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Shu Wen Ong 15 April 2013

Integrating Science and the Humanities? A Comparison of Quantitative Versus Qualitative Narrative Analysis Through a Study of Bilingual Autobiographies

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Abstract

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In light of the increasing integration of cognitive science with literary criticism in recent years, this study compares quantitative and qualitative narrative analysis methodologies to explore the extent to which psychology, as a scientific enterprise, can and should interface with literature. This study compared bilingual and monolingual autobiographies for themes related to linguistic status, and identity fragmentation or ambiguity, using Ulric Neisser's Theory of Five Selves (1988) as a theoretical framework. The researcher applied judge-based thematic analysis and word-count analysis, as well as qualitative analysis to examine the relationship between linguistic background and individuals' experiences of inner division and conflict. The findings from the quantitative methodologies suggested no significant relationship between linguistic status and experiences of identity fragmentation; high variability on all dependent variables was found across different texts as well as across judges' ratings. On the other hand, the qualitative approach to the same texts yielded richer information about the existence and nature of doubleness or confusion in individual self-concepts – linguistic background is far from the only reason for such an experience. The differences in knowledge derived from qualitative versus quantitative methodologies suggest that current quantitative models may not be adequate as standalone approaches to narrative analysis yet. Ultimately, more caution has to be applied when considering the interface between science and literature.

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Abstract

In light of the increasing integration of cognitive science with literary criticism in recent years, this study compares quantitative and qualitative narrative analysis methodologies to explore the extent to which psychology, as a scientific enterprise, can and should interface with literature. This study compared bilingual and monolingual autobiographies for themes related to linguistic status, and identity fragmentation or ambiguity, using Ulric Neisser's Theory of Five Selves (1988) as a theoretical framework. The researcher applied judge-based thematic analysis and word-count analysis, as well as qualitative analysis to examine the relationship between linguistic background and individuals' experiences of inner division and conflict. The findings from the quantitative methodologies suggested no significant relationship between linguistic status and experiences of identity fragmentation; high variability on all dependent variables was found across different texts as well as across judges' ratings. On the other hand, the qualitative approach to the same texts yielded richer information about the existence and nature of doubleness or confusion in individual self-concepts – linguistic background is far from the only reason for such an experience. The differences in knowledge derived from qualitative versus quantitative methodologies suggest that current quantitative models may not be adequate as standalone approaches to narrative analysis yet. Ultimately, more caution has to be applied when considering the interface between science and literature.

Keywords: science, literature, narrative analysis, autobiography, bilingualism

Integrating Science and the Humanities? A Comparison of Quantitative Versus Qualitative Narrative Analysis Through a Study of Bilingual Autobiographies

Since the late 1990s, there has been a surge of interest in interfacing cognitive science with literature; the field of psychology is part of this push towards interdisciplinarity – something that literary academic Alan Richardson has, controversially or not, described to be "the great interdisciplinary venture of our times" (1999, p. 158). The significant development of literary Darwinism as a branch of literary criticism has arguably been one of the most major signs of this interdisciplinary shift, with scholars such as Lisa Zunshine, Joseph Carroll, Ellen Dissanayake, and Jonathan Gottschall conducting and publishing extensive research on the evolutionary and psychological bases for reading and writing literature. Furthermore, a glance at published journals related to literary criticism and analysis, such as Style, reveals no lack of efforts in the application of psychological theories and scientific methodologies to the analysis of stories and narratives. The enterprise of marrying scientific approaches with literary analysis appears to have taken off at an impressive rate within a relatively short period of time.

It is understandable that scholars of literature and psychology – or more broadly, cognitive science – alike have become more enthusiastic about placing their respective fields in dialogue with each other. One result of this is an increase in literary analysis studies that make use of scientific methodologies used in psychology to examine narrative texts (e.g. Carroll et al., 2012). Where literary analysis has traditionally been an almost completely qualitative enterprise, recent interdisciplinary developments have resulted in the rise in quantitative approaches in the field as well. Yet, what insights are gained and lost from the interfacing of this methodology with literature? Furthermore, given that many of these studies are also inclined towards analysing narratives for the insights they can lend into their authors' minds (e.g. Kaufman & Sexton, 2006;

Stirman & Pennebaker, 2001), what do quantitative approaches add to or subtract from our understanding of individual writers through their writing?

Apart from the questions raised above, there are also wider concerns about how the fields of psychology and literature have moved towards integration in the past decade or so. Given that significant populations of cognitive scientists and literary critics alike have embraced scientific research approaches and perspectives as having the ability to unveil new kinds of data and hence revitalise the study of literature, is this wholesale eagerness to apply science to art a wise one? What is the nature of this new data being generated and is it insightful? Apart from continuing to conduct research applying scientific approaches to literature, it is also worthwhile and prudent to evaluate the nature and results of the interface itself.

I am interested in exploring these considerations about the interface of science and literature through the application of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to narrative analysis, in order to compare the insights derived from both. Because published autobiographical writing most explicitly bridges literary writing with personal life narratives, I felt that such texts would be a good genre to examine in this study. In particular, I chose to compare bilingual writers with monolingual ones for differences in their narratives on identity. As such, this study asks an overarching research question – do bilingual individuals have different experiences of selfhood compared to monolinguals, and how is this reflected through autobiographical writing? Yet, it also asks a meta-question – to what extent can, and should, the scientific approach be used to study the humanistic enterprise of literature? This study will replicate and expand upon existing research in the field of narrative analysis.

About This Study

Bilingualism and Personal Identity

The "bilingual fate", writes Argentine-Chilean author Ariel Dorfman, involves an "incessant and often perverse doubleness" (Dorfman, 2002, p. 30-31); other bilingual writers have used starker terms to express similar sentiments – Isabelle de Courtivron, a scholar in French literature, expresses having felt like a "linguistic transvestite" at some points in her life (de Courtivron, 2003, p. 163), and Cuban-American writer Perez Firmat refers to Spanglish – the linguistic hybrid of Spanish and English – as representing an "impossible dream of wholeness" (Montagne & Firmat, 2011). Based on these anecdotal accounts, it would seem that a sense of having an identity that is split, and/or that occupies an undefined, in-between state, permeates the psyche of bilingual individuals. Bilingual writers sometimes espouse their own folk psychological theories as to why this experience exists. On the one hand, this doubleness appears to be a result of the perception that people have limited capacities to absorb and contain languages, with monolingualism as the assumed default. Polish-born writer Eva Hoffman describes how she "wanted Polish silenced, so that I could make room within myself for English", where the "room" is both neurological and psychological in nature (Hoffman, 2002, p. 50). She saw the Polish language as being more deeply attached to both the physical structure of her brain, as well as to her emotions and memories, with the implication that the complete acquisition of English would require a suppression of her use of Polish (Hoffman, 2002). Another reason why bilingualism and a split sense of self are related experiences could be due to the view that people have an identity or self that resides with a specific language. "Will I become another person if I speak another language?" Yoko Tawada, a Japanese writer based in Europe, muses (Tawada, 2003, p. 147). In turn, Nancy Huston, asks, "Why did Kundera lose his sense of

humour when he started writing in French? […] *Who are we*, in other words, if we don't have the same ideas, the same fantasies, the same existential outlooks or even the same *opinions* in one language as in another?" (Huston, 2002, p. 67) Who are we? This question reverberates at the core of autobiographical discourse; bilingual writers' accounts of being doubled, or split, or trapped in the middle, suggest a certain confusion and dissonance in the understanding and construction of their identities that is different from what they perceive the normative – in other words, monolingual – experience to be.

In this project, I will examine whether bilingual individuals do indeed experience comparatively fragmented and/or ambiguous self-identities, as well as the relationship between language and these experiences. I will do so by examining published autobiographical texts as narratives of identity construction. As I will elaborate upon later in the paper, this analysis will be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and will draw upon Ulric Neisser's Five Selves Theory (1988) as a framework for articulating how the writers of these texts construct their identities. Ultimately, this project is driven by two major questions: 1) Is the experience of a split and/or ambiguous self a unique experience for bilingual individuals? 2) How do writers understand, construct, and express their experiences of being fragmented and/or trapped in between identities?

Numerous psychological studies have shed some light on the relationship between bilingualism and various aspects of self-identity. Autobiographical memory is a particularly important part of self-identity, as individuals look back upon past experiences in order to construct their sense of self. In a meta-analysis conducted on existing experimental studies related to bilingual autobiographical memory, Schrauf (2000) makes the argument that the encoding and retrieval of memory in bilinguals is filtered through their socio-linguistic states,

which is determined by the cultural circumstances in which the individual is currently situated. This argument is premised on the language socialisation paradigm, which posits that children develop linguistic and socio-cultural competency in a manner such that the two are inextricably interfaced. Language provides a structure for thinking about the social world in a manner consistent with that of other members within the culture (Schrauf, 2000). Cued recall studies conducted with Spanish-English bilinguals who acquired English later in life, using lists of equivalent words translated in Spanish and English, suggest that word cues in the first language tend to activate reported memories from earlier in life than cues in the second language (Bugelski, 1977; Schrauf & Rubin, 2000). A similar study conducted with Russian-English bilinguals using lists with different words as opposed to translation equivalents similarly showed that first language cues evoked reported memories from a significantly younger age than second language cues, and also that the average age of memories related to the second language was approximately two years after the average age of immigration (Marian & Neisser, 2000). Furthermore, the word cues evoked more memories of events that took place in the same language, suggesting a "congruity" between retrieval language and language at the time of the event (Marian & Neisser, 2000). Schrauf and Rubin's study (2000) involving Spanish-English bilinguals also found that when prompted to describe the manner in which these memories "came to" them, subjects who reported that they came in the form of words as opposed to images displayed a congruence between the language used to *internally* retrieve the memory, and the language in which the event had taken place in.

