



## QUEST FOR SELF IN PAUL AUSTER'S THE BOOK OF ILLUSION AND THE BROOKLYN FOLLIES

Pooja Kumari<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Muzafar Ahmad Bhat<sup>2</sup>

---

**Article History:** Received: 27.05.2023

Revised: 10.06.2023

Accepted: 31.07.2023

---

### Abstract:

The presented work reflects the existential concerns and human habitation of the postmodern society. The essay examines Auster's books through the perspective of existential ideology. Crisis of existence, existential crisis, and conflicts of the soul are terms used in psychotherapy and psychology to describe the idea that a person's life should have purpose. In their own notions, some writers have also highlighted the ambiguous definition of a person's identity. Existential difficulties are often accompanied with worry and anxiety that they reach a point where they interfere with a person's ability to function normally in life and make them depressed. Their dark side or pessimistic outlook on life and its purpose reveals several traits of the various philosophical movements known as existentialism. Existential dread, existential vacuum, alienation, and absurdity are terms that describe it. There are behavioural, cognitive, and emotional components to the many crisis-related features. The emotions they arouse, such as despair, guilt, emotional agony, hopelessness, anxiety, and loneliness, are referred to as emotional components. The challenge of meaninglessness, the loss of values, and reflections on one's own death are examples of cognitive components. Addictions, obsessive behaviour, and antisocial behaviour are typically accompanied with outward existential crises. Theorists attempt to address this by categorising it into various existential crises. The basis for classifications is typically the idea that the problem at the heart of these crises differs from the person's stage of life and level of personal development. Teenage crises, quarter-life crises, mid-life crises, and later-life crises are some of the various stages and varieties of these crises that are frequently discussed in literature. They are all at odds with one another over the meaning and purpose of life. The early crises tends to be more forward-looking: the person is uncertain and worried about the course of action in life to be taken, particularly regarding schooling and employment as well as one's identity and freedom in social life. Life's crises are typically viewed from the past. They can be sparked by indicators that a person is at the pinnacle of their existence and is experiencing regret, guilt, and a fear of dying. There are many distinct levels of personal growth; therefore the age of a person does not always correspond to their level of experience. And everyone's experience varies with regard to the various stages. Some people discover the answer to their existential crises sooner than others and some discover it much later. A person, however, finds it simple to avoid or resolve crisis that he experiences later in life if he discovers resolution at an early stage.

**Keywords:** Existentialism, identity crisis, meaninglessness, postmodern world.

---

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, School of Humanity, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab

**Email ID:** [pooja26061989@gmail.com](mailto:pooja26061989@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of English, School of Humanity, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab

**Email ID:** [muzafar.25623@lpu.co.in](mailto:muzafar.25623@lpu.co.in)

**DOI:** 10.31838/ecb/2023.12.s3.779

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In all phases of existential crisis, the problem of meaninglessness in life is crucial. It may manifest as cosmic meaning, which is connected to the meaning of life or the reason why we are here. The search for a purpose, goal, or value specifically for one's own life is another component of personal secular meaning. The conflict between people's wishes to live meaningful lives and the obvious meaninglessness and indifference of this world—often referred to as the world of absurdity—leads to the crisis of meaninglessness. It has been discovered that there are numerous sources of meaning via which a person might look for or discover meaning. They include altruism, which is attempting to help or benefit others; dedicating oneself to a cause, such as a political or religious movement; creativity, for example, creating different works of art; hedonism, which is the act of living life to the fullest; self actualization, which refers to polishing one's innate potentials; and attaining the sincere attitude towards one faces difficulties in life.

Existential crises have a variety of detrimental effects on individuals and society at large, including high rates of divorce, crime, rape, and anxiety among those who live in this postmodern age. They occasionally make a good impact by helping someone change and become a better person. However, the likelihood of unfavorable outcomes is rather prevalent due to the significant negative impact of existential problems. To avoid any trajectory, issues must be resolved at an early stage. The most popular strategy is to support a person in discovering their purpose or meaning in life. This can be accomplished either through a "leap of faith," which enables the person to put his trust in a system of meaning that is always being renewed, or through a rational approach centered on a vigilant and clear appraisal of the sources of meaning. Some theorists advise taking a nihilistic approach, which helps the person understand that existence has no purpose and seeks to discover the best method to deal with this realisation. Other methods include cognitive behavior therapy and the application of social perspective-taking, which occasionally takes the form of "existential

crisis" to signify that something's continued existence is in jeopardy.

The major problem is meaninglessness in this postmodern world. Most theorists find it as the main issue around which Existential crisis moves. In this way, they may be interpreted as crisis of meaning. The problem of meaning and meaninglessness is concerned with several questions of meaning of life in general, why we are here, or what we are here for, or what is the purpose of our life for that we live in this world. Usually the answer to these questions chooses religious concepts to answer this riddles. For example, we say that God created the world with a purpose and that each thing has a meaningful existence. This idea is termed as cosmic meaning of life in contrast to the personal meaning and individuals seeking for a life that is valuable and meaningful. In this sense of personal meaning, it is commonly asked that why should someone live a life and why should someone do what he or she does. The quest for the meaning can be seen in individual's hope for purpose in life. Sometimes it is even understood that there is no good or evil and no right or wrong, while it may be difficult to find a cosmic meaning of life in this contemporary secular meaning. Thus it has been emphasized that to find the resolution of meaninglessness, it is enough for the individual to attain a personal secular meaning in life. The problem of meaninglessness turns to be a crisis when human being seems to have a solid desire and need for meaning. This reflects itself emotionally and practically since someone has need of aims and ideas to structure his life. The other face of the issue is seen in the fact that there seems to be no meaning of life because world is contingent at its bottom and could have survived in a very different way or not at all. The world's possible future and or indifference to human life are commonly referred as the absurd in the literature which deals with the theme of existentialism. The crisis can be summarized through the question, "How does a human being who needs meaning?"

