

**A POSTMODERN READING OF PAUL AUSTER:THE PARADOXICAL
CHARACTERS OF PAUL AUSTER: THE QUEST FOR METAIDENTITY IN PAUL
AUSTER'S NOVELS**

by

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ABSTRACT:

Paul Auster uses the fundamental paradox of representative reality and representative illusion to convey a quest for identity through multiple identities of the characters. His novels highlight this quest and its steps and thus question the issue of identity by displaying the responses of the characters to stages. Paul Auster questions the issue of identity by means of his characters' quest stages such as objectification, coincidence, solitude and encounters with alter ego which finally ends up with a kind of metaidentity that brings the writer/reader/character trio all together.

INTRODUCTION

Paul Auster uses the fundamental paradox of representative reality and representative illusion to convey a quest for identity through multiple identities of the characters. His novels highlight this quest and its steps and thus question the issue of identity by displaying the responses of the characters to stages. Paul Auster questions the issue of identity by means of his characters' quest stages such as objectification, coincidence, solitude and encounters with alter ego which finally ends up with a kind of metaidentity that brings the writer/reader/character trio all together.

What postmodernist fiction and my thesis try to explain is that there are no certain truths or reality but, there are only representations. In postmodernist fiction, there is no reality or illusion but only constructions of them. Postmodernist fiction rejects the Notion of science and God, therefore inventing new constructions.

As Bertens points out "Metahistory seemed to dissolve the difference between fact and fiction and between real and imaginary events, violating the principles as a scientific

discipline (324).” Auster’s characters in search of identity, conforming to this thesis are thus meta-existences as in case of the narrator(s) in The Locked Room, into whom all characters like Sophie, the mother and Fanshawe have melted. Also with the Lacanian Mirror analysis, the identity is constructed as in postmodernist thinking, Lacan’s analysis on identity ,on alienation is related to my thesis for postmodernism.

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One of the main themes in Auster’s books that I will explain in my thesis is the destiny or coincidence theme, because in the quest for identity whether the events are the results of a destiny or just coincidence is also unclear. Auster wants the readers to investigate whether there is an authority in charge of order or whether the events are serendipitous. There is no such a thing called destiny for the metafiction writers , because it is also an authoritative saying. For postmodernist fiction , the idea of coincidence is suitable since nothing is certain.

Metaidentity can never be static,” Identity is not consist of obsolete platform but built through fluent standard which is supported by neighbors like the changeable beings reflected through mirrors (Min 2)”. It is not built upon certain rules, it is not a result, the identities change like alter egos, and are shaped with coincidence and solitude. This thesis is an attempt directed towards taking steps to build the meta identity that Auster ends up with.

CHAPTER 1:

FIRST STEP TO IDENTITY:

USING IDENTITY AS AN OBJECT:

The problem of representing the human subject in fiction can be seen not only in postmodernist fiction but other periods of fiction. In postmodern fiction, though Auster uses different characters, being an identity is not possible in a world where no ultimate truth can be established. The representation of identity in Auster's books is something that can be worn and when the character doesn't want it, it can be stripped. In Auster's novels, identity is not a thing that is stable, but it is always changing. It is like the mask that people wear. The problem is that the "identity" is not a form but it is a particular. Therefore, the identities are some kind of objects in the novels of Auster. Objects are there for some reason mostly for a mission and after a while Auster needs other objects or identities. "He had of course, long ago stopped thinking of himself as real. If he lived in the World at all, it was only at one remove through the imaginary person of Max Work." (City Of Glass 9) Quinn doesn't have a

stable identity, but his identity is a metaphor. It doesn't have a meaning on its own but with the differences, it gains the meaning. He had to be Max Work in order to adapt himself to the role. After Max Work, he is Quinn or Paul Auster. It is not the representation of identity that is essential but its use is important. Max Work, the detective, is there for the state of being a detective, so Max Work is also an object for Quinn. "For poststructuralists and postmodernists, the subject is a fragmented being who has no essential core of identity, and is to be regarded as a process in a continual state of dissolution."(Sim 367) It is admitted that there is not a stated identity but a thing for the purpose. An object may be used for different purposes as in City of Glass where the characters such as Max Work can be both Quinn and Max

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Work. For Quinn, he has the identity Quinn which doesn't have a purpose, but it turned out that Quinn is the metaobject, the supreme object in the novel. His life depends upon an object, the red notebook and it turns out that the red notebook is a thing that Quinn lives being attached to. Therefore it becomes that the red notebook is the purpose for Quinn, the object gaining importance as a subject. Like the red notebook, the character William Wilson has a role in the book. As in Edgar Allan Poe's story William Wilson, in the end it comes out that the two Wilson's are the same man. Like an object, William Wilson has the role of the feared part of the person, which exists in Auster's character since Quinn is afraid of the role or the object Wilson plays Quinn. Though he is a representation of a character, "After all these months of trying to find him, I felt as though I was the one who has been found. Instead of looking for Fanshawe, I had actually been running away from him."(The Locked Room 286) Fanshawe is the object which is being watched by the narrator. However, the narrator becomes the object because he "feels" he is being watched. Fanshawe they are changing

identities, chasing “egos”. Lives of the characters depend on “moments” so they alter their identities as the situations change. “It was in California that he invented his new name ,turning himself into Thomas Effing when he signed the hotel register on the first night.”(180)so this character is there for protecting himself from getting caught, since he committed crimes ,he had to have a new identity .Like the objects, the identities are there for their usefulness, not to have “ personality”, like the red notebook in City of Glass, Thomas Effing’s identity is there for escaping.

The object has a meaning when it is used. It gains a meaning when it is related to something. ”The man of immediacy does not know himself, he quite literally identifies

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himself only by the clothes he wears, he identifies having a self by externalities (Smith, 84) “. What Kierkegaard wants to mention is that the man becomes a self when he is related to other objects. The identities in Auster’s novels are like the clothes, when the character wants to wear this identity or that identity, he or she chooses it like an object, that it should serve some aim. “He had not really lost himself ,he was merely pretending and he could return to being Quinn whenever he wished..The fact that there was now a purpose for his being Auster a kind of moral justification (51).”Being Paul Auster the detective ,makes him actually aware of the moral issues, he becomes aware of things with the object identity. Becoming an object is important in Auster’s novels because the characters have no purposes other than these object identities. If the identity is an object and can be changed therefore it is not a reality but an illusion because we can’t consider which one of the identities is real or which one is illusion.

The objects in Mr Blank’s room have a name on them and so the identity “Blank” is written on our character.

The objects that the old Stillman collects in City of Glass show us that they are symbolically the characters in the novel. “They seemed to be no more than broken things , discarded things, stray bits of junk (59).” Like the objects he collects, the identities are broken literally, that the identities are valueless therefore they need to be changed when they cannot be used for valid purposes. Quinn is like the broken umbrella in the sense that he has to wear some other identity in order to be useful. In the book Travels in the Scriptorium, Mr Blank is symbolically associated with the object chair because like the chair he is full of secret things and like the chair Mr Blank behind all the difficulties he has, he has a smooth side when treated good, like Anna does when she bathes him.

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The chair has been pushed in, which means that in order to sit down, Mr Blank is obliged to pull it out. In so doing, he finally discovers that the chair is equipped with wheels, for instead of scraping along the floor as he is expecting it will, the chair rolls out smoothly, with scarcely any effort on his part. Mr Blank sits down, astonished that he could have overlooked this feature of the chair during his earlier visits to the desk. (28)

Becoming an object also is something that is related to materialism. An object is a commodity and therefore the identities in Auster’s novels are like commodities; things that one can buy. “More than anything else the suit was the badge of my identity, the emblem of how I wanted others to see me .”(Moon Palace 15) Martin Fogg sees himself as Uncle Victor when he wears the suit. Auster tries to tell us that identities are merely things and they are not related to the feelings but to the material World . Identities in that sense can be owned with

money, like the suit Martin Fogg wears. The character Blue thinks that the identity is only related to objects and the identity is like a commodity to him. The characteristics of his personality don't interest him:

Blue knows everything there is to know about Black: What kind of soup he buys, what newspaper he reads, what clothes he wears, and each of these things he has faithfully recorded in his notebook. He has learned a thousand facts, but the only thing they have taught him is that he knows nothing. (167)

Blue thinks the objects he buys can show his personality but the characters are not commodities and they have deeper metaphorical meanings behind the surface.