Apart from autobiographical memory, language also appears to have some influence on individuals' values and attitudes due to its nature as a cue to specific cultures and their attendant constructs and attributions (Hong et al., 2000). It has also been generally suggested that

bilinguals are highly likely to be bicultural or multicultural, meaning that they contain two or more cultures within themselves and that these cultures all exert cognitive and behavioural influences upon the individual (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). The Cultural Frame Switching theory (CFS; Hong, Chiu, & Kung, 1997) puts forth an argument that situational cues prime the bilingual individual to draw upon the corresponding cultural framework; for example, being in an English-speaking environment would hypothetically prime the bilingual individual to refer more to values and attributions associated with the culture in which they typically use English. Empirical studies on bilinguals' responses to questionnaires administered in different languages indicate that the language medium of a questionnaire appears to prime bilingual individuals to respond in ways congruent to the corresponding culture of the language (e.g. Bond & Yang, 1982; Ralston, Cunniff, & Gustafson, 1995). For example, in a study on Hong Kong bilinguals' scores on the Schwartz Value Survey, Ralston and colleagues (1995) found that compared to subjects who were administered the Chinese language questionnaire, subjects in the English language group significantly rated values culturally important in the West as being more important to them personally as well, and Eastern culturally-important values as being less personally important. In another study, Ramirez-Esparza and colleagues (2006) tested whether CFS also applied to *personality* by administering the Big Five Inventory (BFI) – which has been previously tested to have good psychometric properties in both its English and Spanish versions by Oliver John (as cited in Ramirez-Esparza et al., 2006) – to Spanish-English bilinguals in both languages a week apart. They found that subjects scored higher in extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness when responding to the English version of the BFI; these three traits are also ones that tend to be stronger in English-speaking rather than Spanish-speaking cultures (Ramirez-Esparza et al., 2006). Their findings suggest that language, as a

cultural cue, can elicit variations in personality, as well as values and attitudes; the bilingual individual, having internalised multiple different cultures, has a multiplicity of selves that are not so drastically different as much as they are variations along a similar theme, and that are activated according to linguistic cues.

Apart from influencing how individuals' memories are encoded and retrieved, and what values, attitudes, and personality traits they call forth, language as a cultural cue also seems to have an effect on how individuals *construct* their sense of self and organise their past experiences. Analyses of cases from psychotherapy suggest that language choice for bilingual individuals can impact their narrative constructions in a range of ways (Schrauf, 2000). For example, the language in which therapeutic sessions are conducted can influence whether or not an individual speaks about their past experiences in a flat and detached, or in an emotionally engaged manner; the use of one's first language is often related with the ability to truly tap into the emotional immediacy of one's memories (Schrauf, 2000). Inversely, patients would sometimes speak in the second language in order to preserve a sense of emotional distance from certain memories (Schrauf, 2000). Furthermore, language can be used for the reframing of personal experiences. In describing a case seen by Foster (as cited in Schrauf, 2000), Schrauf (2000) enumerates how bilingualism gives one the option of having an alternative experience of the self in the case of a Chilean immigrant to the United States who relied upon speaking English to buttress her conception of herself as a strong, independent woman. In a case described by Amati-Mehler and colleagues (as cited in Schrauf, 2000), five women undergoing therapy in Italian – a second language for them – found it newly possible to construct a desirable adult feminine identity. Language hence becomes crucial to the building of an identity, and bilinguals have access to a double-ness of experience because they have the option of using more than one

language – and by extension, more than one linguaculture – to express themselves. In a way, these studies shed some light as to why folk psychology often holds a view that is deftly summarised by a Czech proverb describing learning a new language as acquiring a new soul.

Yet, to suggest that these personal accounts, as well as psychological studies of bilingual individuals, point towards a split or doubled self-experience is to implicitly assume that the "default" or normative human experience is that of having a single self-concept, and that this possession of a single, whole self is in the domain of the monolingual individual. This is not necessarily the case. Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps draw from writings by scholars and artists ranging from Erving Goffman to Martin Heidegger to Milan Kundera to suggest that "notions and realisations of self as fragmented and fluid are much at home in the postmodern Western world" (1996, p. 29). Similarly, Paul Eakin writes in his book *How Our Lives Become Stories* that to think of the self, monolingual or not, as a unitary entity may be an "oversimplifying reification […] that obscures the multiple registers of self-experience" (1999, p. 22). While it is possible to think of the self as being unified, such a framework may obscure the different ways in any individual constructs their sense of self; it is also out-of-date with how the idea of self is conceptualized in theoretical spheres today.

Neisser's Theory of Five Selves

One theoretical framework that takes into account multiple types of selfhood in a single individual is enumerated in Ulric Neisser's (1988) paper, "Five Kinds of Self-Knowledge". Arguing that various kinds of self-specifying information form different aspects of the self, and that these aspects can often be "so distinct that they are essentially different *selves*" (1988, p. 35), Neisser proposes that information about identity can be organised into five different selves: Ecological, interpersonal, extended, private, and conceptual (Neisser, 1988). Individuals do not

necessarily experience these selves as being separate, and the different selves develop at different points, but people highly value all of these selves and will strive to maintain them. Neisser's (1988) five selves are described below:

1. *The ecological self* is the self that is experienced relative to the physical environment, and that is built upon objective information about the physical environment and the self's interaction with it.
2. *The interpersonal self* is the self that is "engaged in immediate unreflective social interaction with another person" (p. 41). Like the ecological self, the interpersonal self can be perceived based on objective information and experience.
3. *The extended self* is the sense of self across the past, present, and future. It is experienced primarily through autobiographical memory; individuals draw upon these memories to construct life narratives defining their identity.
4. *The private self* is the sense of self that is gained through "conscious experiences that are not available to anyone else" (p. 50). It is typically constructed through memories, dreams, and one's imagination.
5. *The conceptual self* is the individual's concept of themselves as "a particular person in a familiar world" (p. 52). This knowledge is heavily based on "socially established and verbally communicated ideas" (p. 54), but also draws upon information represented in the previous four selves.

Eakin (1999) describes Neisser's Five Selves theory as being a good one through which to examine ideas of identity due to its recognition of various types of self-specifying information that stem from both physical and mental experiences, without privileging any one type of self.

Would it be possible to analyse bilinguals' "split" or "doubled" experiences using the framework of Neisser's theory? The bilingual anecdotes previously raised suggest that these individuals see themselves as having one self that lies in the domain of their first language and its associated linguaculture, and another in the domain of the second language and linguaculture. Neisser's theory suggests that even the monolingual individual, who is assumed to have the default, normative experience of selfhood, contains within him or herself five different notions of self. This allows for a more detailed paradigm in which to examine the *nature* of the bilingual individual's doubleness of experience. For example, does this sense of having a double primarily reside in one of the five selves described by Neisser? Could it be the case that bilinguals have a conceptual self that is heavily built upon their private self, since they often find themselves living in monolingual environments? The existing research on bilingualism has yet to apply Neisser's theory to bilingual experiences. Interestingly, Neisser himself had also conducted research on bilingualism and its effect on the recall of autobiographical memory (Marian & Neisser, 2000), but did not publish any research relating his early Five Selves Theory to his later work on bilingualism. However, because the Five Selves Theory may prove useful in enumerating the particularities of the bilingual's doubled identity, this project seeks to apply Neisser's theory upon the experiences of bilingual individuals in order to understand their processes of identity formation better.

Autobiographical Writing and Identity Construction

Apart from the shift away from seeing the self as a unitary entity, the self is now also commonly conceptualised as being something that the individual has to construct. More specifically, psychologists such as Jerome Bruner and Robyn Fivush have emphasised the importance of self-narration in identity construction (e.g. Bruner, 1987; Bruner, 1991; Bruner,

1997; Nelson, 2003). In other words, identity does not exist as an *a priori* entity, but is instead formed and shaped by the individual while in the process of organising self-specifying knowledge into the form of a narrative. Aneta Pavlenko describes the act of narration as the imposition of meaning upon lived experience, and as a "discursive construction" (2007, p. 168). In his book *Searching for Memory*, Daniel Schacter (1996) described three forms of memory, of which the first two are procedural and semantic knowledge, related to skills-based and factual knowledge respectively. The third form of memory is episodic, which consists of recollections of significant and definitive personal incidents (Eakin, 1999; Schacter, 1996). Autobiographical memory, seen as a subset of episodic memory, develops slightly later in life, accounting for why children often do not retain their memories from before the ages of 3 to 6 (Eakin, 1999). The role that parents play in the shaping of their children's autobiographical memory support the constructive perspective towards identity formation – researchers such as Fivush have found that children engage in memory-talk with their parents from a young age, and learn and internalise narrative forms used in their cultures when processing memories. The creation of a life-history is crucial for children to develop a "sense of self that continues to exist through time" (as cited in Eakin, 1999, p. 111); it is no coincidence that the language employed in describing autobiographical memory is similar to the description of the extended self in the Five Selves Theory. The extended self "emerges" (Eakin, 1999, p. 113) when the child develops the ability to contain and organise autobiographical memories. *How* an individual interprets and situates experiences within the larger narrative framework of their lives hence becomes as important to their sense of identity as actual events themselves.

Indeed, Ochs and Capps (1996) even make the argument that the self-narrative comes about *because* people experience the self – especially across past, present, and future – as being

fragmented, and hence the act of narration acts as the bridge between multiple selves, and "actualises" (p. 29) the existence of an individual's identity. An inability to situate certain life events in one's overarching autobiographical narrative can result in extreme experiences of identity fragmentation such as in post-traumatic stress disorder or multiple personality disorder. In both disorders, there is the presence of certain memories that are too "devastating" or "threatening" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 30) to fit into the life narrative. A number of therapeutic interventions hence focus on helping individuals articulate and reconcile these past events with the individuals' sense of chronological self (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Autobiographical representation is hence considered a necessary facet of having a healthy sense of identity because it allows for the expression and integration of an individual's multiple selves across various circumstances and contexts. In this respect, the analysis of autobiography is in many ways the analysis of a way in which individuals construct their sense of self across time, and as particular persons in the world they inhabit.

In a review of approximately four published autobiographies written by bilinguals in the English language, Xuemei Li selected writers that either had bilingual experiences stemming from being "souls in exile" or "global souls" (2007, p. 260). The former denotes a forced relinquishing of one linguaculture and the learning of another due to wider sociopolitical and historical reasons, such as refugee experiences, while the latter points towards the experience of being raised in an multicultural environment and possessing a level of comfort with traversing linguistic and cultural borders. She found that the circumstances behind individuals' bilingualism was important for how they constructed their sense of self and how they related to the world; for example, the "souls in exile" expressed a greater sense of powerlessness and involuntariness in the ways in which their language use and identities have been shaped, compared to the "global

souls" who often express empowerment in their ability to switch between multiple linguacultures as they see fit. For both groups, however, the experience of double-ness exists in terms of these writers talking about having different selves when in different linguistic worlds. Apart from the motif of the double self, these writers also talk about having experiences of occupying in-between spaces when it came to cultural identity, without having proper roots in absolute cultural identities that most other non-bilinguals would have. Finally, in the narratives that she reviewed, Li also found that these writers also shared another experience in common – the eventual ability to resolve their sense of double-ness and/or being stuck in an invisible middle ground by "reconciling" (2007, p. 271) their dual linguacultural backgrounds and "embracing" (p. 272) their hybrid cultural inheritance.

