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Quartet of Selves: Quinn's Personal Identity

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The present article discusses the concept of personal identity in Paul Auster's *City of Glass* by focusing on Daniel Quinn's multiple "selves". It questions the idea of the Cartesian self as an underlying and never-changing structure because that notion is problematic to understand the quartet of selves that Daniel Quinn represents: "himself", William Wilson, Max Work and Paul Auster. Instead, it takes into account Daniel Dennett's idea that the self is a useful abstraction that helps to understand our cognitive states by means of a coherent narration, and Derek Parfit's notion of successive selves. All these help to understand how Daniel Quinn's personal identity is built in the novel.

KEY WORDS: PERSONAL IDENTITY, COGNITION, NARRATIVE SELF, CITY OF GLASS, PAUL AUSTER

At the very beginning of Paul Auster's *City of Glass*, the narrator says that Daniel Quinn has become a triad of selves. Quinn is William Wilson, Max Work and what remains of Daniel Quinn. He has allowed himself to withdraw from life and let Wilson, his penname, to write for him, and Max Work, the protagonist of his novels, to become his role model or someone Quinn likes to pretend to be. In the book, the relationship between Quinn and his selves is explained as if Wilson were a ventriloquist; Daniel Quinn, the dummy; and Max Work, the voice that gives life and purpose.

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However, there is one actor missing: Paul Auster, the private detective. The novel starts with a telephone call asking Quinn for someone he is not, Paul Auster, the detective. But afterwards, as he gets the same call, Quinn accepts and pretends to be Auster this time; thus, he becomes another person and creates a fourth self.

It is commonly believed that personal identity is a simple, continued and invariable self; or, in other words, that there is an underlying structure that remains the same no matter what changes a person has gone through. This unchangeable essence is supposed to define oneself. However, the question lies in whether there is personal identity where there are multiple selves emerging from one person. In *City of* Glass, this seems to be the case of Daniel Quinn: a man with a quartet of selves. But establishing Quinn's personal identity is not a problem because identity is not built on a self, or in a one-to-one relationship, but on "multiple parallel processes that give rise to a benign user illusion" (Blackmore 103).

According to Susan Blackmore, the self is closely related to consciousness in the sense that "whenever there are conscious experiences it is easy to assume they must be happening to someone", that they cannot occur without someone experiencing them (83). Thus, this "one" having them would be the self. However, there is the common belief, due to René Descartes' ideas, that the self exists as a "kind of mental presence or thing that is single over time … [and] distinct from all particular experiences" (McCarthy 15).

David Hume asked himself the question about the self and concluded that, in fact, there is no self, but a series of impressions. In his particular case, he says "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other … I can never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never observe any thing but the perception", thus concluding, we "are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity" (252). From this, one could roughly conclude that the self as a Cartesian notion does not exist. The only certainty is that there is mind, but there is no self as such.

Similarly, the philosopher Daniel Dennett states that by leaving aside the Cartesian notion, "there is no need to see the 'I' as thing-like, a primitive entity that exists prior to conscious thoughts and manipulates them" (McCarthy 33). What is needed is to affirm that there is a mind that has cognitive experiences or thoughts.

When discussing this on *City of Glass*, one should first start questioning if Daniel Quinn has a mind. This may seem pretty obvious, but it is better to avoid any doubt. It has already been said that wherever there is a mind, the concept of self appears, and when someone speaks of the self, he is certainly referring to cognitive experiences. Dennett states that we cannot regard a mind as such if it does not have language, although "tradition and common sense declare [that] there are minds without language" (*Kinds of Minds* 16).

In the case of Daniel Quinn, one can be tempted to say that he does not have language and, in the same line of thought, that he does not have a mind. But to consider Quinn as a mindless character is not correct. Firstly, because one should pay close attention to the relationship between "himself" and his "other selves"; and, secondly, one should focus on the role of language in Quinn's life.

As it has already been said, at the beginning of the novel, Quinn thinks that he has three selves: "himself", William Wilson and Max Work. In relation to Wilson, Daniel Quinn considers him to be an invention "even though he had been born within [him], [Wilson] now led and independent life … He never went so far as to believe that he and William Wilson were the same man" (Auster 4-5). It is important to bear in mind that William Wilson is Daniel Quinn's penname; thus, the "self" by which he is able to use language and, in a way, communicate. When reading this quotation, it is possible to see that, in fact, there are two simultaneous experiences or lives in one body, but they are detached among them. As if when one of them exists (mostly Wilson), the other seems not to; and, likewise, one could believe that Wilson lives independently from Quinn, or that there are two characters arising from one body.

The Quinn-Wilson's notion of independence can be explained if one focuses on the importance of language. In *Kinds of Minds*, Dennett clarifies that "one of the most effective ways for a mental content [or thought] to become influential is for it to get into position to drive the language-using parts of the controls" (206). Or in other words, a thought (and in Quinn's case, a self) has to be language-related in order to become relevant in our minds, otherwise, it does not exist. Language is independence, control and a tool to construct our selves.

But it does not seem satisfactory to explain the possibility for the existence of many selves in Quinn's mind by only looking at William Wilson because he is an illusion. For Quinn, Wilson

"remained an abstract figure, … an illusion" (6). He is an excuse created by Quinn for him to relegate his writing, as it can be clearly seen in the following quotation, "If Wilson was an illusion, he nevertheless justified the lives of [Daniel Quinn and Max Work]. If Wilson did not exist, he nevertheless was the bridge that allowed Quinn to pass from himself into Work" (6). Moreover, if Wilson were an abstraction, he, nevertheless, is the cognitive state that he does not want in his life or actively rejects. It is not because Wilson is an abstraction that he should not be regarded as one of Quinn's selves since, actually, all selves are abstractions. But mainly because Wilson appears as Quinn's excuse to keep on writing, but not under his own name.