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“ Brown explores James's "materialist affectivity" (140), in which the deepest understanding of human subjects can be grasped only when thoughts and feelings are figured—indeed, are experienced and acted upon—as if they were physical object”(Bentley 194) Bentley points out that the objects are related to thoughts and they cannot be thought separately and that the ideas should be thought as objects in order to be understood. “To anticipate what Black is going to do , to know when he will stay in his room when he will go out he need merely look into himself“(Ghosts 153). But the identity is related to thoughts, that is if there is no thinking there won't be any perception and objects. So identities as roles are related to thinking .

The character in postmodern fiction is very different from the unified and coherent self. The object(identity) can be viewed from different perspectives and different meanings can be attached to it. In postmodern fiction, we might say that flat characters are encountered since

they are functional and artificial. They don't seem natural in the way that their purposes of existence are about functions. Another characteristic of postmodern fiction characters is the discontinuity in the discourse. For example a notebook can be seen as an object of writing whereas it can also be seen as a sign. The reasons for their existence are in a state of discontinuity. The notebook loses its meaning and takes up another meaning like the identities, therefore they have discontinuous identities. The identities in Ghosts, keep switching to other identities since their meanings keep being changed by the viewers. Blue has an identity that doesn't like to do boring things but for Black he seems to be doing the same things, and actually Black is the one who attaches a different meaning to what he sees. White, on the other hand, sees Black as a bunch of reports. For Blue, however, Black is an object of mystery. "The only way for Blue to have a sense of what is happening is to be inside

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Black's mind, to see what he is thinking"(Ghosts 137). The object Thomas Effing has a different meaning for Marco, he is disgusted by his way of eating but for Mrs Hume, Mr Effing has a different meaning as an object:

Mrs Hume showed remarkable patience during these exhibitions. She never
Registered alarm or disgust, acting as though Effing's behaviour was part of
The natural order of things. Like someone who lived next to railroad tracks or
An airport, she had grown accustomed to periodic eruptions of deafening
Noise...(110)

He is only interested in the reports, but for Blue, Black is an object of mystery: "The only thing for Blue to have a sense of what is happening is to inside Black's mind, to see what he is

thinking.”(Ghosts 137) Though White and Blue have the same purposes that is to find who Black is, actually for White it might be Black , but for Blue , Black is an object that resembles him, or further actually the role is Blue himself. Fanshawe in the novel Locked Room is seen as a ghost for the narrator , that the object belongs to past .”He was a ghost I carried around inside me ,a prehistoric figment .”(196) But Fanshawe is an object that has greater meaning for Sophie because he is her husband. But we can think that the objects’ meanings can be changed from time to time and for the narrator Fanshawe becomes the most important thing in his life. So the objects as identities, can change their meaning as time goes on.

Roles are remedies for alienation. We feel we should be connected to the objects to cure loneliness and we sometimes think that the objects are people. Objects act as if they are

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friends to us but paradoxically they are the reason for the people’s loneliness. Hence, the identities in Auster’s books are like objects, and they alienate people from themselves. Though Auster doesn’t say in the book The Music of Chance, that Nashe changes his identity, I assume that Nashe encounters his other side on the road, the character named Pozzi. Nashe has several other identities in him, but Pozzi, the other side of Nashe makes his life related to chance factor. With Pozzi he does things he has never done before. Therefore we can say that Pozzi made Nashe feel alienated and he feels he is stripped of his own identity . In other words, Nashe takes up his Pozzi identity which made him a foreigner even to himself.

The thought of anti essentialism tells us about how the identities become objects. Self can be changed like objects or that they are used when they are needed. The identity as the object tells us that there is no reality because there is no permanent identity, “antiessentialist

meaning that they reject the notion of there being any essence to phenomena such as truth, meaning, self, or identity.”(Sim, 183) Like the objects the identities are not “true” but there are many possibilities for them. There are no definitions in antiessentialism, the concepts such as self, truth and identity are indefinable.

An object is the possessed thing and there should be a possessor. So there is a power relationship between the object and its possessor. The possessor has the power, the possessor should be a person not a thing. In Auster’s novels the person takes the place of the object, the possessed. herefore the characters like the objects are owned and we don’t know the possessor. The identity in Auster’s novels are possessed by the reader and the author, so there isn’t a possession of an identity, rather a possession of a potential and constructive identity

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CHAPTER 2:

SECOND STEP TO IDENTITY: SOLITUDE

Solitude makes one more aware. When someone is alone, he or she takes off the mask he wears for the community and he recognizes things that he would never recognize while he is with people around him. This recognition leads him to some kind of illumination. Nearly in all the books

of Auster, we encounter with some kind of solitude. “I slept in the park every night after that. It became a sanctuary for me, a refuge of inwardness...the park offered me the possibility of solitude, of separating myself from the rest of the world (Moon Palace 55)”.

The park is the place where Martin Fogg realizes that he doesn’t need to behave because he is all alone by himself. He recognized that freedom is actually in solitude.” The park gave me a

chance to return to my inner life ,to hold on to myself in terms of what was happening inside me(Moon Palace 56)”. Solitude made Martin Fogg recognize of his inner side. He did not have to pick up identities, and change them, in solitude he just listened to himself. He recognizes that life itself means solitude; though we are surrounded by people and things , we don’t recognize that at the end of the day ,we are alone in our room. Actually our life is where this room is and the room becomes the world for us. For Mr Black solitude is a kind of recognition of his being held captive; in the means that he recognizes the beauty of being free. “confined to the space in which these four walls surround him, blocked forever from sallying forth into the World (Travels in the Scriptorium 56)”. This recognition is an epiphany , the character recognizes that he or she is alone, and this realization leads to an illumination which might be constructive(Martin Fogg’s) or destructive in consequences.

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Solitude enhances the “the ideal person” in the character’s mind. Though people try to reach the ideal person in their social lives, it is only when they are solitary, they consider more about it. Solitude gives the person a kind of” open mind”. The ideal person is constructed through the deprivation of things in a person’s life. The ideal is related to the deficiency of things . “Quinn had always thought of himself as a man who liked to be alone. For the past five years ,in fact he had actively sought it .But it was only now , as his life continued in the alley that he began to understand the true nature of solitude(City Of Glass 115) “.

The step solitude for reaching a metaidentity is essential, because when someone is solitary, his mind plays tricks on him, though he thinks he thinks and reaches conclusions, he stays where he is and emptiness will show him that what he saw as reality is all about illusion.

....Sleeping in all kinds of weather and to return from the openness

of that country to the narrow confines of this room has not been easy for me. I can bear up to the enforced solitude, to the absence of conversation and human contact, but I long to be in the air and the light again and I spend my days hungering for something to look at besides those jagged walls.(9)

As Mr Blank says, though he thought solitude gave him a kind of illumination, actually it is just doing the reverse.

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Quinn didn't know about solitude until he faced with genuine solitude. Through the deprivation of the society Quinn felt the illusory divinity. Actually, being alone gives a person a kind of divinity. Boethius in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, tells us that the pleasures of the flesh are only temporary, what is permanent is the spiritual and philosophical things. With materiality, a person can only stay where he is and won't reach a beyond state. However the religious transcendence in Boethius or other classical authors or philosophers are very different from what the postmodern "transcendentalism" requires. The classic understanding of transcendentalism is the beyond but postmodern treats transcendentalism as beyond the transcendentalism, the other of the other. Postmodern thinking requires that there is nothing called ontology or being. Thus postmodernist thinking has the hyperbolic transcendence, that is beyond the transcendent, beyond the wholeness solitude in Paul Auster's books. "The trap that transience springs from Levinas is to confine all travel within the borders of being – either in the classical mode from a lower mode of being to a higher one."(Caputo 5) so in the narrative structure of Paul Auster, he tries to shatter all the meanings and beings, there is not

a being beyond a being for postmodernist thinkers, thus solitude is the purification from all beings and infinite beings.

Quinn had always thought of himself as a man who liked to be alone. For the past five years, in fact he had actively sought it. But it was only now, as his life continued in the alley, that he began to understand the true nature of solitude. He had nothing to fall back on but himself. And of all the things he discovered during the days he was there, this was the one he did not doubt; that he was falling (115).

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Quinn faces with himself and he becomes divine by realizing that he is falling rather than rising. Nashe in The Music of Chance felt the deprivation of his friend's absence and he felt he couldn't go on anymore without Pozzi.

The grief made Nashe and Quinn develop a sense of "ideal" inside them. "It soothed him to indulge in these histrionics of grief, to sink to the depths of a lurid, imponderable sadness, but even after he caught hold of himself and began to adjust to his solitude, he never fully recovers from Pozzi's absence." (The Music of Chance 179) Nashe needs Pozzi he fails to master his solitude.