Statement of Purpose

Li's study (2007) asks similar questions to the one that drives this project: What can published autobiographical narratives tell us about how the bilingual experience has shaped individuals' identity construction? More specifically, do bilingual individuals generally experience a complicated, dual, and/or ambiguous sense of self that they perceive to be different from non-bilingual others? If so, how does this particular self-identity manifest? This study seeks to build upon Li's existing research by replicating her methodology and analysing published autobiographies written in English by bilingual writers. Where Li focused on bilinguals who either had exiled or globalised experiences, and excluded narratives from writers who did not fall clearly in either category, I will examine a wider range of autobiographical texts by having bilingualism be the sole criterion for selecting writers. This is to explore whether bilingual writers *in general* experience these notions of a split or in-between self as well; in other words, are Li's findings generalisable to a larger population? This study will also apply Neisser's Five

Selves Theory (1988) to the analysis of autobiographical narratives, in order to provide a framework with which to analyse and express the specific ways in which these writers feel that bilingualism has impacted their sense of self. In particular, I will focus on writers' construction of their extended, private, and conceptual selves instead of studying all the five kinds of self-knowledge. Furthermore, this study will apply three different analysis methodologies – that of judge-based thematic analysis, word count analysis, and qualitative analysis – in examining the texts, thereby expanding upon Li's (2007) study, which only made use of qualitative analysis.

This study makes the following hypotheses:

1. **Bilingual autobiographical texts will contain more discourse related to language use.** In the judge-based thematic analysis methodology, the bilingual texts will reflect significantly more language-related themes than monolingual ones, as detected by the judges. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and dependent variable is the average number of times themes related to language are detected in judge elaborations per judge in each text. In the word count analysis methodology, the bilingual texts will contain significantly more language-related words than monolingual texts. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and dependent variable is the frequency of language-related word occurrences in each text.
2. **They will also contain more discourse related to identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity.** In the judge-based thematic analysis methodology, the bilingual texts will reflect significantly more themes related to identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity than monolingual ones, as detected by the judges. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and the dependent variable is the

average number of times themes related to identity fragmentation and ambiguity are detected in judge elaborations per judge in each text. In the word count analysis methodology, the bilingual texts will contain significantly more words related to identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity than monolingual texts. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and dependent variable is the frequency of identity fragmentation and ambiguity-related word occurrences in each text.

Apart from the existence of differences between monolingual and multilingual identity experiences, this study also has several hypotheses about the *nature* of these differences:

3. **The bilingual narratives will reflect more disjointed senses of extended self compared to the monolingual ones.** In the judge-based thematic analysis methodology, judges will report occurrences of themes related to fragmentation in their elaborations regarding extended self. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and the dependent variable is the number and content of themes related to identity fragmentation found in judges' thematic elaborations on extended self in each text. In the word count analysis methodology, there will also be significant differences between the bilingual and monolingual groups in terms of the amount of time-related words used in the narratives. For example, the bilingual group may display more mentions of words related to the past in their narratives. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and the dependent variable is the word occurrence frequency of past, present, and future-related words in each text.
4. **The bilingual group will display a greater sense of difference between their private and public identities.** In the judge-based thematic analysis methodology,

judges' evaluations of the bilingual group will reveal more occurrences of writing about private self than in the monolingual group. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and the independent variable is the average rating for occurrences of private self per judge in each text. Furthermore, word count analysis will show that the bilingual group uses more language related to the public-private dichotomy compared to the monolingual group. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and the dependent variable is the word occurrence frequency of words related to private and public identities in each text.

5. **The bilingual group will write about language use in their private and conceptual self-constructions.** In the judge-based thematic analysis, this will be seen in judges' reports of language-related themes in their elaboration on private and conceptual self-depictions. The independent variable is the linguistic status of the writers, and the dependent variable is the number and content of themes related to language found in judges' thematic elaborations on private and conceptual self in each text.

Method

This study approached the research questions using three different methodological techniques, as described in a review of methods of text analysis by Pennebaker, Mehl, and Niederhoffer (2003). The first two techniques were quantitatively based, consisting both of using judges to thematically code the texts using Neisser's (1988) Five Selves Theory as a structure for analysis, as well as word count analysis using Voyant, a web-based analysis programme. The third method was a complete qualitative analysis of three out of the 14 selected autobiographical novels by the researcher.

Autobiographical Texts

In this study, I analysed existing published autobiographies by monolingual and bilingual authors; all autobiographies used are listed in table 1. For the bilingual group, these included autobiographies previously used in Li's (2007) study. More books were found by researching lists of bilingual writers through the Internet. Based on the names gathered, I then ran an Internet search to narrow down the writers that had autobiographies that were written and published initially in English. Through this method, 15 autobiographies by bilingual writers were selected. One book (*Two Lives* by Vikram Seth) was subsequently excluded because it was later found that the author focused nearly all of his writing on other family members as opposed to himself. Hence, the book would not have served as a strong representation of the author's personal identity development.

The selected bilingual autobiographies came from individuals from Asian, European, South American, or North American backgrounds, who all subsequently moved to live in the United States for an extended to permanent period of time. With the exception of two books published in 1953 and 1975 respectively, three of the autobiographies were published in the 1980s, six in the 1990s, and three in the 2000s.

A control group of autobiographies by monolingual writers was also selected through an Internet search for autobiographies written in English. After selecting a list of titles, I then conducted an Internet search on the authors of these autobiographies to ascertain whether they were monolingual. A total of five autobiographies were selected using this method.

Two of these autobiographies were published in the 2000s, two in the 1990s, and one in the 1980s. Three of the writers are female and the other two, male.

Excerpts were selected from each of these autobiographies. To ensure that the number of excerpts was selected proportionally to the length of the books, one excerpt was taken for every 100 pages a book had. These excerpts were randomly selected by using an online random number generator to select a starting page; from the starting page, the excerpt would begin from the next complete event. Each excerpt ranged from three to six pages, depending on how long a discreet event took to be narrated, and how many events could fit within a maximum page count of six. A total of 32 excerpts were selected from the bilingual group, and 12 from the monolingual group (see table 1 for pages used).

Judge-Based Thematic Analysis

Design strategy. The 44 autobiographical excerpts were coded by a group of judges for the occurrences of extended, private, and/or conceptual selves (Neisser, 1988) in the autobiographical discourse. Brief qualitative descriptions were also attached to each coded point to provide more textual context for the nature of the autobiographical knowledge being organised. I aggregated the total instances of each Neisserian self and compared them across each excerpt, each text (which was represented by one to three excerpts depending on its overall length), and in total between bilingual and monolingual groups. I also coded the written descriptions for instances of descriptions related to language, and concepts of doubleness, halfness, or ambiguity in identity. Where the former and latter appeared in relation to each other in a description, this was also recorded. Similarly, these mentions were also aggregated and compared across single excerpts, texts, and finally between groups.

Materials. I created an annotation task for judges by drawing upon aspects of annotation questionnaires used in previous studies by Larsen and Seilman (1988) and Thomas and Duke (2007). The study made use of a similar fundamental structure to that of Larsen and Seilman's

(1988) questionnaire, in which judges make brief markings on the text based on an established coding system, where the quality of interest is perceived to have occurred, before adding subsequent written elaborations after the reading process to these markings. However, the Larsen and Seilman (1988) study investigated memory elicitation in readers, and hence focused on readers' personal engagement with the texts. This was not the case for this study, as my interest lay more in what could be gleaned from the texts themselves. Hence, I also derived inspiration from Thomas and Duke's (2007) study and its use of a theoretical framework and empirical operational definitions through which to organise textual analysis. Thomas and Duke (2007) were interested in the presence of cognitive distortions in the writing of depressed versus non-depressed poets and authors; where they applied Wedding's (2000; as cited in Thomas & Duke, 2007) list of established distortions, I made use of Neisser's list of five selves. Furthermore, Thomas and Duke's (2007) study increased inter-rater reliability by bringing in a second reader that was not the researcher to annotate the texts; this study involved 15 judges for the same reason.

The annotation task was structured such that readers of the excerpts would read them and mark "E", "P", or "C" – for extended, private, and conceptual self respectively – where they felt that an instance of such a self occurred. Readers would then subsequently return to these markings after they have finished reading, and write short elaborations on why they felt a particular sense of self was being represented. The use of Neisser's (1988) theory as a framework to organise analysis ensured a shared method and vocabulary for articulating identity components among readers.

I created a set of materials for the annotation task (see Appendix A). First, there was an introductory letter thanking readers for their participation in my study, as well as a brief

description of the project as a study about autobiographical text and the construction of personal identity. No mention was made of the study's specific interest in bilingual identity construction. Readers were also informed of the way in which the excerpts were taken randomly from the books. An information sheet briefly explaining Neisser's theory (1988) and enumerating the five selves was also provided, as well as a two-page sample created by the researcher about what annotations would look like for a text. The task materials also included a two-page test sheet for readers to practice on and for the researcher to assess before the start of the task. Finally, the assigned excerpts were also included in the study envelope that all readers received.

Procedure. For this study, I recruited a total of 15 judges to read and annotate the excerpts. Each judge was assigned a total of 5 to 17 excerpts depending on the amount of time they were able to commit to the study. Readers rated an average of 10.53 excerpts. Two readers annotated 17 excerpts, 10 annotated 10 or 11 excerpts, and three annotated six.

I met with each reader personally to explain the annotation task, answer any questions, and assess their performance on the practice trial. In the first round of recruitment and engagement, I met with 12 judges, briefed them, and gave them 10 or 11 excerpts to annotate in their own time over the timeframe of a month, which was during the judges' winter vacation period at Emory University. In the second round of recruitment and engagement, three new judges were recruited and engaged; due to the shorter timeframe that I had to work with, I met with the judges to brief them, and they completed the annotation task for up to six excerpts over the span of two hours in the same sitting. Furthermore, two of the readers from the previous round of engagement agreed to return for another two-hour session to annotate six excerpts.

Word Count Analysis

Design strategy. Previous research on applying word count analysis to narratives have shown that individuals' use of content words and even grammatical articles such as pronouns are suggestive of their preoccupations, as well as certain psychological and emotional states (e.g. Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). Hence, I was interested in applying this knowledge to the current study. I compared the occurrences of thematic words and phrases in excerpts from each autobiographical novel between the bilingual and monolingual groups. Words and phrases of interest came from the following themes: Extended self as it relates to the past (past self); Extended self as it relates to the present (present self); Extended self as it relates to the future (future self); Private self; Conceptual self; Language and linguistic identity; and Estrangements in identity. The bilingual and monolingual groups were compared for the relative frequency of these words of interest (see tables 5 to 8).

Materials. The selected excerpts were scanned into digital documents that were saved in both searchable PDF and plain text formats using Adobe Acrobat.

