Daniel Dennett's approach to self (or its lack thereof) is influenced by his materialist and reductionist approach to consciousness, inspired by the hard sciences. In his "Multiple Drafts" model, Dennett argues there is no single entity of self, but a collection of parallel processes which generate a narrative structure. He rejects a "Cartesian theater" in the brain, and utilizes his method of heterophenomenology to avoid errors resulting from a centralized assumption. While I strongly agree with Dennett's distributed channels, seen in neurobiological explanations of perception, I aim to add nuance and argue that the experienced self is composed of centralized points from which distributed information is viewed, akin to a Cartesian theater with rows and rows of seats. I argue that time perception is the foundational unit of these observational points, dictating how narrative impacts experience and decision.

Traditionally, philosophers and psychologists have thought of consciousness as an indivisible stream, where a core identity is located. These theories rely on an assumption of a persisting identity over time. This identity is the structural foundation for memories, experiences, and sense of self. Dennett criticizes this view of consciousness and argues for a distributed "self". In his model, the various processes of perception occur in parallel. If we're to look at neurological phenomena, various sensory networks are active in many areas at any one moment. In Dennett's "Multiple Drafts" model, these processes are not coordinated by a central director, but work independently. He uses the metaphor of drafts to highlight how there is no final version of conscious experience. As the dispersed processes occur, multiple interpretations, or drafts, are generated simultaneously. This plays into his conception of narrative structure, as the many interpretations generate an illusion of self based on elements of conflict, resolution, and climax.

This narrative structure is not only time-dependent, but contingent on the specific time frame considered and perceived during information processing. In each moment, the narrative, or interpreting element of the distributed channels, can be composed from different durations, resulting in various perceptions, phenomena, and attention drawing. By acknowledging the influence of this variable, we recognize that the self is a composite of momentary perspectives, each of centralized observation, contributing to an overarching narrative. While Dennett agrees with a composite and dynamic idea of identity, he advocates against any centralized observator. I argue that the fractional interpretations are of observing character.

One objection to my view is that of infinite regression. If the fractional interpretations carry observing character, is narrative structure also used in those frames? The issue with infinite regression is usually illustrated as a fear of potential continuous observers within observers, or homunculi within homunculi. In epistemology, infinite regression poses a challenge to justification of belief, as no satisfactory, non-circular foundation can be reached. I'd argue that admittance of an infinite regress doesn't equal the non-solution Dennett fears it does, but actually fortifies his argument of how dynamic internal character is. Because there is distortion and variation between every layer of the regress, it is not a redundant or circular theory. In the

example of homunculi, the physical body has a concrete 3D shape. Although mapping body schemas would be difficult because of subjective ideas of attention and agency, for those with body dysmorphia, there are specific variables which are distorted between the outer body and the inner homunculi. This implies there is an internally mapped schema which can be distorted to begin with- something which can be experienced as larger, smaller, disfigured, etc. Another objection to an internalized observer is that an infinite regression would meet biological limitations. Cognitive mechanisms are costly in resources. However, I'd argue that a possible infinite regression is not an active occurrence constantly bolstering perceived identity, but akin to getting closer to an object and discovering texture. Although philosophers rely upon cognitive models of reflection, abstracting themselves into objects of observation, at some foundational level there is an embodiment as an observer. This position is necessary because the intent of a reflective action requires such. At that endpoint, there is blindness and ignorance to further layers, so no infinity is ever actually present or empirically true from our perspective. The continuous creation of internal observers as narrative trudges forward actually aids Dennett's argument of dynamic construction, as there is no set of events or plot which would suddenly hit a bound of character creation, ending the narrative. Even in the face of events which we have not experienced before (which arguably is all events; I did not consent to being woken), character forms.