Everyone in this world encounters the struggle of human existence at some point in their lives, a crisis that forces them to consider things like "Who am I? " and "What am I

living for? " His or her life is haunted by these puzzles on several levels. The 'death of the God' declaration made by Nietzsche has caused a great deal of ire in contemporary society. Many writers have been compelled to consider and write on the problems with human existence by their overwhelming sense of meaninglessness and sense of loss. Living in this society presents the difficulty of alienation to the individual. His alienation is a result of society and himself. In the post-World War II era, disenchantment and existential crisis have been observed, especially in American culture because of commercialization and rapid social change. The belief in the power of God has declined in the postmodern era. As a result, the postmodern writers appear to be concerned with strategies for coping with these situations in the absence of any promise of deliverance. Great American author Paul Auster frequently discusses the battle of the individual for self-expression in the midst of postmodern American culture. In the universe of existentialists that emphasize the necessity of subjectivity and human freedom, he stands out. The protagonists and antagonists of Auster's novels embark on a quest for self-reinvention, and they are people who struggle to overcome life's obstacles. The chapter examines Auster's novels from existential angles in this postmodern age that refuses to recognize anything as having an absolute. The chapter attempts to investigate the extent to which life can be lived alongside existential premises of absoluteness, purpose, and choice in this world of uncertainties.

Although postmodern fiction is based on complex phenomena and has a didactic goal like prose, its authors also take on the guise of sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists. Human behavior is very difficult to judge, impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy, and difficult to comprehend. Over the past century, the web of social connections and personal reflections has progressively grown more intricate, and no one can now claim to exist in a vacuum. Because personal freedom cannot be distinguished from communal wellbeing, the concept of personal freedom has become strange. The economic, political, and social systems that make up society have bred alienation among people,

which has in turn weakened the coherence of the social structure. The rise of mass production and commercialization in American society has altered people's perceptions of their place in the global community. In this condition, Mark Brown remarks,

Contemporary literature is often concerned with representations of complexity and scale of living in this era of late capitalism and global culture....(Brown 1)

In this perspective, the role of literature becomes significant as it is a way of understanding the world. The explanation of American literature is a gigantic task and to look over its complexities. American literature has gone through a vast change after two world wars. The two world wars propelled American literature towards modernism and postmodernism to reflect various cultural, social and political upheavals because these two wars known as catastrophic events in history as well as progression towards a new formation of society and literature. After 1945, American literature enriched itself with the writings of different intellectual writers. Many writers achieved great honour like Noble Prize, William Faulkner prize in 1949, John Steinbeck in 1962 etc. The drama of this time also flourished with **Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller** as important playwrights who presented alienated characters in their drama. The people of the age enjoyed great material affluence and flourished corporate success. But this prosperity was full of alienation and unhappiness. **Rabbit Series of John Updike and The Cather in the Rye (1951)** expresses the anxiety and unhappiness in this affluence world. The tension occurring around the material satisfaction of American society can also be seen in **John Cheever's and o'Hara's** novels. **Wapshots** novels of Cheever show a fascination with past. Moreover, the 1950s society of America was coloured by the thought of conformity and homogeneity which forced the writers to reflect the picture through their works.

The 1960s provided many voices in literature. Southerners, Native Americans, Jews and feminist, Latin American writers produced great American trends. The post-war trauma

and conflicts compelled several writers to invent new themes and forms of literature. Moreover, mass culture and advancement in technology posed a danger to humanity. These led to a sense **meaninglessness, alienation and pointlessness** of life. As a result, the concept of realism, in the works of **James Jones and Norman Mailer** formed a way for satirical and absurdist forms. Fiction writers like **Kurt Vonnegut and Joseph Heller** wrote about **horror and absurdities** of war in a humorous way. The biggest changed occurred with postmodernism which blurred the boundaries of fact and fiction has become the trademark of literature nowadays. International streams like magic realism, post structuralism, and existentialism, among others, have also helped to enrich it. Numerous well-known authors, including John Bort, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and Paul Auster, have found great success by penning similar books. The fictional nature of reality is reflected in their books. Postmodern authors, however, do not advocate for reform. Instead, they observe silently as the world slowly comes to an end while standing on a stage. These authors portray a contingent universe, which is often the case. Although the authors of fiction deal with accidental contingency, experiences from the field show hints of impending certainty. In actuality, one of the key distinctions between modern and postmodern thought is the emphasis on destruction, whereas modern philosophy emphasizes sadness at the loss of former grandeur. Even though there has been significant progress in every discipline, there is still no global concord. There is neither a return to the past nor a future to look forward to because of the uneven scheme of things, which has led to inconsistent reality. We refer to this world of alienation and existential difficulties as the world of alienation with existential challenges, and as a result, contemporary literature has assumed prophetic vision.

One of the different ideologies which are associated with postmodern thought is ideology of existentialism in art, literature and philosophy. The disillusionment and alienation were major ruling terms which influenced the literature a lot during the postmodern period. The age of weapon and technology considered

to be an age of challenges that reflect apparent development:

Despite the apparent mobility, comfort and wealth of American life, many intellectual saw in contemporary mass society as well as postwar technological science much decadence and danger, much alienated and absurdity, much repression and sickness... Mass man was puny, weak, dependent, repressed, controlled, and absurd. The subduers of man were corporate capitalism, big government, mass advertising, rampant technology, Rigid social conventions, co-opted science, and total admission- all of which tamed forms of opposition and fostered docile conformity. (Leitch 129)

These distressing conditions caused many writers to concentrate on Existentialism right after the war. Existentialism made its way into American thought around the 1950s because to the writings of French authors like Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre. With the French Resistance Movement, which reflected both personal and political despair, it first entered the hearts of American writers. Even so, the phrase "existentialism" enriched American literature following World War II despite its emphasis on subjectivity and opposition to scientific objectivity. **Finkelstein quotes**, Paul Tillich in his work

#### ***Existentialism and Alienation in American Literature saying:***

It is now common knowledge in this country that existentialism in the Western intellectual world starts with Pascal in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, has an underground history of in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and an astonishing victory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Existentialism has become the style of our period in all realm of life. Even the analytic philosophers pay tribute to it by withdrawing into formal problems and leaving the field of material problems to the existentialists in art and literature.

The alienation of a person from society is a feature of both existential and postmodern ideas. Both perspectives anticipate the erratic and irrational nature of events that influence and shape a person's life and occasionally make the strangeness of existence itself apparent. The main attempt in this vast

nothingness to give each person's existence a purpose and significance is that there is no meaning to life. The decisions a person takes and the outcome that occurs determine how their life will pan out. American author Paul Auster, who is renowned for combining crime fiction, existentialist, absurdism, and self-examination, is one of the postmodern writers who addressed the relationship between existentialism and postmodern difficulties. Auster has reached the pinnacle of his glory for articulating his views in a groundbreaking and singular manner while being cogent and logical. Readers get additional levels of comprehension when they read his works.

