



Analyzing Existential Rearrangement Through Protean-Self In Paul Auster's Moon Palace

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Abstract:

The present study is about glimpse of mourning over the loss of roots, the quality of the Protean self, quest for identity and Existence in this world. The novel of Paul Auster named as *Moon Palace* has been analyzed to study the character of Marco Stanley Fogg whose life is trouble-torn and worry-born due to his blurred identity. The paper tries to observe the process of protean self and identity shifting in the novel of Paul Auster. This is a theoretical framework through the lens of proteanism or the theory of the protean self, a theory by Robert Jay Lifton. The novel *Moon Palace* written by Paul Auster has been analyzed here to study the fragmented personalities in the novel. Human life is not a bed of roses but it is full of sorrows, challenges, and uncertainties. Human life is not a bed of roses but it is full of troubles, challenges and uncertainties. A person needs social and emotional security and stability while facing all this. But it is not so easy to find such stability in this world, especially in American society. A person, who is living without knowing about his origin, remains a hopeless creep and faces many problems and challenges. His life is a rudderless boat which may go to any direction, sink anywhere in ocean of life, or it may take him to a world that is entirely new and acceptable for him. Here, we study the character of Marco Stanley Fogg who is unknown to his actual identity or origin. Due to which he faces a lot of crisis in life.

Keywords: Origin, Protean-self, identity, psychosocial, historical dislocation.

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Introduction

Paul Auster is a noteworthy American writer who writes about human life, its sufferings, identity shifting, fluid personality, its existence, and revival of life after facing trauma. Auster sits among the category of writers who write about human life, its existence, its absurdity, its suffering and revival of life after facing conditions of trauma or uncertainty. He was born in a town named Newark in New Jersey on February 3 in 1947. He was born in a Jewish family and spent his early time of life in South Orange. He completed his school education in High School of Columbia, Maplewood and his graduation and post-graduation from Columbia University. He moved to Paris in after this where he started earning by writing translation of French literature. This was beginning of his literary career which availed a path for him to go ahead with his literary career. We can notice the influence of French literature in his writings. He had the influence of great French

artists like Stephen Mallarme, Albert Camus and Marcel Proust. He published a wide range of literary pieces after returning back to America. He got several awards for making contribution in the field of literature. He bagged himself with Independent Spirit Award in 1996 for his screenplay *Smoke*, Prix France Culture De Literature Etrangere 1989 for *New York Trilogy*, Morten Dauwen Zable Award from American Academy of Arts and letters in 1990. He was finalist for Pen Faulkner Award for Fiction for *The Music of Chance* in 1991. For his notable trilogy, *The New York Trilogy*, he was honored with John William Corrington Award for literary excellence in 1996 and long listed for International Dublin Literary Award for *Man in Dark* in 2010. He has achieved the honour to be elected for the American Academy of Arts and Letters for Literature in 2006 and got Honorary Doctor Award from University of Liege in 2007. He has bagged himself with a lot of fame and awards which throws shine and



glory on his reputation and career as a writer. His great mastery over writing appeared with his work *The Invention of Solitude* an Autobiographical novel in 1982 in which he has created his concepts of postmodernism. He writes about the multiple features of postmodernism, an occurrence that took place in the post-war world. It was a reaction against the intellectual ideology, literary conventions, and scientific ideas of modernism. It brought rapid flux and instability to society. It is known as the tendrils of American notions of literary criticism. Auster has created his arena in the field of postmodernism. His novels are usually marked with the theme of identity and revival of personality. Paul Auster started to mount up and touch the peak of his glorious career with his first work 'Squeeze Play' which he wrote with pseudonym Paul Benjamin. His real literary skill emerged with the appearance of his another work. 'The Invention of Solitude', an autobiographical novel in 1982. Later, he was renowned for a series of three novels known as 'The New York Trilogy'. His writings have always been studied through a postmodern perspective. His works have also been polished with the techniques of metafiction and detective fiction. His novels are colored with concentration on extinction, on the fragility of individual's sense of existence, which is loss of identity, and on the interface phenomena of life and death. Auster like Nabokov, rests in that elite group of writers whose writings possess a special feature of consistency and coherence. His novels have an evolving skein of technique and ideas that differentiates them from the writings of any other writers while at the same moment, tying them to each other. Auster's hard work with the relationship between storytelling and identity is an important element of his novels.