This study made use of Voyant, a web-based text analysis environment (http://hermeneuti.ca/voyeur) that provides a suite of text analysis tools for users, such as measurements of word frequency within and across multiple texts, as well as graphical data representations.

Procedure. I created plain text files of each autobiographical novel, which consisted of combining the text from all excerpts derived from the same book into a single document. These text files were then uploaded into Voyant to allow for comparisons to be made between individual autobiographies.

Qualitative analysis

I read and analysed three autobiographical novels from the bilingual writers' group in their entirety, focusing on the themes of bilingualism and identity conflict. *Heading North, Looking South* by Ariel Dorfman (1998) was selected because it scored the highest for mentions of identity doubleness and/or ambiguity in the judge-based thematic analysis methodology. *Fault Lines* by Meena Alexander (1993) was also selected because it also scored highly for the same theme, and because it was not a novel covered in Li's study (2008) on bilingual autobiographies. Finally, *Out of Place* by Edward Said (1998) was also used because it had one of the lowest scores in the judge-based thematic analysis for the same theme in question. Hence, the qualitative analysis also sought to examine if the results from the previous methodologies were reflective of the actual autobiographical texts in their entirety.

During the process of reading each text, I recorded the quotes related to authors' experiences with identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity as text document. Subsequently, these quotes were re-examined and organised; I then constructed a narrative analysis of each author's identity development specific to their wholeness or lack thereof in their sense of self, with a focus on linguistic experience as well as other individual-specific important life events.

Results

In this section, I will present the quantitative results for both the judge-based thematic analysis and word count analysis methods. I will then present my in-depth qualitative analyses of three novels.

Judge-Based Thematic Analysis

The study hypothesised that:

1. Judges would rate bilingual texts as reflecting more content related to language compared to monolingual texts
2. Judges would rate bilingual texts as reflecting more content related to identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity compared to monolingual texts
3. Judges' qualitative descriptions of extended self-depictions will include themes related to disjointedness for the bilingual group, but not for the monolingual group
4. Judges' ratings of the bilingual texts would reflect more occurrences of the private self compared to ratings of the monolingual texts
5. Judges' qualitative descriptions of private and conceptual self-depictions would include themes related to language; this will not be the case for the monolingual group

For all hypotheses, I made use of a chi square analysis as it tests for the significance of difference between the effects of the independent variables on a common dependent variable.

For hypotheses 1 and 2, I applied a chi square analysis comparing the number of times judges made elaborations related to language use, or identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity between bilingual and monolingual groups. Although the bilingual group had higher mean judge ratings of both language-related and identity fragmented-related themes (see table 4), the chi square analysis for both themes yielded p values that were insignificant ($P = 0.192$ and 0.238 respectively). In other words, the bilingual narratives as a group did not significantly reflect more thematic content related to language use and/or identity fragmentation in the exploration of authors' extended, private, or conceptual selves.

To test hypothesis 3, I studied judges' elaborations related to extended self and found that while judges did not mention themes related to fragmentation in their elaborations about

monolingual authors' extended self portrayals at all, they did so in some instances for the bilingual authors. Qualitative elaborations included phrases such as "memories of childhood disjointed/contrasted with present", "comparing life in past and present and its foreignness", and "gets confused with past self and present self".

For hypothesis 4, I applied a chi square test comparing the average number of private self ratings per reader between the bilingual and monolingual groups. While the monolingual group had a higher mean for average judge ratings of private self occurrences (see table 3), the chi square analysis did not result in significant data ($P = 0.293$).

For hypothesis 5, I studied judges' elaborations related to private and conceptual self and found that they did not detect themes related to language in the authors' exploration of their private and conceptual selves. This was in contrast to some texts in the bilingual group, where judges' elaborations included phrases such as "how his use of English places him in the culture around him" and "Malayalam, language of dreams. Arabic, French – many possible personal associations based on languages".

Word Count Analysis

This study hypothesised that:

1. The narratives from the bilingual group would contain more words related to language than the monolingual group.
2. The bilingual group would also contain more words related to identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity than the monolingual group.
3. Narratives from the bilingual and monolingual groups would show differences in the number of word occurrences in at least one of the following thematic categories: past; present; or future.

4. The bilingual and monolingual groups would also show differences in the number of word occurrences for either words related to private or public existence.

In order to test this hypothesis, I conducted word count analysis using Voyant, a web-based text analysis programme, to determine the relative frequencies of target words (per 10,000 words) within each text, before calculating average relative frequencies across the bilingual and monolingual groups. I then applied chi square analysis to the relative frequencies. I also made use of Voyant to generate comparative graphs for all the texts and for specific text groupings. Furthermore, I compared the contexts in which the targets words were occurring between monolingual and bilingual group using the *keywords in context* function in Voyant.

For the cluster of language-related words ("language," "tongue," "speak," and "write"), there was no significant difference between the bilingual and monolingual groups in the average occurrence for each word. While there were differences in mean word frequencies, there was also high variability between all the texts even if they were in the same linguistic category (see figure 1 for a visual illustration). As such, the chi square analysis did not reveal significant differences between the groups (see table 5 for exact P values). For the cluster of words related to identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity, the monolingual group of texts contained a higher mean relative frequency per text for two out of eight of the target words – "half" and "apart". For the other six target words, such as "divided" and "between", the bilingual group reflected a higher mean relative frequency. Once again, the variability between texts was high (see figure 2 for visual illustration) and chi square analysis showed that the differences between the two groups were not significant for any of the words (see table 6).

When it came to target words related to time and extended self, results were not significant as well. Across multiple words in the same time category (e.g. the past), neither group

showed consistently higher or lower word count frequencies. This was also reflected in the chi square analysis, where all three time-related categories reflected insignificant P values (see table 7).

However, because some of the target words in this category had multiple meanings that were not all related to time, I also examined the context in which they were used. For the word "present", which had a higher mean relative frequency in the monolingual group (M = 3.146, SD = 3.424; versus M = 0.72, SD = 1.491), it was almost always used as a verb (e.g. "I will present the demands…"), an adverb (e.g. "every sportswriter present had to…"), or an unrelated noun (e.g. "a Christmas present"). Only in one instant was it used as a time-related noun, as seen in the sentence "if you don't like the present you can always return to the past", written in a book in the bilingual group. Similarly, not all the texts employed the word "past" in the same way. While all the monolingual texts (100%) used the word "past" in a directional manner (e.g. "a horse trailer going past the house"), 50% of the bilingual texts used "past" in a directional manner as well, whereas the other 50% used it in a time-related manner (e.g. "our Mexican past, our Aztec ancestry"; "this crusade against my past").

In the word count analysis for private self-related target words, the bilingual group had a higher mean relative frequency for both the words "private" and "inside", but chi square analysis revealed that the difference between both groups was not significant (see table 8). However, when examining the use of both words in sentence context, differences in the way these words were used could be found between monolingual and bilingual writers. All (100%) of the instances in which "private" was used in the monolingual texts were used in reference to people other than the author (e.g. "not a private opinion") or in ways that did not refer to personal identity (e.g. "my father's small private library"). In contrast, 23.077% of the time "private" was

used in the bilingual group, it was to refer to an aspect of personal identity kept hidden from public view (e.g. “writing was first of all a private act”; “the changes in my private life after my Americanisation”). Similarly, all (100%) of the monolingual, and a majority (75%) of the bilingual, usages of the word “inside” were not related to the private self (e.g. “stepped inside a church”; “what the families inside were like”). However, 25% of the instances in which the bilingual writers used “inside” were related to their private self concepts (e.g. “the distance that the politics of the Cold War had created inside me…”).

In contrast to words related to private-ness, there was a less clear difference between the monolingual and bilingual groups’ relative word frequency means for words related to public-ness. Furthermore, the chi square analysis of word frequency resulted in insignificant P values (see table 8). Where the bilingual group had a higher mean for the word “public” (M = 7.307, SD = 24.301; versus M = 1.354, SD = 1.854), the monolingual group had a higher mean for the word “outside” (M = 2.318, SD = 3.575; versus M = 2.179, SD = 2.801). Across both monolingual and bilingual groups, the authors all made use of the word “public” in non identity-related ways (e.g. “the American public”; “the public park”); the only exception to this was one writer from the bilingual group. This writer made use of “public” the most, with a disproportionately high relative word frequency of 91.56; 41.148% of his usages of the word “public” were related to self identity, and more specifically, they often explored the dichotomy between his private and public self concepts (e.g. “I was increasingly more confident of my own public identity”; “Once I learned public language, it would never again be easy for me to hear intimate family voices”).

Qualitative Analysis

I conducted a qualitative thematic analysis of *Out of Place* by Edward Said (1998), *Fault Lines* by Meena Alexander (1993), and *Heading North, Looking South* by Ariel Dorfman (1998), focusing on the authors' identity construction in relation to their bilingual/multilingual experiences, as well as the concept of fragmentation, doubleness, and/or ambiguity. In all three texts, exploration of multiple and "hybrid" (Dorfman, 1998, p. 42) identities consistently emerged as a major concern of the authors; all three authors also examined the impact of bilingualism/multilingualism in their lives, but to varying degrees. In particular, certain motifs and concepts are explored in all three of the texts – doppelgangers and the repression of certain selves, as well as the concern about one's true and/or real self and the construction and protection of this self.

***Heading South, Looking North*, Ariel Dorfman (1998)**

In the preface for his autobiography, Dorfman describes it as "my story, the story of my many exiles […] and the two languages that raged for my throat during years and that now share me" (p. 1). It is an apt prelude to the rest of this personal narrative, in which Dorfman places his bilingual identity at the centre of his lifetime experiences of "duality" and "duplicity". Early in his "bilingual journey" (p. 25), Dorfman was hospitalised alone after his family's migration to the United States; he experienced a deep sense of vulnerability and social isolation during this time, writing,

> "I am alone and my lungs hurt and I realise then, that life can snap like a twig. I realise this in Spanish and I look up and the only adults […] speak to me in a language I don't know […] In what language do I respond? In what language can I respond?" (p. 28)

His subsequent decision to only speak English for the next decade of his life was compelled in part by the realisation that English was the language of social capital in the United States, as well as an instinctive desire to be "whole, intact, seamless" as opposed to "irredeemably dual" (p. 221); Dorfman writes that language is "ensnared in the language of nationality, and therefore of identity" for him, and hence his rejection of Spanish was his attempt at fitting into American society and becoming an "all-American kid" (p. 74).