Existentialism exhibits its affiliation with any school of thought, and another aspect that sets it apart from conventional philosophy is the lack of a systematic justification for its ideas. Existentialism, on the other hand, is closely related to existence while traditional philosophy is very disconnected from life. Existentialism thus addresses the question of human existence. It concentrates on the existential issues of individual's life. **Gale and Panza** tells that it is a "philosophy that makes an authentically human life possible in a meaningless and absurd world" (10). It focuses on the need of finding self through freewill, choice and responsibility. As a philosophical concept, this idea finds momentum with thinkers like **Albert Camus, Jean Paul Sarte, and Simon de Beauvoir** but its traces can be found back to 19<sup>th</sup> century Danish philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)**. Some other great writers like **Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Ionesco, Maurice Marleau Ponty, Karl Jaspers and Heidegger** etc. exhibit several existential traits in their writing. They make an effort to communicate their ideas from an existential standpoint. Religion is Kierkegaard's main area of interest. According to him, there are three "existential spheres" that comprise life: the moral, the spiritual, and the aesthetic. A person uses the ethical sphere to enter the religious one. He contends that the other two spheres of religion are false and that in order to be authentic, one must touch the highest sphere. An individual seeks dependence on God in religious areas. Nietzsche brings to mind the adage, "God is

dead." It is significant where he fits into the existentialist movement. **Earnshaw** says:

His is the moment in history of philosophy recognized as the acceptance, 'the God is dead'. It would seem natural ... that despite a few pangs, existential thought would and could move on to develop an ontology that was free from reference to God. (144)

It shows the annihilation of all absolute system and corresponds to inherent meaninglessness of the world. He, here, expands the limits of individual's horizon to find a direction in life. In God's absence, an individual finds greater possibility of creating his own world. He also says that self is always a process of change.

German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) was influenced by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. He was the first to refer to this field of research as "the philosophy of Existenz." He discussed the philosophical ideas that led to the finding of "Transcendence," which he thought represented "the deepest potentiality of our existence and articulates our experience of our own finitude in such limited situations as suffering, guilt, and death" (Flynn 69). Early existentialist texts, however, lacked coherence and were not widely read since they were complicated and sought a structured development to address the necessary existential problems. Martin Heidegger made an effort to arrange the items in a logical order. His first attempt was published in 1927 with "Being and Time," which was followed by Sarte's "Being and Nothingness" (1942). He noticed a number of existential ideas, including authenticity, finitude, and Dasein. He made an effort to explore existence from a subjective perspective. He said that the unique mode of being that helps humans in becoming other forms of being is called "Dasein." Dasein, which bears the consciousness of its existence, is a word that means "there-being." The correct term for existence is potentiality-for-being.

In Sarte's conceptions, the wonderful concepts of self, suffering, hopelessness, nothingness, and liberation are more logically described. In France, Jean Paul Sarte (1905–1988) is regarded as the father of the existentialist movement and a unique thinker of the 20th

century. In his 1945 speech, "Existentialism is Humanism," he adds a few basic concepts. Being and Nothingness (1942) is his most admirable creation. His other piece, The Imaginary (1940), emphasises the ideas of consciousness, nothingness, and the ego. Existential themes are also reflected in Sartre's other well-known works, such as Nausea, No Exit, and The Flies. He proposes two states of being: the 'in-itself' state, which is the state of being before the self is realised, and the 'for-itself' state, which is the state of being a self that thinks about itself. "Existence comes first, without definition and discovering that we exist, it is only later that we go on to define ourselves," continues Sartre. (Quoted in Earnshaw, p. After being created, man moves towards the future. According to Sartre, when God is absent, human values vanish and everything becomes acceptable. When a man is left alone and without any reference points, he must look within himself for purpose and values. Additionally, he states that "everyman, without any support or help whatever, is condemned at every instant to invent man" (Kaufman 295). Additionally, it implies a positive view on freedom.

*The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), a work by Albert Camus, and other works like "*The Outsider*" (1942) and "*The Rebel*" (1951) all elaborate on the existentialist premise that life is absurd. Even though Camus refused to participate in the existential world, the majority of his writings are connected to existentialist ideas, and he is often regarded as one. His theory of absurdity deviates from the traditional existential conception of being and offers a glimpse into the principles that can make existence meaningful and worthwhile. For him, absurdity is the desire for clarity amidst the absurdity of this life. With the Sisyphus Myth, Camus clarifies the suffering of people who are mired in pointless tasks with no prospect of relief. Because absurdity is an inherent component of human existence, neither God nor science can provide us with a route out.

Additionally, postmodernism takes into account the subjectivity of personal experience and rejects any conceptual frameworks that uphold objective truth. The rejection of postmodernism's big narratives reflects the decline in faith in the absoluteness of religion,

science, and science. It promotes plurality and uses a variety of sources of information rather than just one. The epistemological ambiguities of postmodern concepts are the centre of ontological learning. Postmodernism is one of existentialism's principal heirs. Additionally, we discover pertinent existential understanding of American civilization in Paul Auster's writings.

Numerous academics and researchers have looked at Auster's writings' various facets, including psychoanalysis, the concept of complex identity, transcendentalism, language, and storytelling. The culmination of all these factors prompts us to consider existential issues in relation to the postmodern ideas found in Paul Auster's works. The first person to publish Auster's works in Europe was Robert Mc Crum. In an interview, he said,

an English author would be alarmed by, or afraid of the kind of abstract and existential territory he explores, but he just jumps right in and tackles the big existential themes, the nature of being, of happiness, of fate. (qtd in O'Hagan)

The paper explores a complicated tale of a person's many facets of life, a coming catastrophe or death, and their challenging repairs. The core of this chapter is built around the idea of an individual's existence, which forms the basis of existentialist ideas. It emphasizes the conundrum of a nebulous identity of the person that needs to be reframed despite the fact that the person lives in a postmodern environment and consistently finds a means to recover in a very Austerian manner. This chapter elaborates on Sartre's claim that a person creates themselves by their decisions. As a postmodern author, Auster plays around with the narrative form. One must read the novel in depth in order to fully understand the story's meaning. The tale *The Book of Illusion* is intricate and deep. Auster has shifted the timeline of the story and used the analepsis and prolepsis techniques, which involve using flashback and forecasting, respectively. Auster uses anachronism to reflect the breakdown and discord of existence in the postmodern era. Through the use of storytelling and writing, the chapter also examines the existential search for meaning and purpose.