In solitude, one becomes more and more indifferent to his environment. Thus, solitude makes a person not curious about the events around him. For example "Because it no longer mattered to him what happened, Quinn was not surprised that the front door at 69th Street opened without a key (City of Glass 124)." That Quinn, thinks that the impossible things can

be possible when a person is in solitude. That he could get food out of nowhere. This can be called as “accepting without questioning”.

Solitude means self-sufficiency as well. Marco Fogg, for instance resists demanding help from the others yet he is being helped. “I never asked anyone for anything, I never budged from my spot and yet strangers were coming up to me and giving me help(Moon Palace 57).”

However, solitude also means alienation of the self. When Nashe was alone building the Wall, it was as if the more lonely, the more detached he becomes. “Husserl’s loneliness however is a specific kind. It passed through two stages. It was first the human loneliness, arising from the bracketing of the World in a manner similar to Descartes (Heineman 53).” He doubts everything other than the “transcendental ego” and he doubts even himself but

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agrees on a transcendental being. “His domestic routines became dry and meaningless, a mechanical drudgery of preparing food and shoveling it into his mouth, he tried reading books” so the things that made him happy before were strange to him now when he is lonely.

According to Jungian philosophy, solitude is the journey toward wholeness, self is more important than ego, it is the basic concept. We reach the Self’s knowledge when we are alone. However, this wholeness cannot be achieved as a final destination for postmodern fiction. In the narrative structure of Paul Auster’s fiction, they are not final revelations. The process of individuation of Jung, or solitude, can be achieved through the gathering of Self and ego. “The goal of its striving is wholeness, personhood; its journey toward wholeness is the process of individuation; its method is an ever-deepening relatedness a “befriending” of ego and self. A nurturing milieu for this befriending is genuine solitude.”(Morgan 23) The ego is related to our conscious part whereas self is related to unconscious, with the two of

them in harmony, is the journey toward wholeness, which can be achieved only in solitude. “It felt both odd and pleasant to be sitting indoors as the World went about its business, and this sense of detachment was probably enhanced by the books themselves (Moon Palace 108).” By parting apart with the World, Martin Fogg tried to reach the individuation process through solitude, by combining Self and ego, the conscious and the unconscious. For Quinn writing is the only thing that he does in solitude

and when it finishes he loses the individuation that is “being whole”. So when he couldn’t write there would be no solitude and he would be broken apart. “He wondered if he had it in him to write without a pen, if he could learn to speak instead, filling the darkness with his voice, speaking the words into the air, into the walls (City Of Glass 129).” the only act he knows in solitude is writing. By writing he can achieve the wholeness in solitude and without

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writing, he can speak the words and he can inject the words of his solitude to the city and reach the wholeness told by Jung.

Each character has something related to solitude which is an idea or an object. solitude in his mind where he can find the peace of mind. Nashe in The Music of Chance finds solitude in driving, that the car gives him the freedom and reaching to a place where the inner and the outer selves are connected. “He wanted that solitude again and again that nightlong rush through the emptiness, that rumbling of the road along his skin (The Music of Chance 7).”

The solitude is the point where most of Auster’s characters devote themselves to in order to find an escape, but actually this escape is not from the society but from disintegration.

“Haunted by genealogical gaps and familial losses as well as by the political upheavels of

the time, M.S Fogg as he styles himself , decides to turn his own body language into a perfectly blank text by secluding himself in his apartment(Little 146).

Though we see that solitude brings sadness to most of Auster characters, in the end solitude teaches them how to confront their inner life and their past. “Auster must confront his disorientation and unhappiness in solitude, and the necessary journey into memory is posited as a potential site of redemption wherein he can work toward alleviation from his suffering and restore his sense of self”(Lewis 13)

“Momentarily envisioning himself in a solitary, Thoreauvian utopia, Blue quickly realizes that solitude would be impossible that his tie to Black is inextricable. (Alford 620) Though we might see that Blue is watching over Black, actually it seems that Black is watching over him. He cannot be on his own because he has to watch Black and he has a tie to him. The

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solitariness leads to a kind of sacrifice for his own self, but he cannot be solitary because the only way he could express himself is by watching Black.

The subject of solitude is clearly seen in Auster’s characters. Solitude may mean an identity quest, a struggle to find the essence of a person. Solitude is also an escape from the outer world and return to the inner world of oneself. Solitude is not in its classical meaning in postmodernist fiction like Auster’s. It isn’t related to rebirth, solitude is a kind of inconsistency state which postmodernist fiction dwells itself. ” It became a sanctuary for me, a refuge of inwardness against the grinding demands of the streets, of separating myself from the rest of the world(55).”Here Martin Fogg sees solitude as some kind of holy thing and it is as if to reach something worshipped. When a person is alone, no one can judge him or her for

his or her behaviours. Solitude is a kind of rebellion for life, that is trying to achieve some kind of inner happiness, trying to find his own representation of his self through solitude.

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CHAPTER 3:

THIRD STEP TO IDENTITY : COINCIDENCE/DESTINY/CHANGE /CHANCE

Though coincidence and destiny and chance may seem to differ from each other, they all meet at the same point: they are all related to some unknown but great power: God. It is as if the destinies or the coincidences are like missions for the characters. In his Red Notebook, Paul Auster uses actual events and tells us that these events which seem unnatural are related to a super power and they are not far away from our lives. There are always coincidences but it is us who choose “It was one of those random accidental encounters that seem to materialize out of thin air – a twig that breaks off in the wind and suddenly lands at your feet(Music of Chance 1).” It seems that Nashe calls the event unexpected, though the unexpectedness gives the event an expected part. It is Nashe himself driving along, he is in a

state of nothingness, but somehow by coincidence he meets Pozzi and his life becomes to be something after that being nothing.

“Not just in the *Music of Chance*, which makes the preoccupation obvious, but also in much of the work running from *The New York Trilogy* through *The Brooklyn Follies*, chance has featured as an engine plot and an occasion for meaning making (Shostak 3).” In Auster’s fiction, chance is the breaker of the certainties. “It was a wrong number that started it, the telephone ringing three times in the dead of the night, and the voice on the other end asking for someone he was not (*City Of Glass* 3).” From the very beginning of the novel, Auster gives a meaning to the life of Quinn and the wrong number saves his life from the pit. It is the same case with the narrator of the *Locked Room*. “Out of nowhere Fanshawe had suddenly reappeared in my life.” (*The Locked Room*, 196) The narrator’s life gained meaning through Fanshawe’s surprising appearance.

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Chance or coincidences lead the characters to self-awareness. Though the characters seem to be parted with the coincidence since God can be involved in this, it is the reverse that the coincidence makes the character recognize his being. “It seemed implausible, yet even if he had, why was I the person at our table who had chosen the cookie with that particular message in it? (*Moon Palace* 227).” Martin Fogg wondered about the fortune cookie and how he managed to choose the one with the particular message. It seems that this coincidence’s reason is God, but actually Martin Fogg realizes his being, his existence and be aware of his self by this coincidence. “It was as if he finally had no part in what was about to happen to him. And if he was no longer involved in his own fate, where was he then, what had become of him? (*The Music Of Chance* 59).” Though Nash self this self is severed from him, though he doesn’t seem to understand, his inner self enlightened by his new “self”.

Coincidences also have a power over the people, their role is empowerment. Though it seems that we choose the things, actually coincidences put their hegemony on the people as in Auster's novels. "Flipping through the pages ,he is surprised to discover that the name of the Publisher is BlackBlue is momentarily jarred by this coincidence, thinking that perhaps there is some message in it for him, some glimpse of meaning that could make a difference(Ghosts 149)." though the characters make the decision, they cannot stand against or empower the coincidences. "If it had not taken the lawyer six months to find him, he never would have been on the road the day he met Jack Pozzi (The Music Of Chance 2)."Coincidences lead the life of Nashe, directing him to meet with Jack Pozzi.

After the blurring of reality and illusion, another stage that the characters pass through is whether the acts are planned, they are the results of destiny, or whether they are just coincidences. Coincidence is not talking about certain truths, but the construction.

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Coincidence , not providential design is the structuring principle. Thus, the reader never gets the idea whether destiny leads people or people leads destiny. "The things he said to me, the books he chose for me to read, the strange errands he sent me on ,were these part of an elaborate and obscure plan ?"(Moon Palace , 105)It is as if the things that the characters do are planned before by some special force but not God actually. These people act as the redeemers of the characters. Though it may seem that the redeemers are effective in the quest, actually the redeemers are the characters themselves, playing the all knowing God-like state. coincidence rules his life and shapes it with its power.

