different person, at least when I was speaking English [...] Thus, I came to feel that by learning the Anglo ways I could enrich myself immeasurably, but I could also 'lose myself'. (op.cit.p: 119-121)

Finally, the reconstruction of Wierzbicka's self also involved the negotiable aspects of her new identity, i.e., the ones that can be and are contested and resisted in order to integrate fragmented, decentered, and shifting identities experienced by a second language user in their desire for a unified and coherent identity. As Wierzbicka herself admits,

There were, however, limits to my malleability as a 'culturally constituted self'. There were English modes of interaction that I never learnt to use -because I couldn't and because I wouldn't: they went too much against the grain of that 'culturally constituted self'. (ibid.p.:120)

The English modes of interaction she was unable to accept pertained to the more intimate aspects of interpersonal relations and included conversational routines and 'impassionate' (compared to Polish standards) style of family talk typical of English discourse. Wierzbicka describes this lack of semantic compatibility between Polish and English discourse in the following words:

"[t]here was the "How are you" game: "How are you?
- I'm fine, how are you?"; there were weather-related

conversational openings ("Lovely day isn't it? - Isn't it beautiful?"). The acute discomfort that such conversational routines were causing me led me to understand the value attached by Polish culture to 'spontaneity', to saying what one really thinks, to talking about what one is really interested in, to showing what one really feels [...] I have never brought myself to use formulaic expressions such as, "Pleased to meet you", "It was nice meeting you", or "How are you?", and not just because they are formulaic (Polish, too, has formulaic expressions), but because they are not fully formulaic, and, unlike, for example, Japanese politeness formulae, 'pretend' to be spontaneous and individualized. To use such expressions would have gone too much against the grain. (ibid.p.:120-121)

According to Wierzbicka (1997) the English language of intimacy, dedicated to family talk, lacks the emotional component that allows for genuine expression of one's affection. For example, the importance and frequent use of affectionate diminutives in Polish discourse gives Polish interpersonal interaction a quite different flavor from that characteristic of English, the flavor that she successfully incorporated in her family language. Along these lines Wierzbicka observes:

[w]hen I tried to soothe my children in the first weeks of their lives with anxious Polish invocations of "Córeńko! Córeńko!" (lit. 'Little daughter! Little daughter!') my husband pointed out how quaint it sounds from the point of view of a native speaker of English to solemnly address a new-born baby as 'little daughter'. Now, when my daughters are university students, I still say to them córeńko!, and this typical Polish invocation reflects something important about Polish family relations and traditional cultural attitudes. (ibid.p.: 117)

Another intrinsic constituent of Wierzbicka's personality which is not subject to change is her emotionality. Its importance is illustrated in the following excerpt from her story:

[w]hen I was talking on the phone, from Australia, to my mother in Poland (15,000 km. away), with my voice, loud and excited, carrying much further than is customary in an Anglo conversation, my husband would signal to me: "don't shout!". [...] this perplexed and confused me: to me, this 'shouting' and this 'excitement' was an inherent part of my personality. (ibid.p.: 119)

4. Conclusions

Although our analysis of Wierzbicka's unique story has been very brief, it leads to some important conclusions pertaining to the process of the cultural and linguistic integration which operates within bilingual language users. First, the perception of first and second language and culture by bilingual speakers differs significantly in terms of the distinct persona⁵ enacted by each language. In relation to this, cross-cultural differences, including linguistic differences, can be strategically employed by agentive adult bilinguals to work in their favor in social interactions and practices. Secondly, the self⁶ of the bilingual language user is in 'continuous production' (Harré & Gillett 1994: 111) and emerges as he/she participates in the cultural practices and is positioned interactively and reflectively in different discourses. While interactive positioning refers to one individual positioning the other, the reflective positioning, in our view critical for the reconstruction of identity of adult bilinguals, is the process of positioning oneself (Pavlenko 2004: 20). The reflective positioning involves negotiation of identities, which in a Bakhtinian heteroglossic view, takes place 'within' individuals, resulting in changes in selfrepresentation activated by imposed, assumed and negotiable identities as outlined by Pavlenko and Blackledge and applied in this work to analyze Wierzbicka's identity reconstruction.

⁵ According to Harré *persona* refers to "the publicly recognized human individual who is the focus of overt practices of social life" (Harré 1987: 110).

⁶ According to Harré *the self* is "the still centre of experience to which various conscious states, including organizations of memory, perception, and agency are attributed " (ibid.)

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