Story-within-a-story is a unique narrative method utilised by Auster. Writings by Auster have evolved into a process of introspection that straddles the line between fiction and truth. There is a sense of self that has been refreshed. The novel's existential search is intertwined with its metafictional aspect. The quest for creating a useful sense of oneself consumes the protagonists in the various narratives. The chapter discusses Auster's literature, in which he seeks to give human life, circumstances, identity, and most importantly the "self" some sort of understandable meaning. The primary goal of Auster's characters is to find a meaningful and legitimate purpose for belonging to society, which lends their lives legitimacy and credibility. As postmodernism is characterised by Auster as being impersonal, his protagonists frequently feel excluded from society and estranged from their friends and family. They frequently base their decisions on chance and fate, which highlights the ambiguity and unpredictability of this universe. Without any context or purpose, the solitary characters are described.

*The Book of Illusion* by Auster is a comprehensive examination of man's attempts to understand the complexities of reality. The autobiographies and biographies of two central characters are combined with Zimmer's life story to form the novel. Auster has shed light on the disagreements, conundrums, absurdities, and tensions that characterise contemporary American life. The effort of characters to reinterpret their lost selves is reflected in the story in a very relevant way, along with their identity problem. The book provides a study of a complex narrative including numerous facets of a person's life, the prospect of impending death, and their difficult restorations. Like earlier Auster works, this one's main theme is the issue of existence. It draws attention to the issue of a person's nebulous identity, which needs to be reframed despite the fact that they live in a world that won't give their life any purpose. The fictional universe that the Austerian characters inhabit is one of recurring tragedies, obscurities, and sadness. The character is preoccupied with ontological and epistemological issues. Characters in the book

*The New York Trilogy* engage in research and writing activities, and media serves as a vehicle for rebirth. The writing and cinema mediums serve as the vehicle for Zimmer's resurrection in *The Book of Illusion*. The text contains numerous film scripts that tackle the issue of character identity.

The story of David Zimmer, a college professor, and Hector Mann, a well-known comic from the 1920s who mysteriously vanished from the world, is the subject of the book. In a plane catastrophe, Zimmer's wife and sons were killed, leaving him all by alone to grieve. He has pushed himself to the edge of oblivion after feeling alienated, from which it appears difficult to recover. He succumbs to life's existential struggles and lacks motivation to take any action. He locks himself in the room's darkness. He begins to watch films by the well-known comedian from the 1920s, Hector Mann, and something occurs to him as he watches these films. He begins to believe that something is still living inside of him as he experiences a sense of rejuvenation. Following the demise of his family, Zimmer, like Nashe, the protagonist of *The Music of Chance*, receives some money in the form of insurance money. He begins to write a book titled *The Silent World of Hector Mann* after discovering his life's mission. After a while, Zimmer receives a book proposal for Chateaubriand's *Memories d'outre-tomb* from a friend. To deal with the existential crisis, he comes up with a different approach. He receives a letter from Frieda Spelling when he is busy writing his book, in which she claims to be Hector's wife. Frieda asks Zimmer to meet her in New Mexico and states that Hector is still alive in the letter. Zimmer dismisses it as a practical joke. However, after a while Alma, a woman who appears to be Hector's daughter enters Zimmer's flat and kidnaps him with a revolver. Alma, the biographer of Hector, tells his elderly companion the entire truth of Hector's abduction as they travel to Mexico. She informs him that Hector left Hollywood after accidentally killing his mistress Brigid O'Fallen. In a moment of rage, his future wife shot her in the left eye, killing her. He entered the self-tormenting gorge as an act of penance for everything he had done. He was a helper at Brigid's father's store, but when Brigid's sister started pressuring him into

marriage, he quit the job permanently and fled. He humiliated himself by participating in live sex performances. After a while, he ran across Frieda in a bank, and she knew who he was. She received assistance from Hector when he saved her from a bank robbery attack. He saved Frieda, but in the process, he injured himself. Frieda took care of him while he was in the hospital. While residing there together, they grew close to one another. After their marriage, Frieda was blessed with a son named Teddy, but he passed away three years later. The couple went through a severe trauma. Hector was reluctant to work in films although Frieda later recommended him do so. She persisted, though, and Hector began covertly producing films that were not intended for public viewing. While travelling to Mexico, Zimmer grows to love Alma, which helps him maintain emotional stability. Alma informs him that soon after Hector's passing, all of his films would be destroyed. Hector passes away shortly after Zimmer arrives to the ranch. Before destroying it, Zimmer is able to watch one of Hector's films. Zimmer returns to Vermont to deal with estrangement once more. After he departs for Vermont, Alma accidentally kills Frieda and then kills herself out of grief. The narrative is Zimmer's expression of his life, which drives him to create a book that will be released after his death. Man has not one and the same life, according to Chateaubriand, who is quoted at the beginning of *The Book of Illusion*. His suffering is a result of having multiple lives that are stacked on top of one other. Auster promotes the idea that a person can live several lives right from the start of the book. Actually, the search for one's identity is a synthesis of numerous and varied life phases. The protagonists in the stories have several lives within their one life and are always discovering new lives because they feel incomplete, isolated, and dissatisfied with their current circumstances. At this state, **Mark Brown** comments:

By making Chateaubriand's sentiment, Auster suggests that the characters narrated in illusions live a number of lives within their one life, and that in reading these literary lives we should be sensitive to the many phases contained in them. (219)

The statement highlights the purpose of manifold lives which play vital role in the process of identity formation, but this movement of lives and identity is associated with desolation, dejection and gloom. Zimmer's isolation forces him to start a journey of self exploration which he carries from one phase to another. In the same way sense of guilt propels Hector to undertake various roles. Thus, the idea of multiple lives, in Auster's novel is a way to hold sanity in the ontological process of exploration. Auster has used fragments of Chateaubriand's autobiography to reflect the fragmented identities of the characters. The fragmented aspects show the state of mind of different characters. Even the Mark Brown states: "The lives of Chateaubriand contained in this book-within-the-book are projected forward to become the many lives of Hector Mann, and then once again to those of David Zimmer, each spoken in the voice of dead man" (226).