When focusing on the relationship between Daniel Quinn and Max Work, one is able to see that it is of a different kind. It has a greater importance in Quinn's life due to the fact that the existence of the private detective has led him to believe that most of the adventures Work has, Wilson has also experienced. Even to the degree that "Quinn was feeling somewhat exhausted by [Max's] efforts" (6). Furthermore, Quinn thinks that through the years, Work has increasingly come to life and has become a real presence, an interior brother, a "comrade in solitude" (6).

The narrator says that Quinn has long ago stopped regarding himself as real. He expresses that "if [Daniel] lived now in the world at all, it was only at one remove, through the imaginary person of Max Work. His detective *necessarily had to be real*" (9, emphasis added). It is by means of a projection that Quinn lets himself to "exist", although, he rejects existing as such. As it can be seen in the following lines, "[i]f Quinn has allowed himself to vanish, to withdraw into the confines of a strange and hermetic life, Work continues to live in the world of others" and his presence is more persistent in the world than Daniel's (9). Thereby, it seems as if Daniel Quinn were living two lives, or as if there were two minds in one body.

Previously in the novel, the narrator explains that Daniel Quinn has lived in the grip of a pun for all these years: the private eye. The term holds a triple meaning for Quinn. The "i" can stand for investigator, also for the "I" in upper case which stands for the first person singular pronoun, and for "eye". All these converge in the identity of a detective and especially in Max Work because he is "the detective … who looks, who listens, who moves through this morass of objects and events in search of the thought, the idea that will put all these things together and make sense of them" (8). It is the private investigator the one who acts, who wanders through the city looking for clues, using his mind and thinking how to solve a case. He makes sense by looking at his surroundings. Thus, it

is by using his mind, by being conscious or in certain cognitive states that he can solve problems. But also, it is by means of his actions that he gains confidence and determines his self.

In "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity", Daniel Dennett explains that "we cannot undo those parts of our past that are determinate, but our selves are constantly being made more determinate as we go along in response to the way the world impinges us" (5). Similarly, as Work is the one who is livelier than Quinn, he is the one who is constantly being made more determinate as he solves crimes. However, to a certain extent, as the relationship between Daniel Quinn and Max Work is closer, it also helps to determine Quinn to the point that "in effect, the writer and the detective are interchangeable" (Auster 8). It is clearly obvious that Max Work can take Quinn's place because "Quinn [is] the dummy, and Work [is] the animated voice that [gives] purpose to the enterprise" (6). Moreover, the problem that arises is to see whether it is possible for Quinn to take control of Work. Nonetheless, the last quotations can pose a problem since as Quinn does not talk, it is Work who has language. This can lead us to believe that there is a possibility to think that Quinn, again, is a mindless character.

It has been previously stated that Dennett regards language as one of the main elements for a mind to exist because he says that "perhaps the kind of mind you get when you add language to [a mind] is so different from the kind of mind you can have without language that calling them both minds is a mistake" (*Kinds of Mind* 23). Although Max Work is the one who communicates in his fictional world, it would be wrong to say that Quinn has no mind. Simply because language comes from Quinn and not as an invention of Work's mind.

To question if Work has a mind would be hard to answer because Max Work has everything to be regarded as a rational and independent person. He defines and determines himself every time he tries to solve some of his cases, but at the same time Work defines Quinn. The existence of Max Work in Daniel Quinn's life is due to the need for a projection in Daniel's secluded and withdrawn life. Consequently, Max Work comes to life as one of Quinn's cognitive states that he has removed from his life: making sense of the world surrounding him. However, it is not as if he has given up thinking or solving problems, but he has placed those actions in the abstraction called Work.

As the narrator says, writer and narrator in Quinn's reality have become interchangeable, which has lead Work to have more space to act and think than Daniel. Whether Daniel Quinn can

take Max Work place may seem impossible, but, actually, it happens when Quinn answers the phone and allows himself to be carried by the voice on the phone saying, "[s]peaking … [t]his is Paul Auster speaking"(Auster 4). As a result, the protagonist has become a quartet of selves, and displaces that cognitive process to his new self: Paul Auster. After the new self has been "created", one could ask where to place the four selves, but this cannot be answered. According to Dennett in "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity", trying to place the self in a specific part of the brain is a category mistake (4). It would be inappropriate to start guessing where these four selves are in the brain of Daniel Quinn. However, Dennett explains that "unlike centers of gravity, whose sole property is their spatio-temporal position, selves have a spatio-temporal position that is only grossly defined" (4).