Auster tried to break the diversities and alterities by putting coincidence in the beginning . "I agree with Weisenburger, that coincidences function as an indeterminacy of alterity in Moon Palace, and further suggest that Auster's trademark of incredible narrative ,which is so

often full of coincidences works as a pivot by which he practices his ethical pursuit(Uchiyama 12).”Auster tries to put an end to the alterity of multiplicities and returns to the ethical issues ,that there are reasons beyond imaginations. Marco’s meeting with his father and grandfather shows us that alterity and duplicity should be put aside regarding the reason and the mind.

Coincidences bring change to people’s lives. Change happens when things are randomly happening. The issue of randomness, serendipity is bound to the change, because a person should adapt himself to the changes and by this way he believes that something is coincidentally happening. Auster says “If he is to begin, then he must carry himself to a place beyond memory. Once a gesture has been repeated...the act of living becomes a kind of death .(Art Of Hunger 185) So a person’s characteristics can be about their mood of change. That some people tend to believe that change is the only important thing one should achieve in life, change should be the non-change thing in their lives. Actually in most of Auster’s novels we

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see that there is a certain change that the character goes through. “My uncle simply dropped dead one fine afternoon in the middle of April and at that point my life began to change , I began to vanish into another World.”(4) In the novel Moon Palace Martin’s uncle dies, he undergoes a change in everything. It isn’t just his uncle dies and everything changes but the thought of being lonely is one of the most important symptoms of change.

Coincidence tells us that most of the people, most of the events are connected this or that way. We read about Quinn in the City of Glass, as the detective Paul Auster, but by coincidence, he is the detective of Fanshawe also. We can say that coincidence doesn’t leave possibilities, that is only one possibility remain. With coincidence, every event is connected to each other, either it is logical or not. The coincidence theme exists in every Auster novel which shows us that it is a kind of metanarrative and it follows the same way. In Travels in

the Scriptorium, most of the characters like Fanshawe and Stillman work for Mr Blank in order to fulfill a mission. Therefore their meeting with Mr Blank is not surprising. Actually Coincidence is not a surprising thing for Paul Auster at all.

Change like coincidences brings possibilities to people's lives. Change brings the salvation while changing, people behave like a chameleon and adapt themselves to the situation. The identities are constantly changing because of the problem of adaptation to the surroundings. Auster says in *Art of Hunger* "If he is to begin, then he must carry himself to a place beyond memory. Once a gesture has been repeated ..the act of living becomes a kind of death(185)." Change brings to people's lives by the coincidences .

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Though we might think coincidences are not affective, coincidence alter our characters. So a person's characteristics can be about their mood of change. That some people tend to believe that change is the only important thing one should achieve in life, change should be the non-change thing in their lives. Actually in most of Auster's books we see that there is a certain change that the character goes through. "My uncle simply dropped dead one fine afternoon in the middle of April and at that point my life began to change, I begin to vanish into another World(3)." In the novel *Moon Place* Marco's uncle dies and he was the only relative living at that time. So he undergoes a change in everything, and this can be called destiny. It isn't just that his uncle dies and everything changes but the thought of being lonely is one of the most important things his destiny gives.

The characteristics of a person may be that one is led by destiny, the person binds everything to destiny, destiny leads the people the true way. “To bring his self critical lexicon up to date , I suggest that the Word he is looking for is overdetermination . A code is overdetermined when its information is too clear. In Stillman senior we see something resembling an overdetermination of character(Lavender 234).” Overdetermination is a total opposing idea for postmodernist fiction, the ideas can be from multiple places, and they construct overdetermination of character. In the novels of Auster we can see multiple sides in a character , like chance , the things that construct may be variable and we can never know.

“However, in Auster's fiction chance is a way of shattering the power of reason and logic as it occurs in his narrative. The unexpected occurs with almost numbing regularity in our lives', he declares in *The Art of Hunger*”(Nickolic 4).”Though coincidences are connected to a great power, God, actually in Auster’s novels, it is used to do something unreasonable. The lives of

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the characters are so reasonable that such as Quinn’s, he tries to shatter the idea of reason and logic, a telephone asking who he is not is to break the logic of his lonely life.

Is identity an unreasonable thing for chance randomly or is it led by destiny? The characters in Auster’s books though they are led by some force that can be said destiny, actually they are led by chance. It certainly is serendipity when Quinn hangs up the phone in the middle of the night and suddenly his whole life changes even his identity. In Travels in the Scriptorium, Mr Blank doesn’t know anything about how he got to that room he is being locked but actually he is being led by serendipity, by coincidence he found things. “I’m sorry ..Don’t be. Without you I would never have met David in the first place. Believe me Mr Blank, it isn’t your fault. You do what you have to do and then things happen(22).” Mr Blank talks to Anna and the result of serendipity, she met her husband and the reason in Mr Blank. But at the same time

Anna declares that Mr Blank can't lead the destiny because things happen in the way of life without your participation. "just as an individual can only exist in the world if she is willing to assume the rules, wear masks that will project less of her than what she feels herself to be (Gaggi 103)."

The chance factor dominates the other concepts. "The consequences for the destiny of the two heroes of Music of Chance are catastrophic,,the narrative moves away from freedom and movement ..go complete isolation and fixity of place."(5)So the characters in Auster's novels, while their lives were led by chance suddenly they are isolated from the society. We can compare this with Oedipus's tragedy, that he suddenly falls down from an upper place. He is unaccustomed to this fate therefore we pity him. We can also depict the idea of catharsis with the characters of Auster. Our narrator in the Locked Room takes place of Fanshawe which is the most wanted thing in his life. He married his wife, he lived his life, he even earned Money

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through Fanshawe but the case isn't like that." The worst of it began then . There were so many things to hide from Sophie, I could barely show myself to her. I turned edgy, remote, shut myself up in my little workroom, craved only solitude" therefore though we think he has the chance, destiny leads him to an other way.

In conclusion, in order to construct a meta identity, the characters of Auster used the power of coincidence. Though the coincidences bring self awareness, at the same time they alienate people, therefore the identity is in between neither here nor there. Since there is no identity to reach for, coincidence helps us to assume the identity.

CHAPTER 4:

The FOURTH STEP TO IDENTITY: DOUBLES OF CHARACTERS:

The doubles of the characters in postmodernist fiction tell us about the divisibility of the character the shattering of the idea of Cartesian self which is whole and indivisible. The self is broken in doubles. Doubles in postmodern fiction refuse the nature of binary analyzing of the self and the social patterns. They reject the existence of psychological wholeness.

After the characters go through the stages of objectification, solitude and coincidence, they meet with their doubles. Though the doubles are very different in characteristics, they are mainly the unseen part of the characters. The characters of Flower and Stone in the book The Music of Chance are the doubles of Nashe and Pozzi, because we do not see them after the game and it is as if they disappear, or actually they do not even exist. Though they don't

exist, they exist as the alter egos of Nashe and Pozzi. “Flower was all agitation and lunging good will, but there was something crude about him, Nashe felt, some edge of anxiety that made him appear to be at odds with himself (The Music of Chance 70).” though Nashe is at odds with the man, actually it is his hidden part, his alter ego that he tries to repress. Just as Flower, Nashe did not want to care about things. At the end of the book “You’re driving so fast. By way of response Nashe pressed down the accelerator and pushed the car up to eighty... What did Murks know about driving he thought.”(216)Despite his good will actually Flower does not care. Flower says: “Not quite but we cultivate other things. Our interests, our passions the garden of our minds . I don’t care how much money you have. If there’s no passion in your life, it’s not worth living (The Music of chance 78).” Though Nashe denies the fact that he began to change, he would say these things: Nashe leaves all his responsibilities behind, and one day he starts driving without knowing where to go.

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In Ghosts no matter how much Blue talks about his independence, “To enter Black, then was the equivalent of entering himself, and once inside himself, he can no longer conceive of being anywhere else(Ghosts 186).” and no matter how much he severs himself from Black, actually in the end he sees that Black is the double of Blue. That’s to say, Black is the other part of Blue that is hidden beneath his Blue character. When Blue confronts Black, he realizes that he confronts his own self, his alter ego. The self Blue is divided and in fact this division contemplates the self. He becomes himself by parting him from Black. “Where identity is at issue, Lacan insists that “it is not a question of knowing whether I speak of myself in a way that conforms to what I am, but rather of knowing whether I am the same as that of which I speak.”(Van Pelt, 18) So there are shifting identities, the characters though the characters seem to stick to their identities, actually most of the time they become their alter egos. With

the alienation of the self comes the alter ego. Lacan's mirror stage is the most important stage for the alter egos. With the mirror stage, the identity paradox comes. The person sees the other in the mirror but thinks that it is his identity not the other self. Lacan thought that the baby sees himself in the mirror or sees the "other" baby and thinks about a symbolical identification. This identification is at the same time alienation. This alienated identification gives some kind of coherency in the character.