Following the completion of *The Silent World of Hector Mann*, Zimmer begins translating a French autobiography by Chateaubriand titled *Memoirs d'outre-tombe*. After becoming enamoured with the work, Zimmer gives the translation the title *Memoirs of a Dead Man*. He begins to notice connections between the work and his own ideas. He takes a break from his career and travels with Alma to learn more about Hector's life. The *Memoirs* he writes with Alma help him rediscover the meaning of life. He begins work on *The Book of Illusion*, a biography of himself and Hector Mann that is bound together. Like Chateaubriand did with his autobiography, Zimmer summarises every aspect of his life in this book and leaves it to be published after his passing. He tells;

Following Chateaubriand's model, I will make no attempt to publish what I have written now. I have left a letter of instructions to my lawyer, and he will know where to find the manuscript and what to do with it after I am gone. I have every intention of living to a hundred, but on the off chance I don't get that far, all the necessary arguments have been made. If and when this book is published, dear reader you can be certain that the man who wrote it is long dead. (318)



After his family was killed in an accident, Zimmer began his hunt for meaning in life. He struggles with the emptiness and nothingness in his existence as well as the decline of himself. When he loses his family, he turns into a meaningless being, lamenting in despair that "most of him had died along with them" (6). He endures a dreadful period of seclusion and despair that plunges him into the pit of existential problems such as absurdity, anguish, alienation, and identity crisis. He tortures himself in a variety of ways, including by violating social norms, using a child's bed as his own, dressing like his wife, using her makeup, and ingesting large amounts of alcohol. His existential problems cause his prior identity to be destroyed, which leads to the disintegration of the self. His desire to live in the imaginary world allows him to flee reality, and he believes as though he is "temporarily inhabiting them again, carrying on their little phantom lives for them by repeating the gestures they had made when they had still had bodies" (7-8). It therefore signifies switching from one existence to another. No doubt, the act of watching Hector's movies gives him a short-time relief from his absurd and painful life:

.... It was the first time I had laughed at anything since June, and when that unexpected spasm rose through my chest and began to rattle around in my lungs, I understood that I hadn't hit the bottom yet, that was still some piece of me that wanted to go on living...I was forced to conclude that there was something inside me I had not previously imagined, something other than pure death. (9)

In *Brooklyn Follies*, Nathan experiences various stages of life during which his life is under peril. His life after the divorce is pitiful, but he nevertheless makes it through. Tom, his nephew, joins him, which turns out to be a blessing for him. He overcomes both his own dejection and Tom's negative outlook on life with Tom's assistance. In a moment of craziness, he decides he loves the waitress at the restaurant and gives her the pricey jewellery he had bought for her kid. He will later have to deal with her husband in a confrontation. With his efforts, he manages to get past his existential crisis. After the exciting journey, which began with Nathan dejected, he

transforms into a beloved guy who regains his sense of life. He reveals:

The bitter solitary man who had crept home to Brooklyn less than a year earlier, the burnout who had convinced himself there was nothing to live for – knuckle headed me, Nathan unwise, who could think of nothing better to do than quietly wait to drop dead, now transformed into a confident and counselor, a lover of randy, widows, and a knight – errant who rescued damsels in distress. (284)

In *The Book of Illusion*, Zimmer's instinct of self-preservation arises and takes him to another trek sequenced with discoveries, love, suicide, death and loss. Being a professor of comparative literature, he decides to write a book on Hector's movies. Thus, through the act of discovering Hector's identity, Zimmer involves himself in the process of reconstruction of his own identity- the identity of a writer. He starts to reframe his self because this is "the time to move on marks the end to that identity and emergence of new one" (Brown 220). He writes *The Silent World of Hector Mann*, and then starts to translate a French work of Chateaubriand which helps him a lot to come out of his despondency. With the emergence of Alma, Zimmer finds another shift of identity. He starts to investigate Hector's life and Alma becomes a source of his redemption. Alma seems to be a ray of hope to Zimmer abandoning nihilistic attitude to adopt positive one. He starts to imagine a happy conjugal life with her.

Both Zimmer and Hector suffer horrible events that change who they are as characters. When a person loses their sense of self, they start to doubt their own existence, which helps them redefine who they are. Hector's erratic existence is described in Alma's narration. Both Hector's and Zimmer's lives have been marked by frequent identity shifts, alienation, and ultimately loss of self. Even Hector once acknowledged in an interview that he had gone through numerous stages of identity. He vanishes from society after Brigid dies, and this marks the beginning of his struggle to rebuild himself. He becomes Herman Loesser and gives up his identification as Hector Mann in order to search for other identities. As Alma Narrates,

By the time Hector walked into central station on the morning of January fifteen, his moustache was already gone. He disguised himself by removing his most identifiable feature, transforming his face into another face through the simple act of subtraction.... In the elbow of curved pipe just behind the toilet, someone had left a cap. Hector said it out from its hiding place and discovered that it was worker's cap. That was when he saw owner's name was written out in ink along the back of the interior leather band: Herman Loesser. It struck Hector as a good name, perhaps even an excellent name, and in any event the name no worse than any other... Herman Loesser some would pronounce it Lesser, and other would read it as loser. Either way, Hector figured that he had found the name he deserved... After the subtraction, then an addition. Hector minus the moustache, and Hector plus the cap. .... He left men's room that morning looking like anyone, like no one.... (143-44)

He assumes a new identity to represent the arbitrary nature of life. He makes an effort to conceal his genuine identity and lead an anonymous existence. His marriage to Frieda Spellings adds another milestone to his journey of self-discovery. When she is caring for him in the hospital, she immediately recognizes him and finally falls in love with him. She was being held hostage by bank robbers until Hector saved her. In exchange, she looks after him out of a sense of gratitude. They fall in love with one another and get married. Hector chooses to go by Hector Spelling after once more denying his identity. Frieda insists him to make films as she knows it was the only "thing in the world that makes sense" (207). Hector accompanies experts to work on film making, makes films but in a secret way not to be shown to anyone.