His described attempts at assimilation contain language distinctively related to doubleness and doppelgangers – he writes that "you can give birth to your self all over again. You can reinvent yourself in an entirely new language in an entirely new land" (p. 49). Yet, this attempt at building a new conceptual self involves "deny[ing], day by day, the brother who is in my mind and understands Spanish" (p. 61) – in other words, Dorfman tried to create a new monolingual double of himself by rejecting the potential doubleness of being both a Spanish and English speaker. This constant attempt to repress his "Spanish self" (p. 45) results in a life fraught with anxiety; Dorfman's private existence was characterised by an "internal war" (p. 78) conducted in his "schizophrenic, adulterous" self "suspended vulnerably between two nations and two languages" (p. 132). This quelling of what he perceived to be half of his being is described using language related to violence and distress – words such as "smother" (p. 60), "suffocate" (p. 42), and "kill" (p. 42) permeate his childhood experiences, and Dorfman looks back on his past to poignantly realise, "a vague heartache of guilt had been gnawing away at me, dripping into like a deformed twin" (p. 246). Living with the fear that others would accuse him of having "*double*-crossed (emphasis mine)" (p. 74) them about his identity, Dorfman also recognises that "as a child, I was always performing" (p. 82). One of the significant ways in which Dorfman performed his desired identity was through renaming himself. Born as Vladimiro

Ariel Dorfman, he developed a "doppelganger" with "another name" (p. 79) – Edward – as a child assimilating into American society, and began making his persona as Edward his "reality" (p. 80). Much later as an adult, Dorfman moved to Chile, "banished English from [his] life" (p. 154) and once again "set out to become somebody else" (p. 159); this time, he adopted the name of Ariel – "which happened to be my neglected middle name" (p. 159) – as "the first step, the easiest step" (p. 159) to changing his conceptual identity.

Interestingly, it was the encountering of an external double that helped Dorfman reconcile the "strictly different, segregated zones in my mind" between the "two Edwards, one for each language" (p. 115). His affiliation and affinity with Latin America as an adult led him to appreciate that its culture was "as mixed up as I was, itself a combination of the foreign and the local", and that it was a "mirror" (p. 162) for his own story. This unexpected reflection of an experience he had previously contained in his deeply private spheres of life allowed Dorfman to see that it is impossible to shut out the influence of both his American and Latin American cultural and linguistic backgrounds from his life, and that "the solution is to devour them, to make them your own" (p. 161) – to accept and embrace his own "hybrid condition" (p. 162). There is perhaps something to be said about the inadvertent symbolism of Dorfman's decision to settle upon his *middle* name as the one he finally chooses to live by.

A particular concern that Dorfman has also subsequently repeats itself in the other two autobiographical texts I analysed for this section – that of the individual's essential, true, and immutable self, as well as the relationship between literature and this self. Dorfman once pondered, in his youth, "is there a core that is unchanged no matter what dictionary you reach for?" (p. 116) This question fuels part of Dorfman's anxieties regarding his bilingual and immigrant status and how this has destabilised his sense of self. Finding that the act of recording

his life in his diary could "preserve what otherwise would have become ephemeral" (p. 84), he makes use of words to create "an imaginary space and self outside the body, and, perhaps, as fundamentally, beyond geography" (p. 84). While he had been tormented by the apparent power of language to define his own identity, it seems that Dorfman learned to separate the languages he spoke from the countries he inhabited and to "tolerate my own dissonant voices inside" (p. 246). Hence, even though it may initially seem somewhat contradictory that it is the use of language that ultimately allows him to connect with the "core" self that exists beyond the boundaries of language and the "mortal coil of time and geography" (p. 78), this comfort that Dorfman finds from writing about his life comes from the fact that the act of writing allows him to make concrete the true self that he had been afraid to lose, as well as the fact that the wielding of words to shape his story afford Dorfman power over words, as opposed to letting them have the power to define him.

Ultimately, Dorfman's narrative draws a deep link between language and identity. On the one hand, because language is often inextricable from culture, being bilingual causes Dorfman to see himself as inhabiting two different cultural selves that he spends a lifetime attempting to choose between, before learning to accept them both. Yet, where language lies at the heart of such an experience of split and doubleness, the ability to accept this duality and to exert agency over language gave Dorfman the power to lend voice to his own unique, complex experiences, and to express his admittedly inexpressible core on his very own terms.

***Out of Place*, Edward Said (1998)**

The motif of names repeats itself in Said's autobiographical narrative. However, while Dorfman changed his name twice in a bid to shape his own identity across changing linguistic landscapes, Said did not alter his own. Yet, his preoccupation with it is introduced at the

beginning of the narrative when he writes, "'Edward' [is] a foolishly English name yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arabic family name 'Said'" (p. 3). Compared to other people who had "enviably authentic names" (p. 39), Said viewed his name as a symbol of how he saw himself as being an outsider who was "permanently out of place" (p. 19), and who lived with "a sense that neither my body nor my character naturally inhabited my assigned spaces in life" (p. 50). The multilingual nature of his name prefaces his ability to shift between languages in order to build social capital in different situations, but also his sense of never being a "native" (p. 198) of any one culture.

Despite his multilingualism and multiculturalism, Said's primary anxiety did not have to do with nationality and linguistic belonging, but instead had its roots in family expectations. Hence, the rifts in his life had more to do with the division between his inner life and what he perceived other people would expect of his public persona. In his narrative, Said often takes care to distance himself from "'Edward'" (p. 3; p. 19; p. 27), whom he saw to be "a creation of my parents" (p. 19) that his "inner self was able to observe, though most of the time was powerless to help" (p. 19). Raised in a family that emphasised a strict sense of self-discipline, and becoming an immigrant to the United States with the desire to become "as anonymous as possible" (p. 137) by not drawing attention to himself, the "public, outer self" (p. 137) of Edward is "passive" (p. 236), "hectored and bullied" (p. 261). Said's conceptual public self was characterised by inadequacy – he saw himself as "the *non*-Arab, the *non*-American American, the English-speaking and –reading warrior against the English, or the *buffeted and cosseted* son (emphasis mine)" (p. 236). Yet, Said had an inner, private life that was markedly different and that existed almost as a doppelganger with opposite traits to 'Edward', described as being a "loose, irresponsible fantasy-ridden life" (p. 137). Unsuccessfully buried, this second self was

also doubly estranged from Said's public conception of himself because of his many "displacements from countries, cities […] [and] languages" (p. 217) that resulted in his being unable to identify clearly with, and anchor himself upon, easily defined self-concepts. This buried second self is also trapped within the public self of 'Edward', bound in a physical body that has been shaped by social pressures; Said describes an experience where he had a "sensation […] of being disembodied, relieved of all my customary encumbrances, obligations, restraints", declaring that he felt a freedom that he had subsequently never felt again. At the end of his autobiographical narrative, Said echoes a similar affinity towards fluidity of experience when he describes his self-experience as a "cluster of flowing currents" that he prefers to "the idea of a solid self […] I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place" (p. 295). Furthermore, it is even the experience of "rupture" (p. 294) from cutting himself off from his family and from 'Edward' that allows Said to bring out his second self and allow it to develop.

This second self is clearly the self that Said sees as his authentic one; like Dorfman, Said's autobiography also describes its emergence and development of this true self. Furthermore, Said's narrative bears similarities to Dorfman's in its exploration of this inner self as being at once beyond the reach of language, and yet also accessed and actualised through literature. He describes "one of his recurrent fantasies" from childhood as one of being a 'book, whose fate I took to be happily free of unwelcome changes, [and] distortions" and that maintained it's "integrity" (p. 76). Said's desire was to "remain my own true self" across "place" and "time" (p. 76). This desire for immutability and fixity contrasts with the nature of his inner life, which is "inarticulate", composed of "emotions", "sensations", and "memories intertwined with fantasies" (p. 202), and that Said is "always aware of but was unable easily or immediately to reach" (p. 284). Yet, such juxtaposition once again arises out of the desire to exert power over

one's identity; having lived much of his life "playing the roles assigned" (p. 173) by his family, Said's desire for putting his inexpressible inner self into a more concrete form is a continuation of his attempt to keep it safe. Furthermore, at the time of writing this autobiography, Said was grappling with cancer, and writes, "this book was my way of constructing something in prose while in my physical and emotional life I grappled with anxieties and pains of degeneration" (p. 216). As such, writing his private self into existence is a way of bringing it out into the world, and of ensuring its survival beyond Said's death such that he will be remembered in the way he wants.

***Fault Lines*, Meena Alexander (1993)**

Like Dorfman and Said, Alexander also grapples with the concept of doubleness in her autobiographical narrative. Furthermore, the language she employs to describe this sense of fragmentation is distinctively violent – a characteristic that is similar to that of Dorfman. Yet, while Dorfman's violence is turned towards a specific self contained within his overall identity, meaning that there is a level of dissociation in which the forcible suppression is imposed *by* himself upon a part of him that he seeks to bury, the violence in Alexander's narrative feels like it is inflicted *upon* herself. For example, Alexander describes herself as "a woman cracked *by* multiple migrations (emphasis mine)" (p. 2) and "a fissured thing, a body crossed *by* fault lines (emphasis mine)" (p. 182). It is perhaps Alexander's autobiography that is most opaque with regards to the exact source of why she often felt "torn apart" (p. 15) – while she had the similar experience of being linguistically "askew" and "uprooted" from a fixed "homeland", she also writes about how "sometimes I feel things not physically there, but feel them anyway and they hint at a truth" (p. 215), and that she "had the gnawing feeling" that her narrative "of a life lived between languages and cultures" is but "an emotional counter for a darker truth […] something

that as yet I had no words for" (p. 238). It is only towards the very end, in this edited version with new parts added after *Fault Line*'s first publication, that Alexander is able to dredge up, from the "rubble" (p. 73) that she constantly refers to being buried in, "the wound I could not carry in memory" (p. 237) of having been the victim of sexual assault during her childhood. The traumatic experience had only been experienced in fragments, as "flashes of remembrance, bits and pieces of memory" (p. 237) that she comes to "piece […] together again" (p. 237) in her autobiographical narrative. Her doppelganger – the "girl child who refuses to die" (p. 277) inside of her – came about from her subconscious repression of her traumatic memory. Where Dorfman and Said had much conscious control over their imagery doubles of themselves, Alexander's double is a result of events beyond her control, and existed for a long time in an inaccessible, subconscious sphere. This version of doubleness is, once again, also related to language – Alexander's doppelganger speaks to her in her dreams "words I could not write in any of the languages I was forced to learn to read and write" (p. 272). "To be haunted by the illegible is the fate of […] children who have been hurt beyond visible measure" (p. 317), writes Alexander; the girl that lives inside of her embodies a part of her human experience that lies beyond reasonable, conceivable, and expressible measure because of its horrific nature.