In postmodernist fiction, like the text, the characters are shifting, like intertextuality which postmodern fiction shows. Therefore the characters of Auster are related to their doubles and exist with their doubles, we might say that interpersonalities for postmodernist fiction. Nietzsche has some ideas about being free or dependent on the society "Tradition is the behaviour which most people get accustomed to. When there is no tradition, we can say that there is nothing called "ethics" or "morality",

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the free person is immoral because he wants to do what he wants, not what the tradition or the society requires (Nietzsche, 19)." He also says the same thing, being in a state of disagreement brings one immorality because a free person would think "other" things. Black is the alter ego of Blue, because he is free; he is the one who watches. He is in a state of disagreement because he is not what he "seems" to be.

The characters also wanted their doubles to be "like" themselves, Blue wants Black to be "like" himself though he sees him as the other, his double. "Nealon suggests that the Notion of subjectivity, which begins from one's own identity, is connected with the desire to convert the other into sameness (Uchiyama 3)." Though the identity of the narrator in The Locked Room seems a parasitic one, like he lives through Fanshawe's thoughts, but on the other hand

actually his only wish is to impose himself into Fanshawe his double. He tries to put himself in his double. There begins the alienation of the self because he sees himself as the “other”.

The double destroys the authoritarian self, because actually the self has double selves rather than an authoritarian self. “Lyotard welcomes what he envisages as the political outcome of this new condition, an end to the authoritarianism implicit in any claim to a totalizing understanding of the real(Sim 20).” Lyotard mentions that the reality can be shattered and broken into pieces, and the real self or ego has an alternative self or simply the person is prone to differences rather than totalitarian ideas or “egos”. The narrator in the Locked Room in order to end his double selves lets go of Fanshawe.” He was a ghost I carried around inside me, a prehistoric figment, a thing that was no longer real (196).” he has real self and no other personalities. Fanshawe is just a ghost inside him that is no longer authoritarian. On the contrary, Fanshawe shows the narrator that his real self is not his but Fanshawe’s, by integrating his life into the narrator’s. Though Flower as Nashe’s double

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seems imaginary, Nashe has his authoritative self, actually Flower as an imaginary being other than the totalitarian self thus the postmodernist self as Lyotard mentions takes over.

The double selves win over the solitary self. “ That’s what I find so inspiring about Willie’s city. It’s an imaginary place but it’s also realistic. Evil still exists, but the Powers who rule over the city have figured out how to transform that evil back into good(80).”

Though Flower’s self is imaginary, it wins over the real self, the authoritative self.

The literary double tells us about the good and the bad sides of a character . The literary double refers to the demonic self, but literary double tells us that this demonic self is not out of personal, but it is the construction of the desire of the unconscious. Hence, consciousness and unconscious desire are parts of our identity: unconscious part cannot be seen easily but

when we see the "other" in ourselves, than the unconscious can be accepted as the other. We all have our "other" parts which are hidden. "We all see, hear, smell and taste many things without noticing them at the time, either because our attention is deflected or because the stimulus to our senses is too slight to leave a conscious impression. The unconscious however has taken note of them(Jung 20)." According to Jung, though we don't notice at the present moment the things we perceive, we put the information into a pool in our brain and store the information there. Our unconscious may not have the knowledge but the unconscious or the double stores them in its pool. " Although he still had the same body, the same mind, the same thoughts he felt as though he had somehow been taken out of himself, as if he no longer had to walk around with the burden of his own consciousness(51)." Here we can say that Quinn is in a state of unconscious or his alter ego, though he had the same mind and body, this is the state where all his ideas or rememberances take place. When he turns to his ego from his double Paul Auster, he might not remember all of the things he did as Auster,

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the unconscious or the double of Quinn is there for a purpose, but he still is Quinn. His consciousness is his real self but actually the one who has all the information is his alter ego Paul Auster. It is as if he has the characteristics of Paul Auster in his mind before, he has stored the knowledge there but he forgets when the time comes and instead he remembers all about his ego, Quinn. "But the meaning of these things continued to elude him. Stillman never seemed to be going anywhere in particular nor did he seem to know where he was. No matter how haphazard his journeys seemed to be Stillman never crossed these borders(58)." This purposelessness shows us that Stillman actually is not a real character but an illusionary one. Stillman does not have any aim, he is just going where the road takes him to. We can say that he is totally aware of what he is doing yet it seems he is wandering around and even he himself doesn't know where he was."Reality concept is told in a different way for Lacan. For

Lacan the human thinks about his reality with the metaphors that are piled upon themselves, thus there exists a pit between the human's thoughts and reality. The human thinks about the reality related to society, his naked thoughts are left in the unconscious."(Lacan 5)Mr Blank's reality is in the unconscious, in the past .

Arbitrariness is a part of an illusionary character and the character old Stillman can be called arbitrary. Unconscious is the other in us, or the double of us. Lacan wanted to put unconscious at the center of his philosophy and he wanted to do this with language. Lacan said "the unconscious is structured like a language (20)." Language as we might say is a cultural system and not a personal choice. The person cannot create a language the society creates a language for him, therefore he becomes the "other" . Language is a system with all the rules and the society tries to assimilate the person but the person has to have the other in

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himself. The structure of language and unconscious in Peter Stilmann's talk when he says he wanted to invent a new language. He says:"A language that will at last say what we have to say. For our words no longer correspond to the World(76)." The things around us change and words or language did not adapt themselves to the objects around it. So Stilmann creates a new language, a new system therefore he creates his "other", his alter ego by creating. According to Lacan, the human reality is related to language and can only be constructed by language's rules(Freud'dan Lacan'a 172)." Language is a system so actually human's life related to that system but language also requires the relation between the people. Everything changes but the language remains the same as the real characters. Language is for reality and the change in people shows us that the some of the characters are illusionary such as Flower and Stone.

Lacan says “whatever in repetition is varied, is alienation of its meaning... conceals what is the true secret of the ludic namely the most radical diversity constituted of repetition (The Seminars of Lacan 61).” According to Lacan, the child doesn’t want this mother to go but actually this act repeats. Although it may seem that repetition leads one to a specific point, there is more to it. Repetition brings us the very inconsistency of things while we think they are consistent. For example in the Book of Illusions, narrator tells us about the things Hector Mann uses in every one of his films. One of them is his suit and that “suit is his proudest possession, he wears it all the time again and again to impress the world (31).” We can see here Lacan’s repetition analysis. Whenever he wears it, he thinks that he becomes strong but actually he becomes weaker as a character because he only lives to make an impression, he lives for the other’s desires’, he lives for his alter ego’s contentment. Paul Auster points at the same thing with his novels: ”The entire story comes down to what happened at the end ...

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these three stories are finally the same but each one represents a different stage in my awareness of what it’s about(Dimovitz 9).”

Even our instincts are led by culture. The reality or the identity, instincts of the person is constructed by the society, this self is the alter ego because it’s not us that direct our lives. Lacan also thinks differently about instincts. There are our biological needs and these should be satisfied by the mother. The important thing is the relations about the satisfaction and frustration. According to Lacan the sexual identity that is attached to our relations is constituted by the repression of the culture, and finally it leads to frustration. As Freud mentions “Our instincts are not related to our biological needs (Works of Freud 62).” We can see in Auster’s novels that there aren’t any female characters. In City Of Glass the female character Peter’s wife is thought as a sexual object by Quinn. He began to imagine “how she

looked like without any clothes on”(14) According to Lacan’s interpretation, we can say that the sexual identities are related to culture and not biological needs. , it differentiates from our biology which protects our ego. As Dimovitz says in his article “Lacan conceptualized the mirror stage as the origin of the imaginary order, a sense of self as a unified gestalt outside primary consciousness that arises after the child separated from the mother(12).”

Even Quinn’s desire for Virginia Stillman is led by his alter ego, Peter Stillman the junior.

“Quinn’s desire for solid truths leads him to a regressive climax in which he writes himself, demonstrating how subjectivity is ultimately fractured, partial and textual (Dimovitz 8).” Dimovitz wants to mention that there are certain truths but actually these solid truths are broken apart and they are not completed or whole. The truths such as Quinn’s want of imprisonment, it is a fractured truth and relates completely to his alter ego, Stillman the junior.