The concept of shifting identities can be noticed in every novel of Auster. The existentialists have the view that there is no pre-determined goal in man's life and being in the state of meaninglessness we must try to find meaning by making active choices. Choice has a great value in individual's life as it determines his new self. In the essay '*Existentialism and Humanism*' Sarte says,

"To choose between this or that is at the same time to affirm the value of that which is

chosen; for we are unable ever to choose the worse. What we choose is always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all.' (6)

The decision Zimmer makes to write a book proves to be an escape from his decline. He was previously a member of the evil world. He finds comfort in it and is astounded by it: "Any choice would have been arbitrary by then, but that night an idea had presented itself to me, and on the strength of two minutes of film and one laugh, I choose to wander around the world looking at the silent comedies" (Auster 13). Hector's presence is brought back into the public eye by his decision. Zimmer describes watching films as "the only way I could live now without crumbling into pieces" (20). This decision becomes a driving force in his life. His life's pointless endeavour turns becomes a place of solace for his fractured self. Then, another existential choice he made was to endanger his own life by travelling to Mexico with Alma to meet Hector. It bolsters existentialists' theories that finding purpose in life requires putting one's life in peril and embracing uncertainty. The reader is given important existential insights throughout their initial encounter with Alma. When Alma aims a gun at Zimmer, he is amused by the thought of dying rather than feeling threatened. He steals the gun from Alma when he realizes she is only using it to scare him, but he is able to escape thanks to the safety catch on the weapon. He wants to live out his life to the fullest since he is tired of it being pointless. His trials with the gun make him feel that, "the world was full of holes, the tiny apertures of meaninglessness, microscopic rifts that the mind could walk through..." (109). He goes Along with Alma and his journey leads him to the trek of self –searching. Like Walt Rawley in Mr. Vertigo and Marco Fogg in Moon Palace, he goes to the unknown world to find a meaning for life. He says, "I felt stronger than I had felt at any time in the past three years. Almost whole. I said to myself, already to become real again" (296). After coming back to Vermont he writes a book on the accounts of Hector life and leaves it in the hands of lawyer to be published posthumously.

The characters in Auster's stories have the power to make better decisions. Even Hector,

like Zimmer, decides to live a better life in the book *The Book of Illusion*. He makes the decision to approach each circumstance in his life on his own terms. Without considering the repercussions, he transforms into the "sum of Actions" that Sartre refers to. He undergoes a number of identity changes as he grows increasingly disillusioned with life. Like an existentialist, he never stops striving to defy fate. His adventure of switching identities—from Hector Mann to Herman Loesser to Hector Spelling—is a test of fate to be resolved in this crazy universe. Auster's characters are merely the product of their own decisions; Miles Heller in *Sunset Park*, Marco Fogg in *Moon Palace*, and Walt in *Mr. Vertigo* are the results of their own choices and acts. They are also deserving of the label "existential characters."

In the book *The Brooklyn Follies*, Nathan decides to live a better life rather than pass away in agony. He even decides to produce a book that includes various biographies of people who have been in his life. His transition from being an insurance agent to becoming a writer is a sign of identity shifting through which he reassembles his disjointed self into a useful being with a purpose in life. When Nathan returns to Brooklyn to pass away gently, he is overcome by a piercing loneliness brought on by a difficult divorce, a horrifying and agonising spell of cancer, and a headstrong daughter that only serve to deepen his isolation. Nathan makes the decision to assume the role of a writer and begins work on a semi-literary project that would eventually be known as *The Book of Human Folly*. Nathan feels the need to write because of his isolation. This insane project, as Nathan thinks would save every life, every forgotten self. Nathan calls the project "*Bios Unlimited*" and in it he assembles the stories of those who cannot speak for themselves:

My idea was this: to form a company that would publish books about the forgotten ones, to rescue the stories and facts and documents before they Disappear – and shape them into a continuous narrative, the narrative of life... The biographies would be commissioned by friends and relatives of the subject ... I imagined writing the book myself... The cost of writing and publishing such books would be

steep, but I didn't want my biographies to be an indulgence affordable only by the rich. For families of lesser means I envisioned a new type of insurance policy whereby a certain legible sum would be set aside each month or quarter to defray the expense of the book. Not home insurance or life insurance – but biography insurance." (Auster 210-2011)

Auster's characters know that they have to choose their own ways because as existentialists say, "A human being is, after all, essentially nothing. All that exists at your centre, is an ability to choose" (174). In *The Book of Illusion*, Hector's choice of renouncing his identity, career, and his wife throws him to unlisted and never ending trajectories of self affirmation. He chooses to live with meaninglessness, and sense of pointless existence. Many times he encounters the life-changing choices. He goes on self imposed exile and says justifying his self imposed punishment that,

You drive an innocent girl insane, and you don't make her pregnant, and you don't bury her dead body eight feet under the ground and, expect to go on with your life as before. A man who had done what he had done deserved to be punished. If the world wouldn't do it for him, then he would have to do it himself. (145-146)

He is tortured by his decision to work at Brigid's father's store and be Herman Loesser. He gets close to Brigid's sister Nora, who looks much like Brigid, but he won't marry her. He flees the shop and heads towards the path of self-denial. When he encounters Sylvia Meers, a whore in Chicago, his self-affliction is once more evident. He started appearing in live sex shows after becoming a porn star. The act of masking one's identity and erasing one's old identity as Hector Mann is represented by the wearing of a mask. In this failing world, he appears to be Mr. Nobody. To conceal his identity, Hector attempts to flee to Sandusky, the city of his birth. He relaunches his life after meeting Frieda here. Existentialists believe that a person's freedom depends on his choice of how to interact with the outside world.

In the ditch of meaninglessness and Godless world, both Zimmer and Hector fulfill their responsibility to find their own meanings. The concept of existentialism is in fact, “a rebellion against system of thought that dehumanizes you by removing the human element and involvement from assessment of meaning” (Panza and Gale, 29). Zimmer comes out from his dejection feeling his responsibility towards his existence. Similarly Hector punishes himself because he finds the world godless.

Anxiety arises from a feeling of emptiness. The character of Zimmer is impacted by this anxiety. He becomes aware of his freedom and duty as a result of his concern following the death of his family. There are many examples in Marco's life in Moon Palace of his being connected to those around him, particularly in relation to Uncle Victor and Kitty Wu, with whom he had some very memorable interactions. The presence of Kitty Wu, as he says was, “an earthquake in the heart of my solitude” (94). None the less, the dependence of Marco upon other people in his life, does not run long, as he lives in a state of transition from the fall to authenticity, which leaves him in a state of nothingness. He finds himself dead at heart though he was alive. Bilsker (1992) comments, “Existential death is not only in the biological form, but may be considered as losing significance of others, the ending of caring relationships, the surrender of belief in a protective deity: each of these are forms of death” (Bilsker 186). Anxiety arises from a feeling of emptiness. The character of Zimmer is impacted by this anxiety. He becomes aware of his freedom and duty as a result of his concern following the death of his family. There are many examples in Marco's life in Moon Palace of his being connected to those around him, particularly in relation to Uncle Victor and Kitty Wu, with whom he had some very memorable interactions.