To write this trauma into being is Alexander's way of exerting some control over this aspect of her past. Indeed, as the analyses of the texts thus far have suggested, writing is an act of self-definition and power. This is especially the case for multilingual writers, who have related their sense of self and social estrangement in part to their linguistic background – hence, the act of writing allows them to process and reconcile the divisions in their lives, but more importantly, it allows them to exercise a new authority over language, shaping its role in their lives as opposed to allowing language to define them. Out of the three, it is perhaps Alexander who

displays the most consciousness and concern over language and its relationship with culture and society. “To speak,” she describes a quote in the preface, “means above all to assume a culture” (p. 1). With this thought in mind, her relationship with the English language is an experience in doubleness itself, for she writes primarily in it but was also constantly aware that it is the language of colonialism, and that she is hence always constantly positioned as being an other, “an outsider” (p. 111), and “wrong” (p. 112) as its user. It also seems that English is a language that does not lend itself easily to the expression of her particular cultural and personal experience; hence, Alexander constantly experiences a split between the person that she feels herself essentially to be, and who she can express herself to be using the English language and its attendant cultural implications. For example, at the thought of translating certain utterances in Malayalam to English, she felt like “something tore inside me” and viscerally perceived that such a translation with “the discrepant script of English” would only “distort” the meaning behind these phrases (p. 121). She also paints the image of “the thickness of the white skin cover[ing] over my atmosphere, myself” if she fails to use English in a “supple” manner that can “reveal the intricate mesh of otherness in which I lived” (p. 118). Yet, where Dorfman and Said similarly find their cultural backgrounds to be disjointed from the English that they speak, Alexander experiences an additional, similar dissociation even from her native tongue of Malayalam due to her gender. “My life did not fall from the narratives I had been taught to honour” (p. 1), Alexander reflects, and later identifies a “fear” deep inside how regarding learning the script of Malayalam would force her to “face up to the hierarchies of a traditional society, the exclusionary nature of its canonical language” (p. 119). As a student of English literature – an art that she loved – she deeply felt the separateness of “my own ravaged history” (p. 139) from the content of the poetry written by the male English writers she studied. “My

study of the Romantic identity," she writes, "was predicated on the erasure of my own" (p. 142). The absence of her narrative from this canon motivated Alexander to "write myself into being. Write in order not to be erased […] Sometimes I think I write to evade the names they have given me" (p. 73) – once again, the writing of the self-narrative appears to be the method through which bilingual writers may confront and reconcile the fragmentation that they have experienced because of the very language they used; it is a claiming and reclaiming of a space in the linguistic canon of English, where people like Dorfman, Said, and Alexander have seen few reflections of themselves and their lived experiences.

In a similar vein, and like Dorfman, Alexander changed her name from "Mary Elizabeth" to "Meena" at the age of fifteen, and describes how it reflected "some truer self, stripped free of the colonial burden […] It is the name under which I wished to appear" (p. 73-74). It is interesting to consider that all three autobiographical narratives contain similar preoccupations with the concept of names – assigned at birth according to certain expectations and ideals, names are arguably among the first representations of the conceptual self for most people. The act of renaming oneself is hence also similar to the act of writing one's own narrative – both are linguistic acts of gaining control over personal identity.

Yet, just as Alexander's feeling of being torn "limb from limb" (p. 121) when thinking of translating between Malayalam and English suggests that there are some facets of experience that cannot be translated, there are also aspects of existence that simply completely elude language in the first place. She conceptualises the "zone of radical illiteracy" (p. 259), a "place of no words" (p. 261) where she draws the root inspiration for her writing; this is perhaps similar to the true self that Dorfman and Said talk about in their writing, the "source" and essence of

selfhood from which all attempts at verbal description are but pale copies and "translations" (p. 261).

Discussion

This study asks the fundamental question of what autobiographical narratives can tell us about bilingual writers' experiences with regards to how they construct their identity – specifically, do they experience a unique sense of split and/or ambiguity due to their linguistic backgrounds?

In the quantitative section of this study, I generally hypothesised that linguistic background would have an effect on a writer's personal narrative, particularly by being related to a sense of self-fragmentation and/or ambiguity. Results from the judge-based thematic analysis and word count analysis both showed that there was no significant relationship between the number of languages an author spoke, and their explorations of themes related to identity fragmentation or language in excerpts of self-narratives. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between groups with regards to the proportion of themes related to authors' private, extended, and conceptual selves, or in the amount of keywords used related to these themes.

In the qualitative section of this study, I found that a sense of fragmentation and ambiguity was a fundamental part of all three authors' self-concepts, as explored and expressed through their personal narratives. However, despite sharing common experiences of being bilingual individuals who have lived in multiple countries throughout their lives, the writers differed in the primary reasons for their perception of being split and/or hybridised. For example, while Dorfman attributed such an experience primarily to his being bilingual, Said's primary preoccupation has to do with the disjoint between who he wanted to be and the person his family expected him to be. In contrast, Alexander's experience of being divided within herself is mostly

influenced by a traumatic experience of sexual assault early on in her life, as well as her experiences as an Indian woman from a post-colonial society. Despite these differences, being bilingual and bicultural is an experience that has, to some degree, influenced all three authors' sense of being internally divided and/or confused.

The lack of significant statistical differences between bilingual and monolingual groups in occurrences of themes related to language and identity fragmentation, as well as the qualitative findings regarding the various reasons for the authors' senses of being divided suggest that that experiences of disjointed, ambiguity, and rift may be part of a wider human condition. Hence, it is not merely attributable to language-specific reasons; it would appear that many aspects of life have the capacity to influence individuals' views of the coherence of their identities. Conflict appears to be a driving force for these senses of rift, and is seemingly also a natural part of human experience; in a way, it could even be said that the experience of conflict – and hence of personal divisions – is an expected aspect of life. As mentioned before in the introduction, psychologists, philosophers, and writers have also by and large moved away from conceptualising the self as a unitary entity.

The large amount of statistical variability within the bilingual group seen in the quantitative analyses, and the differences in the nature of the three bilingual authors' experiences of fragmentation in the qualitative analysis point towards the highly subjective nature of personal experience. While individuals may share similar traits – such as being bilingual and/or bicultural – and even similar experiences – such as feeling internally divided – they still have fundamentally different courses of life, and also choose to construct their own identities in different ways.

Limitations

The main limitation for the qualitative analysis conducted in this study would be that I was the one to analyse the three autobiographies, which inevitably raises the issue of possible researcher bias. This was due to time constraints and unexpected changes resulting from the exploratory nature of this project. For the same reason, I was unable to include and analyse an equal number of monolingual excerpts as bilingual ones in both the quantitative and qualitative sections. Doing so could have allowed for greater accuracy in comparing both groups; it would also have shed more light on the degree of variation in monolingual writers' personal experiences, and whether the extent of variation within the monolingual group and bilingual group are comparable. Furthermore, for the quantitative analysis, I made use of excerpts from autobiographies rather than the entire texts due to limitations in my ability to digitise these sources, as well as the recruitment constraints in finding people willing to read and rate novel-length texts. This meant that the judges were not able to understand the full context of the author's narrative when making their ratings and thematic elaborations; a more complete reading of these narratives would have allowed for a more holistic understanding of the authors' processes of identity construction through narrative. Furthermore, applying word count analysis on complete texts would have revealed findings that were more representative of actual word frequencies.

The 15 judges recruited to participate in the study varied in the quality and detail of the qualitative responses they provided, with elaborations ranging from simple restatements of the type of self being depicted (e.g. "Private self") to longer descriptive interpretations. As such, it was not always the case that judges' thematic analyses shed much light on their reasons for, and interpretations of, their ratings of private, extended, or conceptual selves in the texts. A larger

pool of judges may also have yielded a greater range of analyses to draw upon, and may have reduced the amount of variability between judge responses. Also, while the use of Neisser's theory (1988) provided a common framework upon which judges could examine the narratives, it advertently also had the effect of limiting their interpretations of the texts as well because it was possible that judges focused more of their attention on identifying extended, private, and conceptual self occurrences in the text as opposed to making analyses that were more in-depth but that were possibly also more difficult to articulate using the criteria of Neisser's theory.

Because there are few previous studies analysing the same combination of specific topics this project is interested in, this study was highly exploratory and preliminary in nature, and drew upon various aspects of different studies to create an overall study approach and methodology. As such, there are many further developments and refinements that can be made to its existing design. For example, the list of words used in the word count analysis is relatively brief, and requires much expansion upon before the results can be seen as being substantive representations of themes in the texts.

Future studies on the topic of linguistic experience and personal identity can build upon the judge-based thematic analysis and word count analysis methodologies to make them more robust and incisive. For example, the measures used can be reexamined and further testing needs to be conducted to ensure their applicability. Clearer, and more detailed operational definitions for concepts related to identity fragmentation and/or ambiguity that would be relevant to the study could also be developed and applied. The establishment of clearer measures and definitions would allow for greater precision of analysis. Further studies should also consider the analysis of complete texts rather then excerpts in order to appreciate the full contextual meaning of each experience described and each word used. When using judge-based thematic analysis, future

studies could also have a more rigorous selection, elimination, and training process for readers to ensure greater consistency and quality in responses. Given current limitations in the ability for quantitative data to reflect substantial information about personal identity development in self-narratives, I would also recommend that future studies continue to pair qualitative and quantitative methodologies together, so as to arrive at a more complete understanding of the texts.

Implications and Future Directions

Apart from thinking about the limitations specific to this study, it is also worthwhile considering the general limitations of attempts to analyse personal narratives in quantitative ways, in light of this study's overarching interest in examining quantitative and qualitative approaches to narrative analysis. It is entirely possible that the current limitations of quantitatively analysing personal narratives lie more in the underdevelopment of practical methodological approaches rather than a deeper theoretical rift between subjective personal experience and objective statistical data. For example, future research could stand to develop more robust quantitative measures with which to examine various identity concepts, as the current models are still far from being comprehensive. More sophisticated study methodologies can also lend greater nuance to the current dialogue, as suggested by the overall advancements made in the past decade or so in the field of cognitive literary studies and how they have already advanced the conversations between art and science.