Moon Palace is one of the major works written by famous American novelist Paul Auster and it rests with *The New York Trilogy* in the arena of early novels written of Auster written in early period of his novelistic career. The novel has earned much critical and scholarly attention. Its historical – political and autobiographical settings determine it as a complex as well as seminal work. Auster's first journey to move on the track of fictional autobiography is started from the stances of 1986. But it is set on the whole betwixt 1969 and 1972 though it reflects life- span of Stanley Fogg before it. It is about

social insecurity, loneliness and challenges of existence in postmodern world. It presents American society in which a person's origin and relations exist in gloomy surroundings full of loss and uncertainties. The main character Stanley Fogg present picture of the society in which he lives without knowing his father, his ancestors his relations, in short, he has no origin or roots to belong. When he tries to establish his ancestry or relations he fails to carry on with this. He remains aloof and lives a hollow life in American society.

The narrative starts when Fogg starts characterizing himself as an agitator and disillusioned: "I was very young back then, but I did not believe there would be a future." He accepts himself as a great activist when he is a student. He seems to be disillusioned and reluctant to tell much about his life and experience. He passes his adolescence to enter adulthood but he is unaware of his roots. He only knows about his mother who never reveals anything about her husband or Fogg's father. He is a student at university and stuck in student revolt which makes his life tough. "Those were difficult days for everyone, of course. I remember them as a tumult of Politics and crowds [...] I am not planning to discuss any of that here."

As said before, the year 1960s were commonly known as the time culminated in global instability and flux in 1968. In the novel *Moon Palace*, Fogg is an outcome of that crisis. His life remained worry-worn and trouble-torn so he keeps adjusting and changing himself according to the need of time. He becomes orphan at the age of eleven as his mother dies in an accident and he is uprooted from his origin and existence. It brings a tragic turning point in his life but he accepts it as his fate. He tries to be fluid to move on for a better life. He goes to live in Chicago with Uncle Victor leaving his all connections behind. When he turns of eighteen, he goes to New York for study. Uncle Victor, a musician is only ruling person in his life during his teenage, and though he is very caring and loving, he is someone who himself fails in his life by making a deficient acumen in selection of his spouse. Moreover, sometimes he prefers to leave Fogg behind when he gets a chance to go on tour in or outside the country with orchestra arises. At least he was not the most dependable person in Fogg's life but he manages to go on with Uncle Victor just for three



sake of his existence in this world. Instead of his Company Fogg finds him-self perplexed and forlorn as something is missing in his life. Victor fails to provide Fogg a suitable advice at some point when he clearly tells him that 'Every-one is the Author of his own life. Fogg starts to run on the path which has neither any ending nor any destination. He behaves like a protean man instead of being audacious with his destiny and takes his uncle's advice as an encouragement for him to run his life.

Marco tries to develop his personality when he finds new surroundings at university and he gets some success while making efforts to rearrange his personality. He starts new life here with his friends. As Kimmel and Weiner in *Adolescence: A Developmental Transition* assert "Because successful identity formation requires an active effort to examine types of work, friends, potential mates, and philosophies life carefully before choosing among them, young people typically vacillate for a time, in what they like to do and with whom" (1985:388). Marco does all this in the starting years of his college life. But another instance of misfortune occurs in his life to uproot his roots once more when suddenly Uncle Victor dies in 1967. His life becomes knotty and spirals out of control: "I began to wobble, to fly greater and greater circles around myself, until at last I spun out of orbit." Financial troubles added more pain in his life. Full of disparity, he tries to manage his accommodation in his apartment on west 112th street. He thinks about his available sources but none helps to sort out his financial predicament. It is hard to escape and he becomes grief stricken and depressed. He tries to find work but fails and it sprouts rebellious feelings in heart against capitalist society. His trouble existence turns into a nihilistic existence. Finally he has to sell all the books gifted by Uncle Victor to serve as a bond between present and former generation. He turns out to be a nihilistic project for surviving in a better way. But after sometime he is expelled from his apartment. During this time, the student protest takes place in Columbia and Fogg remains inactive towards the effect of this occurrence upon his life. His self divesture and denial of work to support society represents a regularity of disagreement with authority during this protest. He refuses to work and get the political services in society. Instead of being grief stricken he learns a lot of political

