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***THE DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF THE NARRATIVE SELF IN
J.M.COETZEE'S YOUTH: A STRAWSONIAN PERSPECTIVE***

Keywords: *Narrative self; Narrativity; Non-Narrativity; Diachronic self; Episodic self; Teleological; Deontological; Art/artist; Self-experience; Artificial, constructed self*

Abstract: *In the contemporary Philosophy of Mind the self can be approached from two possible perspectives when we agree that there is such a thing as the self: a pro-narrativist and an anti-narrativist perspective. The British philosopher Galen Strawson takes an anti-narrativist position arguing against the fashionable narrativist view of the self. He argues that it is natural to think that there is such a thing as the self but the most important issue is to investigate if such a thing exists and to ask questions related to its nature. In his essay Against Narrativity Strawson's main concerns are phenomenological and ethical matters about the human self. In this paper I examine Strawson's view on narrativity with regard to self-experience and I am trying to show how this view applies to J.M.Coetzee's protagonist in the novel Youth. The aim is to argue that the protagonist of Coetzee's novel fails to understand himself when reflecting upon his experiences; he tries to justify his lack of self-realisation in ethical terms. This tendency to look for a coherent story in one's life can be a "gross hindrance to self-understanding" as Strawson puts it. This lack of self-understanding is reflected in the confused and depressed state of the protagonist which springs from the conviction that he should be able to see his life in narrative terms having a coherent meaning.*