But beyond the question of how to best examine personal narratives, one must also ask what will be accomplished and what will be lost from applying a quantitative model of analysis to material that is as subjective and personal as autobiographical narratives, and by extension, works of creative writing. In *Fault Lines*, Alexander describes a "zone of radical illiteracy" (259)

in which one's true and essential self resides, beyond what language can fully describe. It seems like there is a parallel to what the qualitative analyses of these autobiographies suggest about language and identity: Just as there exists a gulf between lived experience and the attempt to pin it down and fix it in words, it is also difficult to translate the full richness of written narratives into numerical data – some things are inevitably lost. This can be seen in the large differences in the information gleaned from the judge-based thematic analysis and word count analysis sections of this study, compared to the qualitative analysis. This difference does not solely exist on the basis of the overall statistical insignificance in both analyses. Even if significant results had been derived from the sets of quantitative data, would it be significantly insightful to find that bilingual writers used words such as "English" more in their writing? If it is found that bilingual writers made more references to their private selves in their writing, what more does this add to our understanding of their identity development if the results cannot fully express the myriad ways in which these references can still be different from individual to individual? After all, as seen from the qualitative analyses, as well as the high levels of variability within linguistic groups in the word count analyses, people can – and do – have fundamentally different life experiences and identity concepts even if they share common defining traits such as linguistic status or histories of immigration. One of the aims of scientific methodologies are to formulate and validate hypotheses that eventually extend to create knowledge that is predictive and replicable; it is one of its strengths when it comes to many areas of study, especially in the generation of elegant and concise explanations and solutions.

Yet, to view the writing and reading of literature as a predictable and replicable enterprise is to obscure much of its unique value to humanity. In Alan Bennett's play, *The History Boys*, the schoolteacher Hector tells one of his students,

> "The best moments in reading are when you come across something – a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things – which you had thought special and particular to you. And now, here it is, set down by someone else, a person you have never met, someone even who is long dead. And it is as if a hand has come out, and taken yours" (Bennett, 2004, p. 56).

It is the *rarity* of having a specific, "special" thought mirrored in the writing of a stranger that makes literary experiences magical. The inability for personal experiences and thoughts to be predicted and replicated allows for the emergence of the individual as a unique entity in the world, and these it is precisely these differences that set the stage for the development of extraordinary, meaningful, and unforgettable moments of connection between people who may or may not exist in similar times, places, and social circumstances, whether in the form of social relationships or in the communion between a reader, a piece of writing, and its writer. In Edward Said and Meena Alexander's narratives, we can see examples of such transcendental relationships. For example, Said describes his relationship with a person who was able to "speak directly to that underground part of my identity that I had long held for myself… the other self I was always aware of but was unable easily or immediately to reach," (Said, 1998, p. 284) and it is clear that the reason why their relationship stands out to him as being particularly important is because she connected with an important portion of his identity that he felt nobody else apprehended or shared in common. Similarly, the context behind Hector's speech, as quoted above, has to do with how his student, Posner – a Jewish schoolboy living in Yorkshire in the 1980s – talks about *feeling* rather than simply understanding a poem written by Thomas Hardy, who wrote in the Victorian era. The way in which Posner connects with Hardy's poem also points towards the fact that it is not just the writer's voice that is unique, but also the lens that the

reader brings to the table. The interplay between the two create a relationship between the reader, text, and writer that cannot be replicated.

The meaning and uniqueness of these encounters are likely to be glossed over, or obscured, in the application of scientific methodologies to analysing the acts of writing and reading stories and narratives. This should compel a re-examination of the eagerness of cognitive scientists and literary critics alike in jumping into the widespread application of positivist approaches to literature. This is not to say that cognitive literary studies and its methods have not made contributions to our understanding of both psychology and art, but rather to caution against the indiscriminate application of science to literature. In a way, this debate has seen its possible parallel in the tension between clinical researchers and practitioners in the field of psychology, where a common criticism of empirical studies is the fact that their findings are too often "decontextualised" (Wolfe, 2012, p. 102) and may not generate solutions that are applicable to actual patients, who lead unique lives with experiences that may confound what the science of psychology has to say about them, but that are also not represented in the research literature.

Perhaps it is worthwhile to consider the suggestions that scientific philosophers such as Larry Laudan put forth regarding the importance of treating research methodologies as means towards answering our questions, as opposed to ends in themselves. Laudan's writings (1987; 1990) about normative naturalism suggest that different kinds of questions and cognitive aims lend themselves better to different research methodologies; some approaches work better for certain questions than others, and there is not necessarily any one method that can be applied to all aims of study. It is a relatively more agnostic approach to the question of pairing methodological approaches with research objectives. In light of this idea, maybe it is the case that the nature of narratives such as literary writing and autobiographies just do not lend

themselves well to quantification as a standalone, and that qualitative analysis will – in the foreseeable future – still serve as the most optimal way in which to glean meaning from them.

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Table 1

List of autobiographies used

Author	Title	Excerpt pages
Bilingual		
Acosta, Oscar Zeta	*Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo*	76-78; 196-199
Alexander, Meena	*Fault Lines*	217-221; 235-237; 297-300
Arana, Marie	*American Chica*	11-16; 113-117; 236-240
Cofer, Judith Ortiz	*Silent Dancing*	51-56; 111-113
Dorfman, Ariel	*Heading South, Looking North*	77-80; 84-86; 157-161
Hoffman, Eva	*Lost in Translation*	167-171; 231-235; 242-245
Hong Kingston, Maxine	*The Woman Warrior*	21-26; 163-167
Lam, Andrew	*Perfume Dreams*	135-140
Lim, Shirley Geok-Lin	*Among the White Moon Faces*	17-20; 139-142
Pham, Andrew	*Catfish and Mandala*	35-39; 209-212; 213-215
Rodriguez, Richard	*Hunger of Memory*	22-27; 81-85
Said, Edward	*Out of Place*	20-24; 104-106; 157-162
Sone, Monica	*Nisei Daughter*	48-50; 131-135
Xu, Xi	*Evanescent Isles*	71-74
Monolingual		
Baker, Russell	*Growing Up*	17-23; 314-318
Bryson, Bill	*Thunderbolt Kid*	33-38; 91-96; 168-172
Fox, Paula	*Borrowed Finery*	121-126; 164-167
Grealey, Lucy	*Autobiography of a Face*	1-5; 40-44

Kercheval, Jesse Lee	*Space*	30-34; 72-77; 305-309

Table 2

Judges' backgrounds

	Gender	Age	Ethnicity/Nationality	Occupation / Year in school & Major(s)
1	F	19	Korean American	Sophomore; English and Music
2	M	21	Korean	Junior; Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and Classics
3	F	21	Korean American	Junior; International Studies and Chinese
4	F	20	African American	Junior; Psychology and Japanese
5	M	23	Sicilian, Portugese, Native American	Staff
6	M	21	Caucasian American	Junior; Business and Political Science
7	F	21	Asian American	Senior; Psychology and Business
8	F	21	South Asian American	Senior; Neuroscience & Behavioural Biology
9	F	21	Singaporean/ Taiwanese American	Junior; Anthropology & Human Biology
10	F	21	Chinese American	Senior; Psychology (Pre-Med)
11	F	22	Chinese Singaporean	Senior; Psychology
12	F	18	Chinese Singaporean	Senior (High school)
13	M	18	Korean American	Freshman; Undecided
14	F	19	Romanian	Sophomore; Neuroscience & Behavioural Biology and Comparative Literature
15	F	19	Irish, Chinese, Indian American	Sophomore; Psychology & Linguistics

Table 3

Judge-based analysis: Average number of ratings per judge for extended, private, and conceptual selves per excerpt

	Mean	Standard Deviation	*p*
Extended self			
Bilingual	1.980	1.459	0.137
Monolingual	3	1.232	
Private self			
Bilingual	2.183	1.043	0.293
Monolingual	2.357	0.895	
Conceptual			
Bilingual	2.266	1.272	0.302
Monolingual	3.5	1.391	

Table 4

Judge-based analysis: Average occurrences of language and identity fragmentation-related themes per excerpt in judges' elaborations

	Mean	Standard Deviation	*p*
Language-related			
Bilingual	0.577	0.654	0.192
Monolingual	0	0	
Fragmentation-related			
Bilingual	0.230	0.381	0.238
Monolingual	0.143	0.262	

Table 5

Word count analysis: Occurrence frequency of language-related words in bilingual and monolingual conditions per text

	Mean	Standard Deviation	*p*
"Language"			
Bilingual	8.466	8.440	0.674
Monolingual	0	0	
"Tongue"			
Bilingual	1.926	5.182	0.771
Monolingual	0	0	
"Speak"			
Bilingual	6.381	7.416	0.504
Monolingual	3.158	2.519	
"Write"			
Bilingual	3.698	7.253	0.630
Monolingual	0.878	1.963	

Table 6

Word count analysis: Occurrence frequency of fragmentation-related words in bilingual and monolingual conditions per text

	Mean	Standard Deviation	*p*
"Half"			
Bilingual	2.600	4.935	0.155
Monolingual	5.982	4.410	
"Apart"			
Bilingual	1.049	1.820	0.312
Monolingual	1.230	1.429	
"Divided"			
Bilingual	0.953	1.608	0.771
Monolingual	0	0	
"Between"			
Bilingual	5.282	4.236	0.602
Monolingual	1.114	1.581	
"Middle"			
Bilingual	3.661	7.466	0.630
Monolingual	0.680	1.521	
"Other"			
Bilingual	16.975	10.772	0.392
Monolingual	13.462	8.339	

Table 7

Word count analysis: Occurrence frequency of time-related words in bilingual and monolingual conditions per text

	Mean	Standard Deviation	*p*
"Past"			
Bilingual	2.856	2.941	0.591
Monolingual	3.360	5.404	
"History"			
Bilingual	2.040	2.870	0.630
Monolingual	0.440	0.984	
"Memory"			
Bilingual	2.551	3.026	0.676
Monolingual	0.828	1.851	
"Present"			
Bilingual	0.720	1.491	0.114
Monolingual	3.146	3.424	
"Now"			
Bilingual	9.676	8.015	0.392
Monolingual	8.740	7.508	
"Future"			
Bilingual	1.051	2.337	0.424
Monolingual	0.440	0.984	
"Next"			
Bilingual	7.955	7.432	0.239

Monolingual	7.798	1.708

Table 8

Word count analysis: Occurrence frequency of privacy-related words in bilingual and monolingual conditions per text

	Mean	Standard Deviation	*p*
"Private"			
Bilingual	3.062	4.841	0.661
Monolingual	0.878	1.963	
"Inside"			
Bilingual	3.479	3.075	0.602
Monolingual	1.358	1.933	
"Public"			
Bilingual	7.307	24.301	0.312
Monolingual	1.354	1.851	
"Outside"			
Bilingual	2.179	2.801	0.517
Monolingual	2.418	3.575	