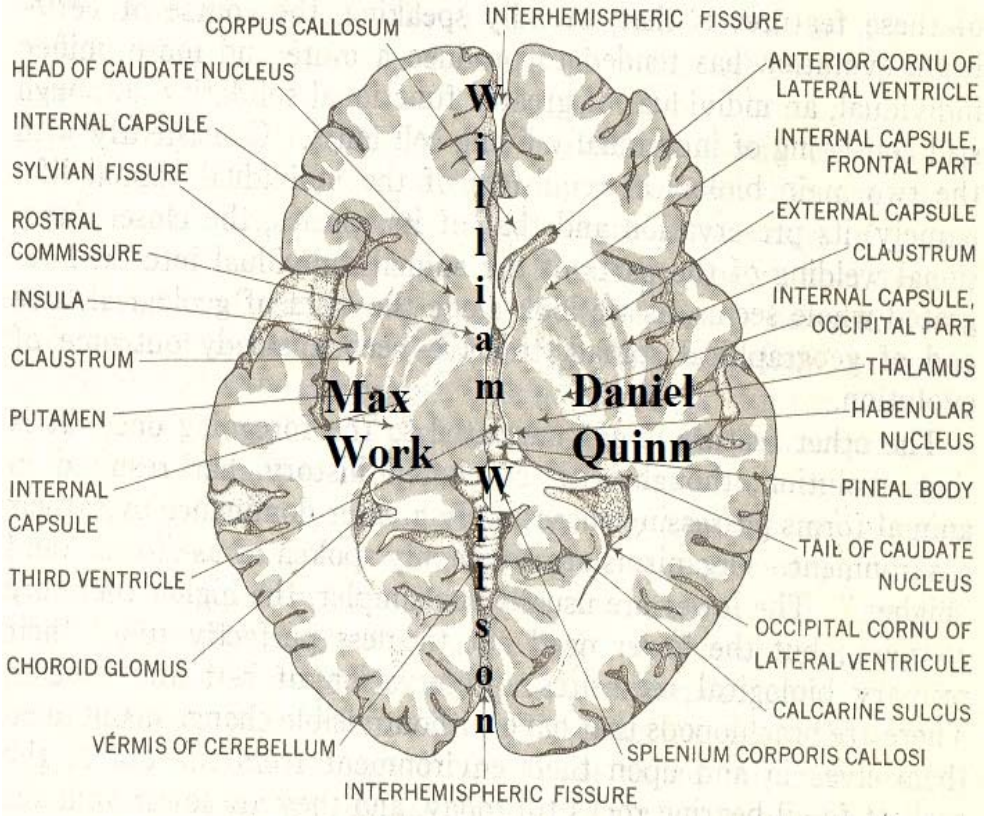

Fig. 1. An attempt to locate the self in a certain place in the brain would be wrong according to Daniel Dennett. It cannot be said that Quinn's brain and selves are placed like this: Work having language, Quinn the non-active participant, and Wilson as the corpus callosum. "Fig.13.—Section Through Brain (Seen from Above)". *Encyclopaedia Britannica: a New Survey of Universal Knowledge.* 14th ed. W.E. Preece, H.E. Kasch, et al. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1965. 77. Print.

What Daniel Dennett is trying to say is that although the self may be in a place in our minds, it cannot be explicitly located because the self "is an abstraction one uses … to understand, and predict, and make sense of, the behavior of some very complicated things" ("The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity" 8). However, *City of Glass* presents a different problem since the reader encounters a series of selves emerging from a single mind. On this aspect, Dennett argues that "the self, as it is usually regarded, is a fiction because, among other things, consciousness, on which it supposedly relies, is fragmented, unstable and discontinuous" (McCarthy 31). Although one is able to see that our cognitive processes are fragmented and, even, some of them unconscious, there is still the belief and tendency to regard the self as an existing and stable entity. Dennett explains this attitude due to our nature to "spin" ourselves, or as our unique "ability to self-represent in language" all our cognitive experiences (49).

He explains that while other animals organize boundaries in terms of teams, humans essentially organize boundaries narratively, as "[o]ur fundamental tactic of self-protection, self-control, and self-definition is not spinning webs or building dams, but telling stories, and more particularly concocting the story we tell others—and ourselves—about who we are" (McCarthy 49). Consequently, having said that our ability to tell stories about ourselves is an innate attitude, Dennett explains that it is this phenomenon that gives rise to the idea of a unified and stable self because, though, the stories we create about ourselves are based on different and unconnected cognitive states, "[t]hese strings or streams of narrative issue forth *as if* from a single source …. Their effect on any audience … is to encourage them to (try to) posit a unified agent" (50). Having said that, he explains that the self is a center of narrative gravity, which is theoretically useful to create a sense of continued and conscious existence, but it is disconnected from the idea that the self is real and can be located in the brain (51).

In *City of Glass*, the adoption of Paul Auster as another self in Quinn's personal identity is not problematic since it follows the same logic with some slight differences though. It is the excuse for him to understand one of his ideas on being a private investigator. Thus, he is no longer just a private eye, in the sense of only observing, but he starts becoming a private "I", as making his self more determinate. Similarly, he becomes a private-eye, who can see, talk, move through the city, solve mysteries and make sense of his life.

However, it can be seen that it is too soon for Daniel to assume this new self. Because after accepting being Paul Auster and arranging to meet Peter Stillman Jr. (the man who was phoning him) next morning, Daniel Quinn seems to doubt whether he can be Auster, as "it did not occur to him that he was going to show up for his appointment. Even that locution, *his appointment*, seemed odd to him. It wasn't his appointment, it was Paul Auster's. And who that person was he had no idea" (12). This insecurity occurs simply because there is not a strong narrative construction that can explain the relationship between Paul Auster and Daniel Quinn. Or, as Derek Parfit would say, because there is no strong psychological connectedness between Auster and him.

Parfit explains in a similar approach to Dennett's that during our lives, we are not just one self but a number of them. However, "the distinction between successive selves can be made by reference [not to psychological continuity], but to the degrees of psychological connectedness" ("Personal Identity" 25).