experiences and feels that there is a lot of social and political injustice in society. His tale of sorrows is not ended here but it has many more parts to be followed by one after the other. After leaving his apartment he becomes a homeless and roams here and there like a stray animal. This time he is uprooted once more without having any ray of hope for a better and stable life. Being uncertain about his future he tries to rebuilt his destiny but as usual it is not so easy at all. He starts to live and sleep in central park allowing cold season to freeze his blood, allowing heat of sun to burn his skin like a coal. He tries to find a renewal sense of democracy and freedom here to lessen his grief: "The grass and the trees were democratic, and [...] I could have passed for one of the picnickers or strollers around me. The streets did not allow for such delusions." Fogg lives here to be humiliated and starved and feels a great loneliness which tears his heart very harshly. His friends David Zimmer and Kitty Wu help him to escape from this pathetic life. He goes through some harsh experiences of life which seem to support his decision to resist social standards. After sometime, he gets a job with the help of his friend Kitty Wu. He is employed under a disable and blind old man named Thomas Effing, who later revealed as his grandfather. Effing tries to comfort with aesthetic thoughts and teachings. Effing is a talented painter so that he carries great aesthetic perceptions. Here Fogg learns to perceive artistic thoughts and put them into words. He also learns potential and important political lessons in the mentorship of Effing. Thus, comes to a conclusion: that no two entities are alike. Fogg learns to describe his surroundings in a very aesthetic manner.

Moon Palace is a praiseworthy novel marked with the features of shifting identities and fluid personalities. In the novel Auster manifests the arduous journey of Marco Fogg's life as the protagonist of this novel whose blurred identity and peculiar life condition starts the trigger for moving through various stages of experiencing the bitter taste of this challenging and uncertain world. His expedition starts with his lonely life where Uncle Victor is his only relative and after losing him he finds a turning point where he steps into the world where he finds a new "self". He faces many ups and downs in his life. From growing up in the life of solitude without any being around except Uncle

Victor, he moves to the point where he loses all money and starts living in the Central Park, from getting a job as an attendant and finding new people in his life until he buries his father who dies after few months when Fogg discovered him, and then moving towards the end of the continent, in the search of his true "self". The character of Marco Stanley Fogg is a fine example of the protean man. He has all the abilities which are required to survive and explore a self while facing the difficulties of life such as loss of roots, historical and psychosocial dislocation. The postmodern world is full of challenges of flux and uncertainty. Nowadays it is hard to live with the fixity of character or identity. The shifting of identity is a very common phenomenon. This world is a web of complexities and flux that generates a lot of challenges and problems in life. So the shifting of identity is the most required element at this time. The thing which determines the delineation of a character is the stress that social order and existing culture exerts on the internal structure of an individual. The internal structure of an individual which is also called human psychology turns shaky in the social system and order. This occurrence is mostly noted in Western World where life has many uncertain challenges to face. The life which people are experiencing in the post-war era and society, the identity of individual has turned anonymous. The identity of an individual is manipulated by weird and collective forces and the individual has remained with a polymorphous, fragmented, and fluid personality.

For Auster this process involves some certain magnitude of vision that his characters carry in his novels. He delineates characters that present the general conditions or fragmented identities searching for a new self. Accordingly, it is hard to find a fulfilled character in his works. The characters in Auster's works are opposite to the conventional notions and views of personality and characters. The notion of conventional characters, as Jay Lifton asserts, "indicate fixity and permanence; where the present stress is upon change and flux (1968, 13). The real motive of Auster's characterization lies not in the personalities or characters but mostly upon the external or internal forces that shape them. Characters must be considered in a text very attentively.

"The Disappearance of Characters" and The Protean Man are two articles written by Scott Sanders and Jay Lifton that have introduced and promoted the idea of the formation of fluid personality. These are very much helpful and vivid for the description of the fragmented self and regeneration of the self. Though Sanders is mostly keen on the study of science fiction he still brings to our notice the ignorance of characters in science fiction in which characters are ignored for views, situations, plot, or ideas. He states:

"In its treatment of characters, science fiction reproduces the experience of living in a regimented, conformist society, within which the individual has become Anonymous: persons are interchangeable, relating to each other through socially defined roles: emotion is repressed in favor of reason; the individual is subordinated to system.....(1979, 131 - 132)."

He continues to say forcefully that "in the twentieth-century science fiction as a genre is certainly about the disappearance of character, in which the eighteenth and nineteenth-century bourgeois novel is about the emergence of characters" (132). Same as Lifton's article proposes the assumption of fluidity and provides an exploration of causes and self. Robert Jay Lifton offers to examine the self through his point of view considering postmodern life and conditions of the human being. He examines an individual through "a set of psychological patterns, characteristics of contemporary life, which are creating a new kind of man - 'a protean man' (1968, 13). He starts with the views of Erik Erikson's concept of identity which is an effort to move away from the concept of permanence and fixity. Lifton provides support to "the idea of flow", "the idea of continuous self-exploration" and "self process".