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For Lacan, human beings don’t take natural frustrations for reality, but the reality or the meaning is hidden in the cultural symbolical meanings. So we might say that actually the cultural codes that lead us to our “other” or alter ego, are important. In our ordinary lives we don’t see tiny things because we live according to what culture tells us to do. For Lacan even our instincts are led by cultural symbolic codes. In the book Ghosts Auster says:” Life has slowed down so drastically for him that Blue is now able to see that have previously escaped his attention, the trajectory of the light that passes through the room, the beating of his heart(142).” Though we think the cultural codes direct our lives, that is the alter ego, we need to look for the simple things. Dimovitz in his article says:” Not in the Lacanian sense of the self’s definition deriving from the symbolic order but the self would have no being without

the other to force consciousness into consciousness for itself(15).” We need an other eye or culture to shape our behaviours.

According to Lacan, “there is the frustration of the child and the symbolical law and forbidden is the Father’s name. This way the children is in the Oedipus triangle. The source of the frustrations, the person who forbids, who deprives is the father(Tura 180).” “He locked Peter in a room in the apartment, covered up the windows, kept him there for nine years. Try to imagine it Mr Auster .An entire childhood spent in darkness ,isolated from the World with no human contact ...(26)” So the father becomes the “other “ for Peter , the alter ego of Peter, because Stillman the senior as Lacan says the Father’s Law directs the child. The double is the frustrations Stillman Junior has.

The characters in Auster’s novels live in the past which is their “other” part, or their double. ” characteristic of an arrested process in which the depressed, self-bereating and traumatized self locked in compulsive repetition is possessed by the past...remains

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narcissistically identified with the lost object(Chen 110).” The depressed self as we see in most of Auster’s novels tries to find an escape from the depressing situation, the people leave their doubles such as Nashe is fed up with the past and in order to forget he takes up his double Flower.

The ironical situation about losing and gaining one’s self is retained in the part of seeking the other. “Since a central absence shadows and directs Auster’s novels, they tend to follow a narrative pattern of quest or detection in which the questing figure seeks the missing person(Shostak 66).” Though the figure is questing we have to remember that the final truth is never attained. The quest is one of the literary structures of postmodernist fiction. The missing person Shostak wants to emphasize is actually the missing personality of the questing figure,

that is the character searching for his double. The questing figure being lost in the world of metaphors, world of similarities, does not want the similarities or the prototypical self but his alter ego. He never hesitates to run after the missing alter ego because he should follow him in order to reach the absolute.

The point about being watched is the permanency of the identity of one. Being watched actually means accepting the fact that someone has a dominant character rather than the other. The other is passive and submissive without regarding to have an independent idea." All the formal rituals that structure otherwise irresolvable contradictions into livable if repeatable oppositions those of family system, legal system .(O'hara 137) O'Hara here wants to depict the point that discourse in a culture or formal things in a culture order people to do things, Lacan names it as the Big Other. "He needs me, he needs my eyes looking at him. He needs me to prove he is alive(215)." Black says self definition is imposed by the other.

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In The Locked Room, though things contradict, they exist within each other that the other part is dominant in all the characters. "I see now that I also held back from Fanshawe, that a part of me resisted him. Especially as we grew older, I do not think I was ever entirely comfortable in his presence. If envy is too strong a word I would call it a suspicion, a secret feeling that Fanshawe was better than I(205)." The narrator conveys us the feeling of exclusion which makes him totally dependent on Fanshawe because Fanshawe is better than him. He couldn't feel secure within himself because he seeks for the better one, Fanshawe. He couldn't be sure of himself therefore he excludes himself and includes Fanshawe embodying all the best character qualities." Fanshawe stood apart from us and yet he was the one who held us together. Fanshawe was there for you yet at the same time inaccessible(206)."

The characters in Auster's novels though seem to be interested in the "other" in themselves, actually they are self involved and this brings them pleasure."When the object becomes a source of pleasurable feelings, a motor tendency is set up which strives to bring the object near to and incorporate it into the ego, we then speak of the attraction exercised by the pleasure giving object and say that we love that object(Rickman 83)." We try to seek pleasure because we think that pleasure can be achieved easily but rather than that seeking pleasure in everything may lead us to harm. We generally like to seek pleasure in our double.

Lacan talks about his mirror theory which is related to the alienation of the self in postmodern fiction. where there is alienation of the self. In Lacan's mirror theory, he says that the aim of the 6 months child is to find his identity, be aware of his identity, to catch the gist of himself(Lacan 2). In Auster's books this child may be the characters such as Nashe in Music of Chance. Instead of a child, a grown up discovers himself in the mirror, the mirror

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changes his whole identity. His family is torn apart, but this being torn apart clearly is a mirror, it is what shows Nashe his real identity." To imagine all that freedom, to understand how little it mattered what choice he made. He could go anywhere he wanted(6)" Though it might seem the opposite of Lacan's theory because in that theory the child finds his own identity with his mother and being with the mother is what makes him a being. It is like the responsibility of existence for Nashe has gone away.

Alienation can be clearly seen in Oedipus character. For Lacan, the identity problem starts with the Oedipus. Oedipus problem lies in the cultural order. Oedipus transforms the biological subject to cultural subject (Lacan 5)Oedipus problem is father's restriction of the person's relation with his mother. Mr Blank cannot be regarded to have a cultural identity or

Oedipus because he is in a confined situation. In his confinement, he is simply being divided from the world outside. He wonders whether the door is locked from outside or not. He doesn't bother to look at it. We can say that Mr Blank accepts his confinement wilfully. He accepts the fact that the alter ego is superior than him.

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THE FIFTH STEP TO IDENTITY: META-IDENTITIES

In postmodernism, the people thought that there is no absolute truth or reality and they reacted against the institutions who claims to have a certain truth or reality. In postmodern theory ,people don't look for authorities but they are their own authority. There are no certain truths , but subjective realities in different situations. Connected to reality issue, words are not related to objective world but they are constructed and invented by each person. In Auster's books we can see that the modern issues such as the authority figures or the paradox between the literary illusion of reality and illusion, the blurring of the two and noone can

understand which is real and which is not. In postmodernism we see this issue of the literary illusion of reality and illusion, postmodernism doesn't tell us the difference but it blurs one's mind to the extreme. Auster's character David Zimmer talks about the difference of silent movies and movies" the paradox was that the closer movies came to simulating reality, the worse they failed at representing the world(Auster 14)." Postmodernism refuses the existence of certain, domain things. The literary illusion of reality that means to construct an illusory reality in Auster's novels. It is like saying one thing and meaning the opposite, there is a conflict within itself.

We see the intrusion of authorial voice in Auster's novels in *Slaughterhouse 5*. In *Slaughterhouse 5* Vonnegut speaks about his own experiences which connects his life and fiction. In Auster's novels, characters cannot be differentiated as real or illusionary. We cannot tell which characters are real or which are illusionary, but as I pointed out before they can be the alter egos of other characters. Being an object, being in solitude and being led by coincidental events, Auster wants us to tell whether they are real or their world is real. To

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have a center is to have a reality in a sense. The characters may be called supreme because they are extraordinary. In postmodern texts the reality is recreated to create different centers instead of a center. Umberto Eco says "Postmodernism is born at the moment when we discover that the world has no fixed center (Williams 13)." There is not a unity between the things as Eco points out in postmodernism. When a character has a center he or she is related to order. In Zygmunt Bauman's book Postmodernity and its Discontents "Order means a regular, stable environment for our action(7)." only in the state of order or center we can find our way through the labyrinth in Auster's books. In the beginning of the novel City of Glass

the narrator says no matter how far he walked, it always left him with the feeling of being lost(4).”Nobody can be lost within an order. Because being lost means going out of the normative values and being lost leads one to the lure of the unknown. Therefore there is no center that one can find his way.

Order means also a stable identity, and in order we don’t see puzzling characters and spaces. When someone disappears, it shows us that there is no center he or she can be bound to. “In Paul Auster’s New York trilogy, we encounter genuinely puzzling characters and spaces, characters seek to lose themselves by wandering through unfamiliar space...(Alford 1).” Steven Alford takes up the puzzling characters such as Paul Auster at the very beginning of the novel City Of Glass. Paul Auster is a detective but we never see the real Auster, but Quinn as Paul Auster. “ Stillman was gone now. He was a speck, a punctuation mark, a brick in an endless Wall of bricks. Quinn could walk through the streets everyday for the rest of his life, and still he would not find him....a nightmare of numbers and probabilities (90).”