In "Personal Identity", Parfit introduces two concepts that can help to understand the existence of more than one self in our lives: psychological continuity and psychological connectedness. By psychological continuity, he refers to "the overlapping chains of direct psychological relations," which can include causal continuity (20). In other words, it refers to the continuity of mental states of a person. In the book *Reasons and Persons*, Parfit also refers to this concept but in other form: experience-memories. He says it is commonly believed (partly due to Locke) that the only criterion for personal identity is the existence of an "overlapping chain of experience-memories"; and to reject this idea, he exposes the following:

Let us say that, between X today and Y twenty years ago, there are *direct memory connections* if X can now remember having some of the experiences that Y had twenty years ago. On Locke's view, this makes X and Y one and the same person. Even if there are *no* such direct memories, there may be *continuity of memory* between X now and Y twenty years ago ("The Psychological Criterion" 205).

Having said that, psychological continuity cannot be *the* criterion to determine the self and personal identity since some of our experience-memories are not remembered.

As a consequence, Parfit proposes psychological connectedness as the criterion for personal identity. He explains this concept as "the holding of these direct psychological relations" over time ("Personal Identity" 20). Or more clearly, psychological connectedness involves holding some

hopes, desires, intentions, memories and the like over time. Supposedly, each individual is the sum of all these mental states that are constantly changing and evolving. He also explains that "connectedness is a matter of degree, the drawing of these distinctions can be left to the choice of the speaker and be allowed to vary from context to context"; thus, "the word 'I' can be used to imply the greatest degree of psychological connectedness." (25) And applying this to the novel, the word "I" can be replaced by Daniel Quinn in order to establish the degrees of psychological connectedness that exist in the novel.

Quinn's estrangement from his appointment and Paul Auster can be explained by Parfit as he says, "[w]hen the connections are reduced, when there has been any marked change of character or style of life, our imagination would say, 'It was not I who did that, but [another self]" ("Personal Identity" 25). The explanation for Quinn's detachment from Paul Auster is simply because he has not made Auster determinate, or has not acquired him yet. Moreover, as he moves to the street he is more suspicious and wonders if he is really going out. At this particular moment, Quinn does not assume his new self because, there are not greater degrees of psychological connectedness or a connected story about his selves; thus, it is not his work as a private investigator for the moment, but other's.

However, one still questions that, though Quinn feels he is not in contact with Auster, he still believes he can present himself as Paul Auster, the detective, in Peter Stillman Jr's apartment. The answer to it is that he is "constantly being made more determinate as [he] go[es] along in response to the way the world impinges on [him]" ("The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity" 5). Moreover, the relationship between Quinn, Work and Auster is built in the following manner: as Daniel Quinn does not have a strong bond or psychological connectedness with Paul Auster, Quinn establishes a bond between Work and Auster since they are both private investigators. In this way, due to the characteristics of Max Work's occupation and the one requested to him as Paul Auster, he is able to replace Work by Auster and create connectedness between them. Or, in Dennett's account, Quinn would be creating a new narrative of his self by replacing his stories of Work and Wilson into Auster.

The relationship between his selves has to be established though. It is as if Quinn has only established the "I", but has not yet had the characteristics of a private-eye or an "eye" as an observer. Therefore, it makes sense that when he is heading to the Stillmans' apartment, he is not

sure of what he is doing; there seems to be a skeptical view on anything surrounding him. Similarly, when he goes to the apartment, he says "I seem to have arrived", leaving open the possibility for him to be wrong. Or, again, as the Stillmans' door opens, he warns himself, "If all this is really happening … then I must keep my eyes open"; hence, he can start defining his new self (Auster 13). It can be said that, in fact, Daniel Quinn is beginning to have some cognitive processes by his own via Auster

Similarly, as Daniel Quinn meets and talks to Virginia Stillman, he does not know what to do, he is in constant doubt; and ass to construct a coherent self and be more comfortable with himself, he wonders what Max Work would do in a situation like this. Moreover, he does not try to act as the private investigator but thinks as Work, as, "he began to imagine what [Virginia] looked like without any clothes on. Then he thought about what Max Work might have been thinking, had he been there," and after that he decides to light a cigarette, as probably would have done the quick-tongued detective Work (14).

Gilbert Ryle explains that in order for a person to be in the cognitive process of learning, he/she has to become "capable of doing some correct or suitable thing in any situations of certain general sorts. It is becoming prepared for variable calls within certain ranges" ("Self Knowledge" 147). In the same way, by paying attention to what has just been said about Daniel Quinn's attitudes when dealing with other people, it can be seen that he is in the process of learning to communicate again, or to start defining his narrative self as a means to recover some of his cognition.

From the last quotation, it is clear that Quinn tries to shape closer degrees of psychological connectedness between his selves by means of imitation. However, a more convenient form to do it is by living and thinking by himself. Ryle explains this "readiness" for thought as a mental state in which a person "is actually meeting a concrete call … [so that a person is in] in a 'ready' frame of mind, for he both does what he does with readiness to do just that in just this situation and is ready to do some of whatever else he may be called to do" (147). Nonetheless, it is still hard for Quinn to start constructing and narrating his own self and his own story because as he is in Stillman Jr's apartment sometimes he "could feel himself going blank, as if his brain had suddenly shut off. He had wanted to take in the details of what he was seeing, but the task was somehow beyond him at that moment" (Auster 14). It is as if consciousness is still beyond his control and, likewise, cannot control his selves. His conscious experiences are not in a coherent continuum, but are disconnected

points with no narrative gravity. Yet, as the narration progresses, there are instances in which Daniel Quinn is able to start shaping a connected story.

As Quinn is sitting on a sofa in the Stillmans' apartment, he sees Peter walking into the living room. Daniel is impressed to see how this man sets into move his body because it seems as if Peter's body "were out of control, not quite corresponding to the will that lay behind it … and that all its functions had been relearned, so that motion had become a conscious process" (15). Nevertheless, Stillman Jr's movements are not the only shocking aspect for Quinn, his use of language is still more impressive.