I also would expand on narrative structure and propose that media technology has expanded the interpretations possible. As modes of media have progressed, our processing references cinematography, photography composition, poetry deconstruction, etc. for methods of interpretation. In the argument of narrative structure, the illusioned self is constructed from thematic elements derived from the distributed processes. When I used to be a film minor, we studied an "encoding-decoding" model of media. During the encoding phase, filmmakers make decisions about how to represent characters, events, and themes through chosen elements. During decoding, the audience makes their own sense of such messages, bringing individual background and ideologies into a very active process. Though our image of experience is not so clear in where the roles lie, there are components of internal encoding and decoding that occur, as seen in the narrative theory. Thus, practiced analysis from media consumption enters this encoding-decoding model.
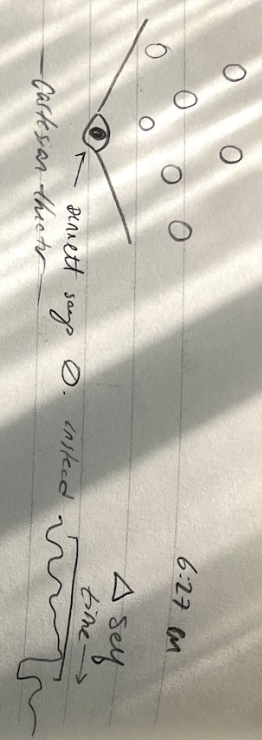
A quote holds different interpreted consequences than the entire book it comes from, but the quote doesn't hold less interpreted meaning than the novel. Just like a still frame from an experimental film might be so beautiful it goes viral, despite most individuals not having watched it. In this capacity, the time over which each frame of our narrative processing occurs has consequences on our decisions and actions. That factored perspective points to an origin of observation. Agreeing with Dennett, this origin is not fixed; we are not straightjacketed to a concept of self. Instead, the constant changing of seats is where we experience and meet ourselves. This is why "turning points" are a universal aspect of narratives. Conflict and resolution are good examples of such turning points, as they are recognized across cultures by changes in certainty. Certainty, similar to entropy in physics, is only coherent in relation to a time

frame. A static image cannot be discerned as chaotic or ordered if there is no referential point. Hence, the time frame each narrative reflection or interpretation takes place over is not only impactful to identity's manifestation, but a necessary and defining variable.
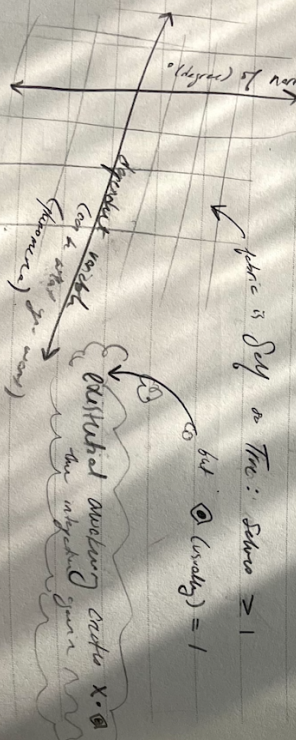
Another counter-argument may be that this doesn't address the hard problem of consciousness. In theory, Dennett believes that consciousness can be fully explained by understanding the neural and cognitive processes without any additional non-physical elements. I believe the hard problem does exist- where does this difference show in our theories then? To Dennett, characterizations of literary elements are physically-based, thus wholly "explained" physically. I agree that these thematic recognitions have complete basis in neural circuits of detection, but the theme recognized holds value in its reduced nature. A theme in a storyline is similar to a mathematical formula; it is reducing a nuanced, real dataset into a smooth theoretical line between important points. The directionality and slope of such a line is described in its regressive statement, but no information about the unit is revealed. Despite the indescribable nature of unit in this analogy, my nuance on narrative structure aims to bring the philosophical and physical problems closer than other theories to the point of nearly touching.