With order we will not have any utopic situations, either there is a being or not being. Yet;” While traditionally utopia has been thought of as an other, as the stuff that dreams are made

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of, as a not here, we can see that utopia in New York trilogy is not a not here but a neither-here nor there.(Alford 629) In New York Trilogy the characters dream of places where no one can discover. There are places where no one can imagine and Auster writes about those places.

The old Stillman is a puzzling character because he suddenly disappears from the novel. Though we might think that Stillman’s disappearance is the sign of loss, this loss leads to another symbol for a new identity. That actual loss is a kind of gain, but Quinn doesn’t know this. The empty house can be equal to his empty mind but actually this emptiness showed him

the right way of losing or finding himself. Center vs no center, order vs disorder and loss vs gain leads us to the paradox whether the characters are real or illusionary. Reality is to have a stable identity, not losing but finding, to have a center, to have an order and each of these paradoxes can be collected in reality and illusion paradox.

Order is related to reality and it is related to general agreement where the society leads up to. "A sane and normal society is one in which people habitually disagree, because general agreement is relatively rare outside the sphere of instinctive human qualities(Jung 46)." Disagreement is about the way people express their own, unique ideas about life. Their ideas may confront with the society. The characters in Auster's novels are illusionary because they confront the society, such as the old Stillman is an illusion because he wants to change the language. "For Blue is a solid character on the whole, less given to dark thoughts than most if there are moments when he feels the World is a foul place...It might be better to stand alone than to depend on anyone else...(155)."

If all agrees, there is no conflict. The issue here is that the conflict with reality is a crucial step taken to make an order. Without paradox or illusion, order and reality won't have any

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meaning because they have meanings with their opposites. In the article of Raymond L Williams, he says: "For Hutcheon, the key concepts for postmodernism are paradox, contradiction and the concepts of the multiple(213)." Paradox with the reality and contradiction might be said as the essence of postmodernism, because you cannot tell whether the characters are real or illusionary. In Auster's books, most of the characters are illusionary, because they are in contradiction with themselves longing for being another person, so their identities are blurred. Another sign for being illusionary is to have doubts. It is always a different case with Auster, even doubts according to his character mean other doubts. "To

think one thought meant thinking the opposite thought, and no sooner the second thought destroy the first thought(4).” It is as if there are no static ideas, everything is apt to change, worse than this it is always the opposite thought. So there is a right for everyone, there is an authority, reality, and everyone should act according to that authority. Difference doesn’t take place in people’s lives, sameness or reality is what shows a work to be proper but according to Auster as he is a follower of differences and illusionary characters, he says in an interview:” Anything that appears “implausible” is necessarily taken to be forced artificial and unrealistic. I don’t know what reality these people have been living in but it certainly isn’t my reality (Art of Hunger 270).” What Auster tries to mean is that the important characteristic of his novels so called “postmodern” is there is no reality that is being suppressed by the authorities and his characters are free to wear masks or contradict their essence. But there are different realities for different people and different worlds, and they can be called illusionary characters. Lyotard also says” the postmodern would be that which, in the modern puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself(20).” So there is the presentable and unrepresentable. The presentable thing is the one we can understand that there is a being, but unrepresentable is a non-identity, an illusionary identity in numerous possible identities.

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Paradox of reality and non-reality leads up to the question whether there are other possibilities. Reality would give us a single possibility but the paradox is the beginning of possibilities, converses. Delillo also says: “ a production of possibilities without end or definitive resolution(Geyh 20).” This sentence might explain what the postmodernist writer aims to, it is that simple that the most important thing is not to have an end, there is no solution to the problem or there are many possibilities that the end may be a possibility or an unresoved solution or simply illusion.

The question of how metafiction different from fiction is . There is no authorial voice in metafiction as there is no absolute truth or reality. Metafiction shows the impossibility of a resolution or reality. Contemporary metafiction's theory is that the reality is provisional and there can be artifices or constructions rather than reality . The paradox is that in Auster's books the characters deal with more than one possibility, that the characters such as Quinn changes his character to Auster, there are multiple possibilities for identity/meaning.

“Deconstruction does not show that all texts are meaningless, but rather they are overflowing with multiple and conflicting meanings(Balkin 6).”Deconstruction contradicts the idea that there is a simple meaning or order for everything. “City of Glass considers the question of temporality. City of Glass is a deconstruction or a sabotage. It deconstructs the form of the novel, the canons of criticism, theory tradition and it deconstructs itself(Lavender 220).” Lavender tries to say in his article that all the events are temporal, meaning that there is always shifting from one place to another. Deconstruction has a similar meaning that to deconstruct is to destroy the construction, the reality, the theory. In the novel City of Glass, we see that everything is deconstructed, everything is temporal, they are not stable. Even the identities are deconstructed ,” the two letters remained the E and L. Quinn's mind dispersed. He arrived in a neverland of fragments, a place of wordless things and thingless words(71).”

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The deconstruction in the novel is here, there he has the letters but not only the characters, but the letters are illusionary. The thing is deconstructed the meaning is gone, and a word won't work without a thing that it signifies. As Lavender says because there is being in the non being, there is something missing in a nowhere, the impossibilities become possibilities, as reality becomes illusion in Auster's novels. We can also mention that the characteristics of a person is deconstructed in the book City of Glass because Quinn becomes a different person everyday when he meets Peter Stillman.

Reality operates according to construction rather than deconstruction and to some certain rules and mostly bitter truths or things that do not bring us pleasure. We need to have bitter reality in order to see the pleasure of the non reality. We need to see order in order to understand the beauty of paradox, illusion and dilemma.” The person falls ill not as a result of some alteration in the outer world which has replaced gratification by frustration. He falls ill of the attempt to adapt himself to reality and to fulfill the requisitions of reality(Rickman 64).” A thing frustrates the character, and he has to replace it with something that gives gratification. The reality is so bitter that the person tries to find something grateful, the gratification can only be provided by frustration. The opposite things need each other to complete the whole. David Zimmer in the book of Illusions lost his family but a thing of frustration led to gratification; his real life became an illusion by writing about a person. “For once I didn’t have to worry about whether I could afford to do what I wanted. Desperate and unhappy I was, I was also a free man because I had gold in my pockets...”(17) David Zimmer loses contact with reality and tries to find meaning in an illusionary world.

In Auster’s books the multiplicity of identities and their illusionary nature lead to a concept of meta identity. It is difficult for us to identify who is who when the writer/narrator/character

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is concerned. “ I see now that I also held back from Fanshawe, that a part of me resisted him. Especially as we grew older, I do not think I was ever entirely comfortable in his presence. If envy is too strong a Word I would call it a suspicion , a secret feeling that Fanshawe was better than I (205).” The narrator conveys us the feeling of exclusion which makes him totally dependent on Fanshawe because he seeks for the better one, Fanshawe. This better self is also illusionary; he makes this up to have a purpose in life; he wants to reach his real

identity through the imaginary Fanshawe. He couldn't be sure of himself therefore he excludes himself and includes Fanshawe embodying all the best character qualities. “

Fanshawe stood apart from us and yet he was the one who held us together ..Fanshawe was there for you , yet at the same time inaccessible(206).” Fanshawe is a kind of holy figure ,he excluded himself from the other nevertheless , his presence has a kind of unification , holding together. A holy but illusionary figure dazzle them and Fanshawe is like worshipping to an ideal fictional character. He was there all the time; he embodies an all knowing figure, like some holy creature.

In Auster's books , for example the character Martin Fogg tried to show that mind has much more important than matter but by practicing not eating he understood that actually the matter wins over the mind, there wouldn't be mind without matter .”I was trying to separate myself from my body , taking the long road around my dilemma by pretending it did not exist.. all of them had discovered what I finally discovered myself, the mind cannot win over matter (29).” He tried not to think about hunger or the body's things, he tried to be out of reality. Body's needs overcome the mind. The mind is about the abstractness, but the concreteness win over the abstract ideas. Martin Fogg tried to solve the problem by disregarding the body, trying to find himself in mind and not the matter. The mind is in a shell

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that is the body and in order to protect the shell he needs to have control over the matter. The mind is related to illusion and the body reality. Martin Fogg tried to avoid reality, and be in illusion.