Before going into further discussion on Peter, it should be preferable to always hold Daniel Quinn in mind as a comparison to Stillman Jr. Although they may seem pretty different, they share many characteristics. One of them is their use of language, or, one should say, detachment of language as a communicative means for themselves. Because every time Peter tries to speak and convey meaning, he denies and deconstructs what he has already said, as when presenting himself, "I am Peter Stillman … That is not my real name. No. Of course, my mind is not all it should be. But nothing can be done about that. No", or uttering meaningless and created words as in "[w]imble click crumblechaw beloo. Clack clack bedrack … [f]lacklemuch, chewmanna" (15, 17).

It is important, at this point, to bear in mind Daniel Dennett's ideas that maybe the kind of mind that has no language is so different from the one that has that "calling them both minds is a mistake" (*Kinds of Minds* 23), since Stillman Jr's use of language is so strange that to wonder if he has a mind would make things more complicated. However, there is no form to answer that. The only possibility is to say that he is a chaotic character since it is in constant change and construction, not being able to have a point of reference for his narrative. He even says something similar when he declares that "[he] know[s] nothing of time. [He is] new every day. [He is] born when [he] wake[s] up in the morning. [He] grow[s] old during the day, and [he] die[s] at night"; thus, creating a discontinued and forever changing self (Auster 18). Let us remember that something similar happens at this moment of the narration to Daniel Quinn as he is on his own in the Stillmans' apartment and feels his brain shuts off. However, this state is only temporal in Daniel Quinn's life.

Because as he knows what his mission consists and accepts to spy on Peter Stillman Sr, Daniel has the opportunity to wander through the streets of New York as himself via Auster but

giving space for psychological connectedness to take place among Quinn, Auster, Work and Wilson. Moreover, Quinn is given the opportunity to start creating his coherent narrative self by responding to the way the world impinges on him and by, finally, writing no longer as William Wilson, but under his own name.

After eating in the Heights Luncheonette, Daniel Quinn goes to a shelf in the restaurant and sees some notebooks. He thinks that he has to buy one because he needs to take notes while following and preventing Peter Stillman Sr from killing his son. But what is more impressive is that he regards the notebook as a means to have things in order, "[i]n that way, perhaps, things might not get out of control" (38). The notebook is the form by which he can start shaping a coherent personal identity.

More revealing and complex is the part when Daniel Quinn starts working. As he gets arrives in his apartment, Quinn takes off his clothes, sits and prepares himself to write,

> trying no to move, trying not to do anything but breathe. Then he opened the red notebook … and wrote his initials, DQ (Daniel Quinn), on the first page. It was the first time in more than five years that he had put his own name in one of his notebooks. He stopped to consider this fact for a moment but then dismissed it as irrelevant … For several moments he studied its blankness, wondering if he was not a bloody fool. (Auster 39)

First of all, Daniel Quinn and the notebook are pretty similar. He faces it in the same manner as the notebook confronts him: without language and naked, or without a proper command of language. He undresses as a means to create certain bonds with his own writing. He has not written under his own name for more than five years, and he has not lived as himself or under his own name for the same period. All his experiences during these years of seclusion can be considered as approximations to real experiences by the imagination of William Wilson and Max Work. At this moment, he has the opportunity to start experiencing as Quinn, but due to the wrong phone call and the acceptance of Paul Auster as part of his personal identity, the only place he is able to finally present himself as Quinn is in his blank notebook.

As he continues to be naked and writing, he puts into words several appreciations that are important to understand his behavior as the story develops. Quinn writes that "[he has] not been

hired to understand – merely to act. This is something new. To keep it in mind, at all costs…. [T]o remember who [he is]. To remember who [he is] supposed to be …. All [he] can say is this: [His] name is Paul Auster. That is not [his] real name" (40). Beside the fact that the first entries in his notebook are mostly chopped phrases and non-logically ordered ideas, it is quite revealing that his performance is similar to Peter Stillman Jr's when speaking. The words go from one topic to another, following their own order and trying to establish their own coherence. It is as if he were trying to start retrospecting himself in a chaotic way; however, it is still difficult for him to accomplish it.

Gilbert Ryle explains that it is not correct to say that a person is introspecting when he is thinking about his own cognitive experiences. It is more accurate to say retrospection because

> [w]e catch, as we pursue and overtake, what is already running away from us…. It is true and important that what I recall is always something expressible in the form 'myself doing so and so'. I recall not a clap of thunder but hearing a clap of thunder …. The objects of my retrospections are items of my autobiography. I can recollect seeing things just as much as I can recollect imaging things …, however I may still fail to recognize [the nature of this images]. ("Introspection" 166-167)

In the same manner, Daniel Quinn cannot accurately run after his own thoughts because he cannot still convey a coherent story of his self. His thoughts are not connected among them, or his autobiography is still not based on his own actions and experiences.

Daniel Dennett expresses something similar in his already quoted essay "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity", as he explains that it is possible for a person "to engage in auto-hermeneutics, interpretation of one's self, and in particular to go back and think about one's past, and one's memories, and to rethink them and rewrite them. This process does change the … character that you are" (5). Thus, it is also possible to make a more determinate oneself by means of thinking about past memories, similar to Ryle's concept of retrospection. However, it is still too soon for Quinn to change his own "character" since he has not yet created a coherent narrative.

As a form to start creating psychological connectedness, as Parfit would say, Daniel needs to constantly bear in mind that he has to be Paul Auster, but, at the same time, to allow himself to be Quinn. Because by exclusively focusing on the piece of text written by him, it is seen that he is in the

throes of doubt. He has to be a private-eye and a private I, but there is also an evident conflict in him. The passing from one self to another is too abrupt; it seems that there is no continuity, as someone would normally expect when dealing with personal identity and change.