Austerian characters are constantly trying to mend their broken identity. Hector and Zimmer, like the other characters in Auster's work, seek salvation through their artistic abilities. The Book of Illusion and Oracle Night are two excellent instances of how writing and filmmaking for Hector and

Zimmer respectively become tools for self-invention. They can escape their hectic lives and rediscover their sense of self through writing. Zimmer starts to feel better when he works on his writing assignment. He takes nine months to finish it, and it ends up being his path to salvation.

I was in the book, and the book was in my head, and as long as I stayed inside my head, I could go on writing the book... It was the only one that made sense to me... It was a slow work, perhaps meaningless work, but it demanded all my attention on for nine months, and in that I was too busy to think about something else, it probably kept me from going insane. (55-56)

In order to escape the memories of his family, Zimmer relocates from Vermont to Brooklyn. Writing offers the constant opportunity in Auster's works "to stage the fundamental alienation of the subject and to find out how to prop up, back up a weak, fragmented self, how to give it cohesion and continuity" (Roger N. Pago). He recovers from estrangement as a result of moving to Brooklyn, and he discovers a strategy for coping with his existence's difficulty being accessed. It gives him access to the outside world. After finishing and publishing his book about Hector, he meets with Alma and Frieda. Hector himself requests Alma to write his autobiography. Hector transitions from being a film actor to becoming a filmmaker, and it was a significant change in who he was. The strangeness of his films, as recounted by Alma to Zimmer, demonstrates the strangeness of Hector the person. Alma tells,

He was out of commercial loop, and that meant he could work without constraints. Hector used his freedom to explore things which other filmmakers were not allowed to touch, especially in the forties and fifties. Naked bodies. Down to earth sex. Childbirth. Urination defecation. Those scenes are a bit shocking at first, but the shock wears off rather quickly.... Hector didn't make a big point of it. (208-209)

His both identities as film actor and film maker show his artistic and ontological breakthroughs. His actions in movies foretell his relentless pursuit to reconstruct his self

among overwhelming distractions and diversions. For instance, his movie Mr. Nobody catches special attention as a foretelling of his disappearance from this world. Mr. Nobody, "is essentially a film about the anguish of selfhood" (53). The movie focuses on loss of identity and the absurdity of existence and the extreme need of self discovery.

He doesn't find against his condition so much as try to understand it, and rather than look for a way to make himself visible again... he embarks on a series of weird and impulsive experiments, an investigation of who he is and what he has become. (45)

The existential challenges revolve around him every time and to overcome these challenges he keep renouncing his former identity to adopt new one. The renouncement of his identity from Herman Loesser to Hector Spelling shows his quality of fluidity which is very essential to survive in this postmodern world. In spite of his invisibility of in this world, he gift himself "all the fruits of American Capitalist ethos: his business, his family, and his wealth" (Shostak, 78). Even Alma's life faces existential absurdities in this world. She tries to save Hector's movies from destruction. When Frieda destroys her manuscript written about Hector, she becomes very disappointed. In the act of saving her piece of art she kills Frieda by mistake. And to avert the sense of guilt, she kills herself. The destruction of art is destruction of self for Alma. This is what Jim Peacock Calls, "the character's necessity of representation, without which they fail to survive. Because for the individual only art is true and the Zimmer accepts at a point that "the world was an illusion that that had to be reinvented everyday" (57). Alma is also in the quest of identity in the novel. Her quest is seen in her words when she tells Zimmer that she had been a serious reader of 'The Birthmark' written by Hawthorne. She feels similarity with Georgiana, the heroine of the story because she carries the birthmark on her face like Georgiana. For Alma her birthmark is a symbol of her uniqueness and humanity. She cannot dispose it off without spoiling herself. She works for humanity. She is the source of validating Hector's existential disorders. But

after Hector's death, Frieda destroys Alma's manuscript and Alma commits suicide. The characters in the novel are in an everlasting process of reframing their identities through different sources. But the truth they try to explore also becomes deceptive. To escape the loss and disparity they live in illusions. Zimmer tries to relocate himself by locating Hector's life. Hector also renounces his identity and moves away from it in the quest of new one. Towards the end of the narrative, Zimmer finds meaning to explore that is to discover Hector's movies and for him "the story will start all over again" (321).

Death is the major aspect of human limitations that makes him conscious about his finitude. Existentialist says that it is essential to be conscious about death as its knowledge gives us finitude and creates the situations and exigency for individual to be authentic. The idea of death hovers throughout the whole novel. In fact the novel begins with the idea of death and ends in the same way. Paul Tillich suggests that one must deal with the awareness of death or non-being to have a hold on life. Heidegger also claims that to be a perfect individual, one must face death; one must live heading towards the reality of death:

Being unto death, a phrase Heidegger borrows from Kierkegaard, is a way of life that looks at the possibility of death as an intimate part of life: It isolates man, it throws him back upon himself, it offers him the possibility of becoming a personality. (J. Gray 123)

Zimmer's idea to publish his autobiography posthumously affirms his idea of death. Zimmer tends to be keen about the finitude of human existence. The idea of death gives a shape to his existence. He tries to achieve authenticity being aware of inevitable death. It helps him to consider life in a deeper and more serious way. It opens a door for him to resolve his quest.

Another book that expresses knowledge of death is The Brooklyn Follies. Due to psychological or physical unfitness, Nathan Glass, Tom Wood, Harry Brightman and Flora, and Aurora, Nathan's niece, are all in pain. Nathan Glass, the main character, narrator, and writer of this book, is introduced

right at the start. He is utterly dejected and has given up all hope for the future because he has cancer. To top it all off, he recently got divorced, and his only daughter is now dissatisfied with him. He comes to Brooklyn to hug his death as he reveals the fact at the very beginning of the novel: "I was looking for a quite place to die. Someone recommended Brooklyn, and so next morning I travelled down from Westchester to scope out the terrain" (1). Nathan Glass appears to be affected by death as a character in the novel, and the narrator deals with death in a variety of ways. When Nathan has a near-death experience that results in lung cancer, he has to deal with death on a personal level.