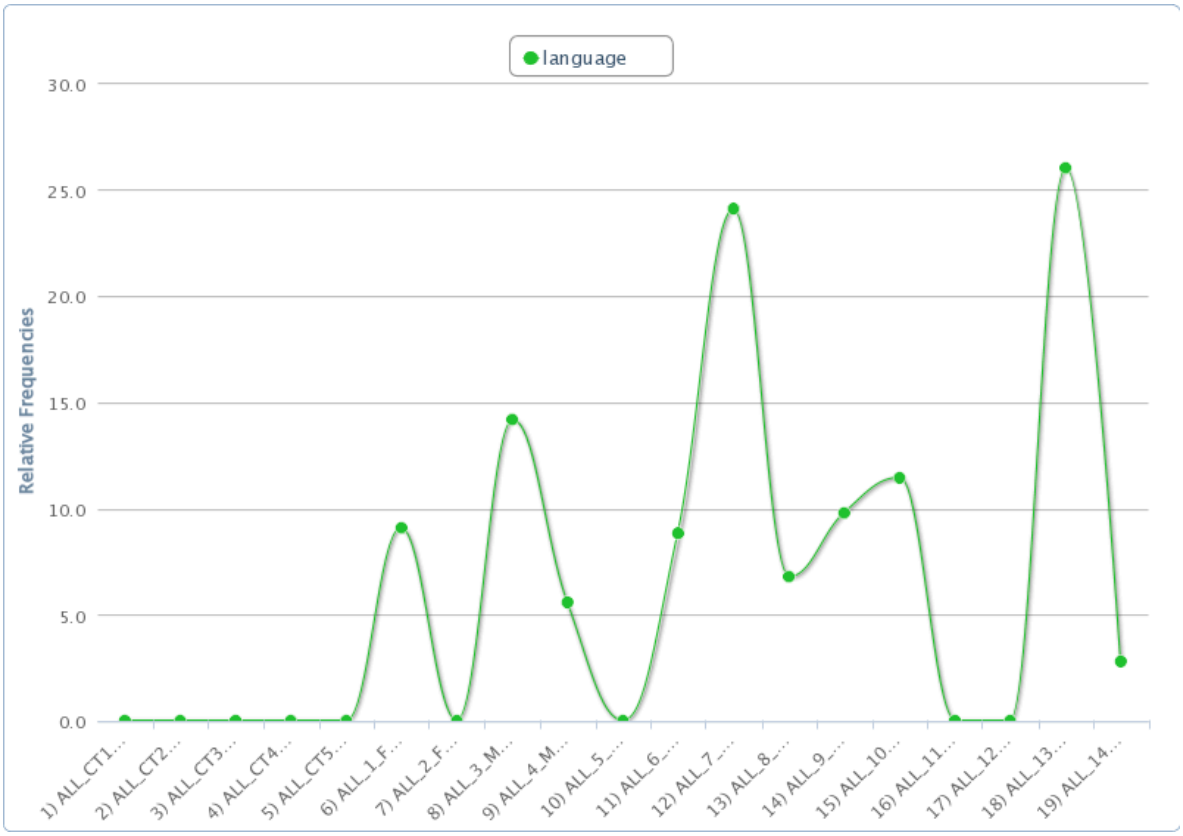

Figure 1. Voyant graph output: Word occurrence frequency for "language". The first five items in the X axis beginning with "ALL_CT" refer to the monolingual group texts.

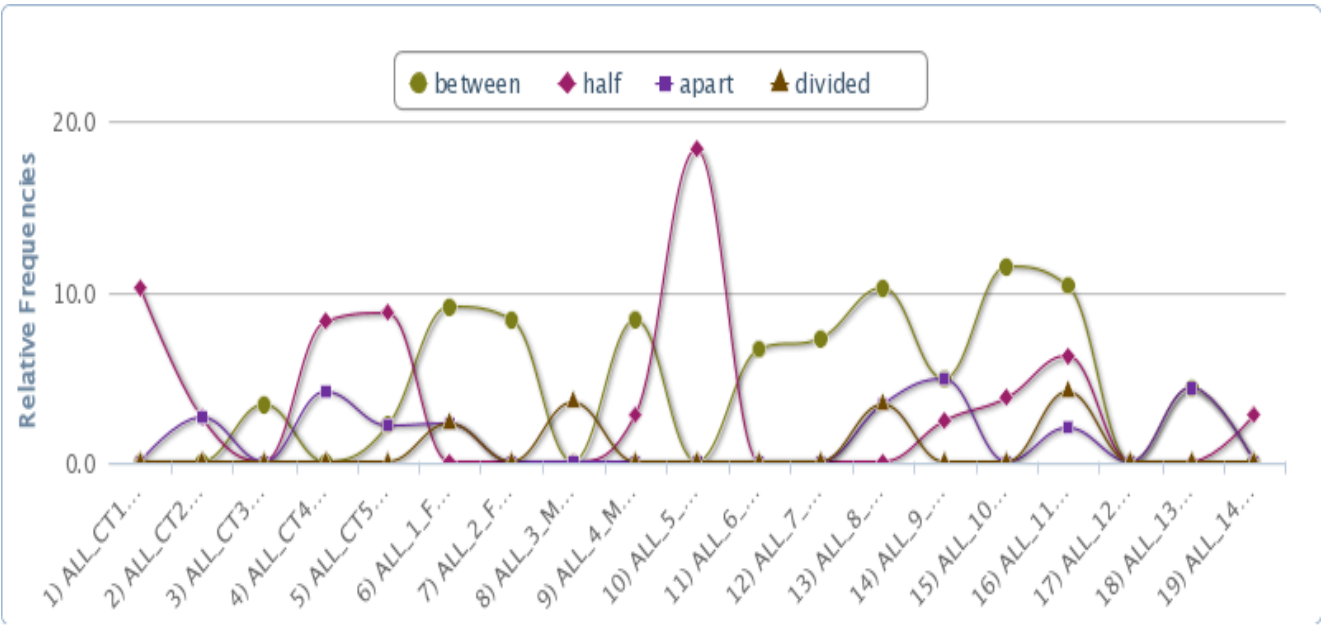

Figure 2. Voyant graph output: Word occurrence frequency for words related to identity fragmentation. The first five items in the X axis beginning with "ALL_CT" refer to the monolingual group texts.

Appendix A

Training Materials Given to Judges for Annotation Task

Dear Reader,

Thank you for volunteering your time to help with this project! Your participation is very much appreciated, and is highly important to this study.

Here is more information about my project:

About the project
This study is part of Shu Wen Ong's undergraduate honours thesis, which is written under Emory University's Psychology department, advised by Dr. Marshall Duke. It deals with the textual analysis of published autobiographies, using Ulric Neisser's "Five Kinds of Self Knowledge" (1988) as a theoretical framework. Hence, this study asks the basic question: what can autobiographical texts tell us about how individuals construct their sense of selves, and organise their understanding of their lives?

Readers will be asked to read excerpts from various published autobiographies, and to annotate them based on Neisser's theory. Further explanations of the theory and the task are attached.

In this project, readers are not the subjects of the study; rather, the texts are the subjects, and readers' annotations will be compared with each other's as well as with the researcher's in order to establish measures of reliability.

Readers' completed annotations must be returned to the researcher by January 20th 2013 (Friday). Please place all completed annotations into the same envelope.

About the texts
The excerpts in this study were taken from published autobiographies written in English. Passages were randomly selected, and then randomly assigned to different readers.

Because of this method of selection, it is possible that Neisser's theoretical framework may not apply as readily to some excerpts compared to others.

About Neisser's "Five Kinds of Self-Knowledge"

Published in 1988, Ulric Neisser's "Five Kinds of Self Knowledge" posits that our self-identity consists of different forms of information, which can be organized into five different 'selves'. These five 'selves' do not necessarily develop at the same time, but they are far from being separate and distinct from each other; the individual typically experiences them in a cohesive manner.

The five kinds of self knowledge can be briefly described as such:

1. *The Ecological Self* – The self that is relative to the physical environment; can be directly and objectively perceived.
2. *The Interpersonal Self* – The self that is engaged in social interaction with another person; similarly, can also be directly and objectively perceived
3. *The Extended Self* – The sense of self across the past, present, and future; is typically perceived through memory
4. *The Private Self* – The sense of self gained through conscious experiences that are not available to anyone else; can be perceived through memory and imagination
5. *The Conceptual Self* – The concept of oneself as a particular person in the social world; can also be thought of in terms of identities (e.g. an American, a sister, a professor)

This study will focus on the **Extended, Private**, and **Conceptual** selves as presented in autobiographical literature.

Instructions

You are to read the given text and mark an "E" (Extended Self), "P" (Private Self), and/or "C" (Conceptual Self) along the margins where a depiction of any of these selves appears.

When you have finished reading the text, return to each of these annotations, and write a brief elaboration on what the text has depicted (e.g. "P" – continually imagines self in another country while going about daily life).

An example text with annotations is attached for your reference.

TEST SHEET FOR READERS

Instructions

Please read the given text and mark an "E" (Extended Self), "P" (Private Self), and/or "C" (Conceptual Self) along the margins where you feel a depiction of any of these selves appears.

When you have finished reading the text, return to each of these annotations, and write a brief elaboration on what the text has depicted (e.g. "P" – continually imagines self in another country while going about daily life).

On the wall above my writing desk there's a photograph of me taken a few years ago during one of my many trips back to Vietnam as a journalist. In it I stand at the entrance of my old house; its green iron gates are rusted beyond recognition and the bougainvillea of my memory is gone.

Although I smile in the photo, it's a sad and discerning smile. For behind that smile is complex self-knowledge based on opposite ideas that took me a long, long time to grasp: 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.

Somewhere in between the boy who once sang the Vietnamese national anthem in the schoolyard in Saigon with tears in his eyes and the man who writes these words was the slow but natural demise of the old nationalistic impulse. The boy was willing to die for his homeland. The man had become circumspect. The boy had believed that the borders, like the Great Wall of China, were real demarcations, their integrity not to be disputed. The man discovered that the borders have always been porous. The boy as once overwhelmed by the tragedy that had fallen on his people, had resented history for robbing him and his family of home and hearth and national identity. The man, though envious of the primacy of his childhood emotions, has become emboldened by his own process of individualization.

And yet this much is true also: were it not for my ties to the Vietnamese people, their trials and tribulations, were it not for my own memories of the life that was taken from me, my American individuality would be shallow.

Often I wonder why my Vietnamese childhood seems full of magic and why – though I am no longer beholden to the reality of my homeland with her many current troubles and problems – my memory of her continues to inform and inspire me. There are no easy answers to this, of course, but I think it has to do with that deep sense of reverence I once felt toward the land in which my umbilical cord is buried.

After all, to live in a less than modern society where land still holds your imagination, where ties are permanent, and where tradition is concrete, is, in a way, to live in an enchanted world. It's normal that your ancestors' ghosts talk to you in your dreams, that they inhabit all sorts of corners of your house, and that you should answer them in your prayers, in your offerings, in the incense smoke you burn nightly…