Daniel is able to manage this situation as he starts investigating the case by himself. For instance, he goes to the Columbia library next morning and learns about Stillman Sr' ideas; hence, by doing so, he is in a position to understand by his own. Nonetheless, it is still too soon for him to start making sense and "being capable of doing some correct … thing in any situation of general sorts" (Ryle 147); because after finishing reading, he opens the red notebook, but just "as he is about to write in it, however, he decides that he has had enough" (Auster 49). He is still not able to control all his processes.

It is as he starts following Peter Stillman Sr that his narrative begins to make sense. Moreover, as he waits for the man in the train station, Daniel is able to make his self more determinate by recognizing the place and as he meets a woman reading one of Wilson's detective novels. At the beginning he is shocked with the scene and tries to tell the reader that he is the author of the novel; however, he "realize[s] that it made no difference …. For five years he had kept William Wilson's identity a secret, and he wasn't about to give it away" (Auster 53). In a way, as Wilson has remained disconnected from him for so long and now that Quinn is finally starting to command his language, it seems inappropriate for him to identify himself with his penname. He no longer needs that abstraction.

This same feeling and disposition can be seen as he finally encounters Peter Stillman Sr because he seems to be prepared to begin to follow Stillman through the city which would mean to recall almost everything that the old man does, but always having as a point of reference his self or cognition. However, his first moments as a detective are not a passive state as mere follower because at the moment that he is about to start keeping record of Peter Stillman's wanderings, a man that looks exactly the same as him appears. Daniel has to make a decision and "whatever choice he made — and he had to make a choice — would be arbitrary, a submission to chance" and it will always define his work" (56).

At the beginning, Quinn follows the second Stillman, but "something [tells] him he would regret what he [is] doing. He [is] acting out of spite… Quinn breathed deeply, exhaled with a

trembling chest, and breathed again. There [is] no way to know: not his, not anything", but he finally decides to follow the first one (56). This passage overtly shows how difficult for Daniel is to make a decision that will define his investigation. In the same manner, it also illustrates that it is his first attempt to set his stream(s) of narrative.

As he has already defined the subject to follow, he, as well, starts defining his self by walking firstly, but then as he starts writing while going after Stillman. Because it may seem that wandering is "a kind of mindlessness" as it used to be for him in the beginning when he walked by New York in a form to lose within himself, but not anymore (61). Stillman could wander, not Quinn "for he was obliged now to concentrate on what he was doing, even if it was next to nothing" since even nothing is now a cognitive experience held by and within him due to the writing of the notebook (61).

By having a written record of Stillman's wandering through the city, Quinn "not only … takes note of [Peter's] gestures, describe[s] each object he selected or rejected for his bag, and keep[s] an accurate time table for all event, but he also set[s] down with meticulous care an exact itinerary of Stillman's divagations" (62). Subsequently, he also keeps record and starts making more determinate his story as he is on Stillman's trail. Or, as he establishes a "point of view of a particular conscious [experience by] … moving through space-time" (McCarthy 31).

Daniel Quinn's state of mind is finally in connection with his own mental experiences because being Auster now poses neither a problem nor confusion to him. He regards him merely a name, a man "with no interior, a man with no thoughts", a mere surface that obliges him to "keep his eyes fixed on Stillman, [which is] the only thought he allowed himself to have" (62). However, as it was already pointed out, this focusing on Stillman also involves Daniel's writing on his notebook, which has let him "divide his attention almost equally between Stillman and his writing … seeing the [man and his actions] and writing about it in the same fluid gesture"; or, for the sake of interpretation, in the same fluid thought (63).

It is at this point that one could express that Daniel Quinn and his red notebook are interchangeable as it was believed that detective and writer were in the beginning of the novel. Experience, writing and the notebook are now closely connected, if not in psychological connectedness. It is the succession of events that Quinn sees on Stillman which are held in the

notebook and realized in one coherent narrative. Additionally, this leads Daniel to start interpreting anything being based on what he has written about Stillman, leaving him to understand Peter's wandering through the city as an actual message: Tower of Babel.

Quinn is correct as he reads every movement of the old man because that way he is able to grasp but not completely understand a life that is being made more determinate. However, he fails to see that Stillman's narrative contains Peter's own cognitive experiences which are only accessible to him and not equivalent to patterns in the street. By the same token, Daniel's self is made more determinate as he watches and follows Stillman, but still his narration is only based on the outer and not on his inner activities. His story allows one direction, that taken by Stillman, but it is not open to Quinn's own decisions.

He allows himself to play with different names (he is Henry Dark, Paul Auster acting as Daniel Quinn, and Peter Stillman Jr) as a means to approach the old man, but this exercise does not give room for him to rethink and rewrite his own character because his narration is still anchored to Peter Stillman. This explains his reaction when Stillman Sr disappears.

After having waited Peter to get out of his hotel for many hours, Daniel goes in the building and asks the bellhop for Stillman. As Quinn knows that his subject is gone, he is panic-stricken because the outer base for his narration has disappeared. Daniel walks home and in desperation says to himself that it has been "so much for functions… [and s]o much for the meaning of words"; thus, trying to reject language again (89). Moreover, when arriving home, he immediately phones Peter Stillman Jr's wife, Virginia, and breaks the news. He tells her that he has lost the man, but that he already has a plan and he will be calling every two hours to check that nothing has happened to her and her husband. Virginia trusts Quinn's words, however, "[h]e [finds] it hard to believe [that] she still seem[s] to trust him …. For the fact [is], he ha[s] lied to her. He [does] not have several ideas. He [does] not even have one" (90). There is no place that can work as a base, and he questions the fact that Virginia still believes him because there is no anchor for his narration or point of reference for him to have thoughts.