Nathan in *The Brooklyn Follies*, experiences death very closely like Bowen and Sidney Orr experience it in *Oracle Night*. But treatment of chance as fundamental base of reality is helpful to overcome the crisis of existence. Chance malignantly interferes in his life. Nathan faces heart attack and is taken to hospital and this is the beginning of a new era for him. He confronts with the idea of life and death very deeply. He is awed by the ideas of perishable nature of life, but unlike Bowen in *Oracle Night*, he finds the renewal in the sense of life in positive way and starts to cherish whatever the remains of life.

The empty idea signified death, whether the death was real or imagined, and as I pondered the implications of this idea, another idea gradually took hold of me, which overwhelmed all thoughts about everything else ... I understood that I had come up with the single most important idea I had ever had an idea enough to keep me occupied every hours of every day for the rest of my life. (50)

Dealing also occurs when the narrator witnesses his friend Harry Brightman's passing. That Nathan, a former insurance agent who insures people's lives and deaths, is constantly faced with mortality is what strikes me about this situation. On the other hand, this frequent practise seems to act as a line of defence against the fear of dying. Nathan's fear seems unavoidable despite his best efforts to put a wall between himself and the idea of death.

Existential crises cause people to reinvent themselves, and depending on the conditions they encounter, this results in either a bright or dark self. In the book, Tom meets Nathan, who helps him heal and guides him through his "purgatory" stage. Harry Brightman, on the other hand, has a dark inner self as well as a dark external persona. According to Tom, the inner truth of a man's existence is more significant than the outer facts. Harry has several qualities that cause him to struggle, including loyalty, bravery, generosity, fragility in the face of love, and identity problem. This causes Harry to become homosexual and ultimately land in prison. Harry accepts his inconsistency:

There is an imp inside me, and if I don't let him out to make some mischief now and then, the world just gets too dammed dull. ...I like tricking people ... I don't know why, but the urge comes over me. That's who I am Nathan. I am generous, I'm kind, but I'm also a born Prankster. (120)

These inconsistencies are what push Nathan to begin writing about Harry in his biography project. Because Harry represents for him the lives of regular people, who experience love, hate, affection, generosity, goodness, mistakes, and untimely death. Here, Auster addresses the challenges and absurdity of this reality. Thus Auster's works reflect character's everlasting quest for identity/self. They have blur vision about their existence. The question of their existence has lead them to the path of everlasting quest for self. This study throws light on the continuous struggle of character to find a meaning of their existence in life.

## 2. REFERENCES

### Primary Sources

- Auster Paul. *The Book of Illusions*. Henry Holt and Company, 2002.  
---*The Brooklyn Follies*. Henry Holt and Company, 2005.  
---*Oracle Night*. Henry Holt and Company, 2003  
---*The New York Trilogy*. Faber & Faber 1988  
--- *Sunset Park*. Henry Holt Company, 2010

**Secondary sources-**

1. Alfred, Steven E. "Chance in the Contemporary Narrative: The Example of Paul Auster." Paul Auster. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publisher, 2004. Print.
2. Aronson, Ronald. "Albert Camus." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. N.P. 2012. Web. 5 June 2014
3. Auster, Paul. *Collected Prose*. New York: Picador, 2010. Print.
4. Bloom, Harold, ed. Paul Auster. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004. Print.
5. ---"Intermediality and Narrative Identity in Paul Auster's Oeuvre." Ph.D Thesis Dabrecan University, 2014. Print.
6. Brown, Mark. Paul Auster. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007. Print
7. Brucner, Pacal "*Paul Auster, or the Heir Interstate*." Paul Auster. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004. Print
8. Burnham, Douglas, and George Papandreopoulos. "Existentialism." Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Staffordshire University, n.d. Web. 2 Feb. 2014
9. Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. Trans. Justin O'Brien. New York: Random House, 1955. Print
10. Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and its Tradition*. Maryland: John Hopkins UP, 1980. Print.
11. Earnshaw, Steven. *Existentialism and Alienation in American Literature*. New York: International Publishers, 1967. Print
12. Flynn, Thomas. *Existentialism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
13. Genette, Gerard. *Paratext – Threshold of Interpretation*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: U of Cambridge P, 1997. Print.
14. Gray, Richard. *A History of American Literature*. London: Blackwell, 2003. Print
15. Hutcheon, Linda. *A poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print
16. Leitch, Vincent B. *American Literary Criticism Since the 1930s*. London: Routledge, 2010. Print.
17. Lyckova, Hana. "The Problem of Identity in Writing by Paul Auster". M.A. thesis Masaryk University, 2009. Print.
18. MA, Li. "Indeterminacy in Postmodern Fiction", *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 4.6 (2013): 1338-42. Web. 2 May 2014
19. Macolin, Pia Masiero. "Notes on/in Paul Auster's Oracle Night". *RSA Journal* 14 (2003): 181-196. Web. 20 Aug 2015
20. Martin, Brenden. *Paul Auster's Postmodernity*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.
21. Ni, Hui, and Dawei Lian. "Study of Fragmented Structure in Oracle Night as a Metafiction". *Theory and Language Studies* 2.3 (2012): 540-46. 10 March 2012. Web. 2 Sep. 2015
22. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Trans. Walter Kaufman. London: Random House, 1974. Print.
23. O'Hagan's Sean. "Abstract Expressionist". *The Observer*. The Guardian, 8 Feb. 2004. Web. 5 Feb. 2012
24. Panza, Christopher, and Gregory Gale. *Existentialism For Dummies*. Indiana: Wiley Publishing Inc., 2008. Print.
25. Patterson, Richard F. "The Teller's Tale: Text and Paratext in Paul Auster's Oracle Night." *Critique* 49.2 (2008) 115-30. Routledge. 7 Aug 2010. Web. 28 Oct. 2014
26. Peacock, James. "Signs of Grace: Paul Auster's *The Book of Illusion*." *Journal of American Studies* 40.1 (2006): 53-69. Jstor. Web. 9 May 2015
27. Sartre, Jean Paul. *Existentialism and Human Emotions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1987. Print
28. Tillich, Paul. *The Courage to be*. New Heaven & London: Yale UP, 2000. Print
29. Trofimova, Evija. Paul Auster's *The Courage to be*. New.