This consideration of time perception then elucidates essential aspects of experience. In some moments, our narrative interprets from a stance of time as its epistemological construct, remembering past and future (which are not immediately present and must be cognitively considered). Emotions, decisions, and experience may reflect this longitudinal consideration through wisdom. In other moments, our narrative interpretation references closer to our experiential time perception, short and consisting of the present. This might manifest in the prioritization of hedonistic values like pleasure, relief, or other transient gratifications, as we seek resolution in the shortest storyline (usually resolution of pain). However, this length of reference shouldn't be framed as negative inherently. Shorter time frames are also how we experience embodied peace, flow, and trance states. Maybe my life is falling apart in a societal sense, but if I can sit and be present with the trees, my narrative can experience calm, because certainty within the micro-frame has been reached. Anxiety paralysis may occur due to an overwhelmingly large frame being referenced at an inappropriate time. Even though looking at the big picture is usually associated with intelligence, the narrative can become removed from immediate tasks and joys as it attempts to tackle overarching conflicts.

Perhaps there's an aspect of intelligence in regards to these factors, like a narrative intelligence. Can we use tools like mindfulness and abstraction to adjust our experience of time to reduce anxiety and increase agency?
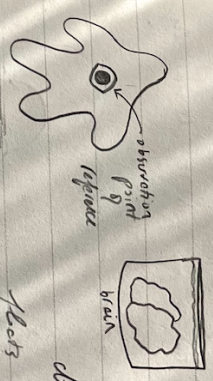
Bennett says Ø. nihcd

Cartesian theater

Δ say

time

I can the time frame of narrativity.

then on may selves, they

are coordinates along a plane.

point is Say as the : selves

but Ø (reality) = 1

(degree) of narrativity

Dennett avoiding caches X, Ø

Self

He's wrong it's all physical; but the light?

Narrative construction is arising proces in real-time

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multiple dr... model :

Dennett says Self is

his is right

observation point of reference

Human Self = Ø

brain

It still exists; a schema

lets think :

experienced schema

in abstract material
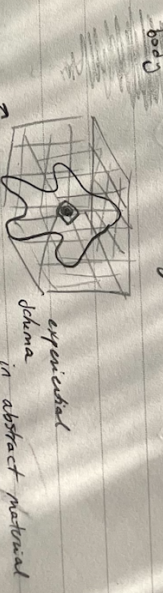
this cube exists; It exists as much as it exist

It ≠ I, while around the brain there is Ø.

knowing components.
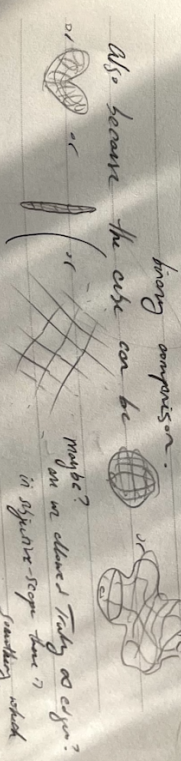
also because the cube can be

maybe? you we observed Things or edge?

in subjective - scope - time

this argument is could learn, can't think or

brach into the brain. No nothing in Ø

I raise : Say of the

the print I correct

the subjectivity never in sees

brain
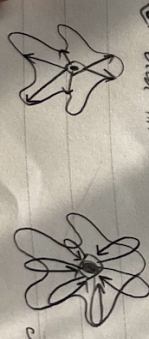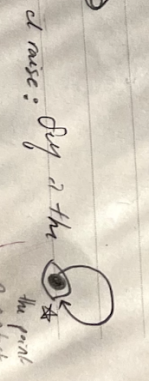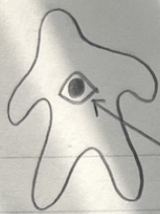
this is my patient. ultimately

Self is both actor + audience.

can turn into

actor   audience
♀   ♂
me   you/others
child   parent
child   abuser
Somayya   Allah
animal   Science
art   art
suicidal   inspired

and here DIALOGUE ensues.

Thank you for teaching this class and being so open and giving a space I could unmask in.
Please let me know when you have OH next semester, I'd love to stop by sometime