Then, at this point of the novel, Daniel Quinn starts questioning the events so far. Peter Stillman has gone and with him the only direction his thoughts could go; that is why now he wonders what has occurred to him and settles a more reflexive state on him. It is the time for him to

start revising and going back to his own memories of this event, to "rethink them and rewrite them [so as to] change" or make more definite the character that he has become (Dennett, "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity" 5).

He realizes that he "ha[s] never seriously questioned the circumstances of his hiring. Things happened too quickly, and he ha[s] taken it for granted that he would fill in for Paul Auster. [However, once] he ha[s] taken the leap into that name, he ha[s] stopped thinking about Auster himself", and entirely focused on Stillman Sr's trails and his writing in the notebook. Accordingly, more than being Auster, the detective, he has become the writing in the notebook and he can rely only on that. It is, in fact, the notes that he has taken while following Stillman that are the basis for his subsequent but not successful quest.

He starts by looking for the real Paul Auster and meets him. But he does not find any answer or hint for his current state. Moreover, his visit to Auster's apartment has carried memories of his own family when Paul Auster, the writer, introduces his wife and son to Quinn. However, these reminiscences seem not to be accepted by him since he almost rushes out from Auster's building and expresses that he is nowhere and has nothing. Or more emphatically, Quinn "knew that he knew nothing [because] not only he had been sent back to the beginning, he was now before the beginning" since he feels completely disconnected from the memories of the former Quinn and he does not know how to locate Stillman and help Peter and Virginia (104).

He has nothing but the narrative of himself following a person he does not know if he will ever see again. There is only this particular story held in his red notebook for him to recount and revise, and he starts rethinking it as he walks endlessly on the city streets. He spends almost the whole day going all over the city and revisiting certain places where he has followed Stillman. But as he finally decides to take a rest, he feels the urge to write what he has seen in it. What is more, Quinn finds out that "[f]or the first time since he … bought the red notebook, what he wrote that day ha[s] nothing to do with the Stillman case. Rather, he concentrate[s] on the things he ha[s] seen while walking" (108). Hence, he feels that he has to start to self-reproduce in language or to create a coherent story about himself.

It has been already said that Daniel Dennett expresses that a unique human ability is that of telling stories and "more particularly [to start] concocting the story we tell others—and ourselves—

about who we are" from our own experiences (McCarthy 49). Moreover, when explaining the notion of the narrative self, Dennett says that "our tales are spun, but most of the part we don't spin them; they spin us. Our human consciousness, and our narrative selfhood, is their product, not their source" (50). Similarly, Daniel Quinn starts shaping his self as he starts writing, finally, about his own thinking and understanding of the world surrounding him. Then he sets himself into writing certain facts "before he forg[ets] them" because then they would cease to exist (Auster 108).

The coherence among the notebook and Quinn, or, let us say, the degree of psychological connectedness that Daniel Quinn achieves with his red notebook by means of writing can lead us to affirm that the object and Daniel are interchangeable; but, what is more, Quinn's cognitive processes cannot be performed without the notebook. As one can see in his latest entry, he says, by quoting first Baudelaire and then paraphrasing him, that "it seems [that he] will always be happy in the place where [he is] not. Or more bluntly: Wherever [he is] not is the place where [he is himself]" (110). Then he stops writing and wants to think a little about what he has written, but finds he cannot. As a result, he is himself while he is "anywhere out of the [concrete] world" or, similarly, as an abstraction through writing (110).

Despite what has been said, the notebook makes references to the Stillman case yet; thus, Daniel Quinn's narration coheres with that fact, and for that reason he goes to Peter Stillman Jr's apartment and stays in an alley spying his building. However, as there is no one to look at and since Daniel has already said that he is himself where he is not, "we cannot say for certain what happened to Quinn during this period, for it is at this point in the story that he began to lose his grip" and even the "red notebook, which until now has provided a detailed account of Quinn's experiences, is suspect" (113). Once again, it is confusing to see what and where Quinn is exactly as there is no story about him. The notebook is rejected and his narrative selfhood is lost or stopped while "he [has] melted into the walls of the city" (116).

Once again, he is lost in the private-eye pun for he can only be an eye, but no longer an "I" or a detective. He fails to accomplish his mission since he is neither thinking nor writing about his cognitive processes. His non-stop seeing is just an action that only requires him to be awake, but not focused or aware; thus, he does not make his self more determinate by seeing but gets psychologically disconnected from his previous selves or from his narration. In fact, the story of this

period is not definite and it is not possible to locate it on time; as a result, his disintegration is evident.

As Derek Parfit explains, when the degrees of psychological connectedness are reduced, a person can say "It was not 'I' who did that, but another self". Similarly, at the time that Quinn falls short of food and money, he plans to go to a bank and then buy what he needs. However, when he passes in front of a shop, Daniel sees himself in a mirror for the first time since he has begun his vigil. His reaction is neither of shock nor satisfaction, he "ha[s] no feeling about it at all, for the fact [is] that he d[oes] not recognize the person he [sees] there as himself….He trie[s] to remember himself as he [was] before, but he f[inds] it difficult. He look[s] at this new Quinn and shrug[s]. It d[oes] not really matter" since he has been one thing before and now it made no difference to be another (119-120). As the action progresses, Daniel Quinn continues to disconnect from his other selves when he finds out that his apartment has been rented to another person, and when Paul Auster breaks the news that his case no longer exists: Peter Stillman Sr committed suicide two months ago.

