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***THE INTERTEXTUAL SELF: WRITING THE SELF IN
PETER ACKROYD'S DAN LENO AND THE LIMEHOUSE GOLEM***

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Abstract: *Starting from Peter Ackroyd's essay, 'The Uses of the Self' in Notes for a New Culture (Ackroyd 64-89) where he focuses on the relation between the self and language and shows that the human self does not exist prior to language, I am going to enlarge upon his concept of the intertextual self in his novel entitled Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem. Moreover, I will demonstrate that all the characters in this novel are symbols of intertextuality. For Ackroyd, the self is a multiplicity of voices and texts adapted to the different situations and discourses it encounters. The self is dispersed, fragmented and defined intertextually. Dan Leno is the master of masks and a good example of the intertextual postmodern self; he is described by one of his colleagues as 'endless' (109); there is no part Dan Leno could not play. His identity is a multitude of different selves hidden behind the masks he assumes. Dan Leno is a symbol of intertextuality; he comprises several and countless personae, the same as intertextuality comprises countless texts, contexts and intertexts. The theatricality of the human behaviour and the idea of the intertextual self are closely related in the novel. They are woven around the crime plot in which the poststructuralist self – the influence of Thomas De Quincey upon the murderer – is inseparable from the theatricality of the killings themselves.*