Mind also has the obsessions. Obsessions are an important factor for creating meta identities. It can be claimed that the obsessions make everything illusionary, with obsessions one can not reach a reality, therefore like Mr Blank, he is obsessed with the people he sent on mission, he

is obsessed with the feeling of guilt, therefore he can't make it to a real identity. Obsessions actually may mean that the person think about the non-existent things and they couldn't reach to reality, while being interested in the unreal things. Though some of the characters seem to be leading their normal lives, actually have psychological problems such as obsessions. The obsessions preoccupy the lives of the characters and display us that the obsessions lead one to forget about the world. "Obsessional neurosis is shown in the patient's being occupied with thoughts in which he is in fact not interested, in his being aware of impulses in himself which appear

very strange to him(Rickman 297)." Though the person knows that the thoughts don't make any sense to him, he or she perpetuates to think about them in an abnormal way.

"Quinn's desire for solid truths leads him to a regressive climax in which he writes himself , demonstrating how subjectivity is ultimately fractured ,partial and textual (Dimovitz 8)." He wants to mention that there are certain truths but these solid truths are broken apart and they are not completed or whole.

In postmodern texts, the characters are illusionary most of the time because they are not identified with traditions or accepted norms called metanarratives. As Bauman says "In the

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world of Postmodernism, bonds are dissembled into successive encounters, identities into successively worn masks... taking risks replaces the stubborn pursuit of goals."(24)

Postmodernism does not convey the thoughts about traditional, ideological and ethical; there is no complete and unique thoughts. In Auster's novels, we can depict the issue of non traditional or illusionary characters with the metaphor of space; being in Neverland means that they are out of reality, out of the norms.

The idea of reality constructs the idea of illusion. Perceiving things also brings the comprehension of the misperceptions-illusions. That's to say perception and misperception are simultaneous; objects are illusionary. "For Lacan identification derives solely from misperceptions, it remains at best a split-off self representation, an alienating identity. (Dervin 8)." Misperceptions mean that actually identities come from perverted seeings so they are alienating identities. Identification comes with the gaze, with the observation but in Ghosts Blue realizes his wrong perception in terms of Lacan's theory perception. "at one point that Blue thinks that he is looking directly at him; but on closer inspection he realizes that it is merely a blank stare; a look that makes things invisible, that does not let them in (Auster 135)." Blue thinks that he is watching Black but where he looks is vacant, Black is actually invisible. The things the characters perceive; come out to be the things they are severed of, they misperceive reality such as the Old Stillman suddenly disappears from the novel; we can't decide whether to perceive him as illusion or reality.

In Art of Hunger Auster says: "Reality for Ashberry is elusive, and things are never what they seem to be. They cannot be separated from one another, isolated into component parts but overlap, intersect and finally merge into a changing whole (Auster 96)." While explaining

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the poetry of Ashberry actually Auster talks about his way of writing. I think Auster doesn't want to define reality because reality always changes: There is not "one" reality or a real character that Auster creates in his novel. For instance, in the Book of Illusions, an Auster character Hector Mann becomes visible at one moment and invisible at another in his films. "Unpredictable in his behaviour, full of contradictory impulses and desires, Hector's character is too complexly delianeted for us to feel comfortable (Auster 35)." What Auster says about Ashberry is seen in Hector's character. Reality is a kind of explanation for the constant

change. His acts cannot be predicted and this unpredictability gives us an illusionary character because the character is like a river and always fluid and therefore he becomes an illusion.

Identity is not something like a vacant room, but it is like a seashell in which every pearl is unique, therefore there is not one pearl but many pearls. Foucault in his book The Order of Things says, “for classical thought, man does not occupy a place in nature through the intermediary of the regional, limited, specific nature that is granted to him, as to all other beings as a birth right(Foucault 310).” Foucault tries to say that nature actually puts upon people a kind of restriction about their personalities; man’s place in nature is not the limited self that the nature dominates. The nature or other things in life try to set people in small places, or to have one reality and tries to put hegemony on people. Nature put on us some real identities and we take them as a real character to be worn. Thus it is nature that imposes on us certain identities. These garment selves are selves that may not be real because reality isn’t a thing that is imposed on people. In The City of Glass the narrator says:”He had of course long ago stopped thinking of himself as real. If he 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(Auster 9).” So he has to act in a real way, or simply live as Max Work in order to be real he should strip himself of his “self”. Nature posts on us some kind of identities such as the

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detective or the writer and these characters correlate with certain kind of personalities and therefore they cannot be illusions. Yet in Auster novels the identities are illusionary most of the time, there are multiple identities as if on one side they are real and unreal on the other.

With the burden of his consciousness(Auster,51)Here we can say that Quinn is in a state of unconsciousness because though he had the same mind and body, this is the state where all his ideas and remembrances take place. The unconscious is where his real self exists. When he

turns to his illusion self or “Quinn” he might not remember all of the things he did as Paul Auster , the unconscious state is where his real self is , but it is there for a purpose. His consciousness , though it is always changing ,is the illusionary self. It is as if he has the characteristics of Paul Auster in his mind before, he stored the knowledge there but he forgets , when the time comes he remembers all about being Quinn. “But the meaning of these things continued to elude him. Stillman never seemed to be going anywhere in particular nor did he seem to know where he was...No matter how haphazard his journeys seemed to be –Stillman never crossed these borders.(58-59) This purposelessness shows us that Stillman actually is not a real character ,but an illusionary one. Stillman doesn’t have any aim ,he is just going where the road takes him to. While we can say that he is totally aware of what he is doing, it seems that he is wandering around and even he doesn’t know where he was. He is aimless or doesn’t care about what he does, since his character is illusion.

Identity is the problem in Auster’s novel, because one cannot decide which character is real and which is illusion. Though the characters seem to have one mission, actually Auster attributes several missions for several identities and their missions can exchange while their reality can be changed. “Work allows Quinn’s texts to accomplish an end , to create order, to

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solve mystery, by building a satisfying solution ...(Nealon, 2) Quinn has three people inside him. William Wilson is the writer of the novel, Work is the detective of the novel. We can say that Quinn can only concentrate on the novels with the identity of William Wilson and Work is the detective who can accomplish things, he is the problem solver of Quinn. These characters are the illusions of the illusionary character Quinn.

“Metafiction, then tends towards brevity because it attempts, among other things to assault or transcend the laws of fiction.”(Scholes 107) So we might say that metafiction opposes the ideas of fiction , such as there is no interchangeability between reality or illusion. But in The Locked Room, it cannot be understood whether Fanshawe is a real person or not, because it might be an ideal person in the mind of the narrator. All the steps to metaidentity tell us the improbable characters.

The mind is in a shell that is the body and in order to protect the shell he needs to have control over the matter. Auster characters seem to refuse not only the things but also the very existence of human beings. “With all the fervor and idealism of a young man who had thought too much and read too many books, I decided that the thing I should do was nothing , my action would consist of militant refusal to take any action at all (20).” Marco Fogg decided that he would take no action at all, he would take up refusing everything till the very end. It is like he refuses his very own presence. He is a man of books but actually he thought he would never be able to have the essential knowledge in his life therefore he decided to have a whole denial, we can consider that Marco doesn't know whether his identity is real or illusion

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CONCLUSION

In Paul Auster's novels , the subject of identity is pivotal. Auster tries to puzzle the reader by playing with the identities. Withholding multiple identities, Paul Auster 's characters take a road to identity and there are steps to reach this state of identity as being discussed in my thesis.

In my thesis, the issue of identity whether it is real or not is discussed broadly because the identities interchange. Most of Auster's characters are illusionary characters, without any center: they are divided. The characters are investigated whether they are conscious or unconscious and the unconscious is said to be where the "real" identity is. The ongoing change in the identities makes us question whether they are real or illusory. In most of the identities, we don't see any order but disordered beings.

Another issue that is taken up as a step to metaidentity in my thesis is that the identities are like objects and that they are being used just for their purposes. Being an identity meant being a commodity in the sense that the characters in Auster's novels are like the objects that we buy from market and pay for them since they have values as commodities. The identities always change one character becomes the other, so they are like objects.

Solitude is another step in Auster's identity quest. In solitude the characters though they are objectified, they become aware of things and thus solitude is a kind of awakening for the characters. Before that stage they encounter the events of coincidence, which gives them self-awareness. They recognize their importance as "individuals" in the society and they assert themselves. After the coincidental events, the characters meet with their alter egos, who are the hidden parts of the characters, actually it is the society around them which creates different selves for them as other's

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In conclusion, the characters quest for identity ends up with a metaidentity, which is most of the time in-between. The characters like Blue, Black, Quinn etc.. reach a stage of incompleteness, that they are not completed through the steps taken to identity but, it is the act of going those steps that enlightens /creates them and the reader.

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