With nothing more to do, Daniel heads aimlessly to the Stillmans' apartment and discovers that it is empty. He goes into some rooms and decides to stay in a bathroom. He throws all his clothes and watch away by the window and accepts the only company of his red notebook. Then, he falls asleep and when he wakes up, he starts remembering the books "he had written under the name of William Wilson" and he wonders why he had done it (127). It is remarkable in this passage that Quinn finally assumes that it was he who wrote the novels and not Wilson as an abstraction; he even attempts to find a reason, but that cannot be done. Moreover, as he continues thinking by himself and making sense of his life, he realizes that Max Work is dead and he seems not to care since "many things [are] disappearing now [that] it [is] difficult to keep track of them" (128). Nonetheless, he fails to see that, actually, it is particularly at this moment that things start reappearing and cohere in his life as his writing becomes a part of his everyday, if not, every minute.

Every day, as soon as he wakes up, Daniel starts writing in the red notebook and does not do anything else. His entries are mostly related to the Stillman case, but, in contrast with all his previous writing, they are all questions that arise from Quinn and are not impinged by the immediate context; they are a result of his retrospection, or, rewriting of his character. And as the time progresses, Quinn "realize[s] that the more he wr[ites] the sooner the time would come when he could no

longer write anything" (130). He also notices that everyday there is lesser time to write and eat because the room quickly gets dark; hence, some days he could eat only two bites of food in order to have some time or seconds to write. As a consequence, Daniel Quinn's life is reduced to the words written in his notebook and nothing exists outside his writing or his pages. His last entry is a question that remains unanswered: "What will happen when there are no more pages in the red notebook?" (131). Daniel Quinn has become his words and, by the time the notebook ends, he ceases to exist as a body. However, he remains as a coherent narrative in the notebook's pages.

At the very beginning of this paper, it was said that Daniel Quinn's successive selves may posit a problem when trying to deal with his personal identity. However, it is possible to conclude that Daniel Quinn is not problematic as far as one bears in mind that the self is a useful abstraction, and not an entity that can be located inside the mind, as the Cartesian theory proposes. Taking into consideration Dennett's ideas, the self is no other thing as the coherent story of our cognitive states, or as he states "our human consciousness, and our narrative selfhood, is the product [and not the source of] the streams of narrative" that seem to come from one source (McCarthy 50). This quotation leaves space to say that, actually, there are simultaneous and numerous cognitive states, but our mind creates the fiction that they are held by just one self.

In a similar manner, Derek Parfit expresses that the existence of successive selves in a person's life can be explained by means of psychological connectedness. And, in fact, it is the degrees of connectedness that create the sense of a continuous personal identity. In this sense, the word "I" implies the greatest degree of psychological connectedness. In order to establish Daniel Quinn's personal identity in *City of Glass*, the word "I" can be replaced by either Daniel Quinn or his red notebook. Figure 2 illustrates these ideas in which Quinn and the notebook are represented in the third line. The shadings are William Wilson, Max Work and Paul Auster, and they all are psychologically continuous, but the parts of each line are not all psychologically connected. This allows us to believe that there are previous selves in Quinn's life and that "when the connections are reduced, when there has been any marked change of character or style of life, [one can say] 'It was not [Daniel Quinn] who did that, but an earlier self'" (Parfit, "Personal Identity" 25). Thereby, this helps to create a sense of continuity in Daniel Quinn's life.

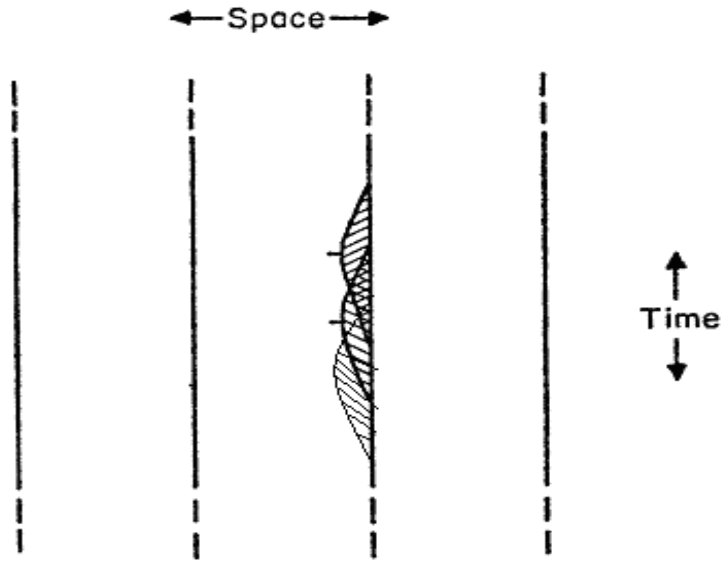

Fig. 2. Illustration of Daniel Quinn's personal identity following Derek Parfit's ideas, in which the third line represents either Quinn or his notebook. William Wilson, Max Work and Paul Auster are represented by the three connected shadings. Parfit, Derek. "Personal Identity". *The Philosophical Review* 80.1 (1971): 3-27. 24. Print.

Finally, there is clearly a connection between Daniel Quinn's mind and his selves; however, this connection is neither static nor physical since "it is an abstraction one uses as part of a theoretical apparatus to understand, and predict, and make sense of the behavior" of some of his selves ("The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity" 8). Then, it is not problematic when Daniel Quinn disappears and leaves the red notebook only as a sign of his existence since "we try to make all of our material cohere into a single good story. And that story is our autobiography" (8).

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