Identity is not a hard tag or the idea an individual gets at the time of birth, but it is a flexible process and term that hints evolution process. In the same way, the self is known as the emblem of an organism. The process of Lifton's protean man is a self process based on the psychic recreation of this emblem. It is also merged with "the process of thought reform". In this whole process, he appeals to "identity fragments - of combinations of belief and emotional involvement - each of which could

readily be abandoned in favor of another" (14). This brings notable and dramatic shifts in the self process. This brings a lot of changes in a person's thoughts, behavior, ideas, personality, and identity, as we can see in the case of Marco Stanley Fogg in *Moon Palace*. He faces many challenges, difficulties, and changes in his life. He is an outcome of the crisis and his life is trouble – torn and worry-worn. Due to the several shifts and challenges, his life remains a tale of changes, troubles and shifts in identity, but he tries to face everything as a protean man.

Henceforth, these changes take place very quickly, and without any pain. Lifton's 'The Protean Man' describes character of Greek sea God Proteus. Like contemporary or postmodern man, Proteus could change his shapes easily according to the need of time. Lifton explains:

"We know from Greek Mythology that Proteus was able to change his shape with relative ease from wild boar to lion, to the dragon to fire or flood. But what he finds difficult, and would not do unless seized and chained, was to commit himself to a single form, from most of his own, and carry out his function of prophecy. We can say the same of protean man, but we must keep in mind his possibilities as well as his difficulties" (16 – 17).

Protean Man is an example of a person who can explore himself all the time to be settled in the changing world. To survive in the world of uncertainties and flux, it has become a soul-like thing that is required to live. His difficulties and possibilities lead him to a process of self-exploration, identity shifting, self process, and ultimately to the "protean self". Protean man runs on the protean path which leads him to a path of fluidity to change his self and reformation of it as per the circumstances. It demands renewal of sense and identity. Ashis Nandy asserts:

"What looks like a human potentiality that ought to be actualized in some distant future is often only a cornered culture strain waiting to be renewed or rediscovered."

HIIn the era of trauma and fragmentation, the process of proteanism can awaken the individual to survive in the conditions of

uncertainty, flux, and diversity in the postmodern world. The sudden shifts in life which may occur due to tragedy or some other reasons bring a trauma in our life, which is everywhere, and posttraumatic occurrences are visible worldwide. So a process is there to cope with this condition. The process involves "a series of experiments, exploration conducted in all areas of human experience". We find all these features in the character of Marco Fogg who faces a lot of difficulties and challenges, tries to explore himself, and then adjusts himself according to the conditions. He is capable of doing so only because he has the qualities which a protean man has. He has no roots of his identities as he even does not know anything about his father. He remains confused about his sense of belonging. But he tries to explore himself. His story starts when he starts to imagine himself as a disillusioned and agitator person. His vision for his future life is blurred and he says: "I was very young back then, but I did not believe that there would be a future". But he tries to cope with the hurdles of his life to survive: "I wanted to live dangerously, to push myself as far as I could go and then see what happens to me when I got there".(2) He is very active in his student life though he seems to be reluctant to tell much about his college life. But he had not plenty of money or food to continue his study. Uncle Victor gives him money and he makes his nurturing after the death of Fogg's mother. But still, he can get the hand to mouth. He is the victim of fate pathetically living his life. He becomes parentless in his early years when his mother dies in an accident as he was eleven and he was completely unknown about his father. This accident brings a tragic turning point in his life. But he tries to accept it as his fate and becomes fluid to move ahead in his life. Being an orphan he starts to live with his maternal uncle – Uncle Victor only ruling figure in his life. He is another example of a protean man. Uncle Victor was a loving and caring man but he is someone "bound up in the logic of impulse", he often reveals his mourning over his deficient discernment while choosing a life partner. He becomes depressed when he is teased by his wife but instead of ending his life and becoming a dejected personality, he tries to cope with the condition. Finally, Uncle Victor becomes able to explore himself and he changes his attitude towards life. He



establishes his band of music and starts concerting in or out of the town. He becomes very energetic and optimistic in life as well as selfish. He often leaves behind Fogg alone while going on a tour with the band and fails to provide him any useful notion at some point in life and tell him; "everyman is the author of his own life". Fogg often feels perplexed and runs on the path which provides him no destination in life. His life becomes a rudderless boat but he becomes fluid gradually instead of being audacious. He takes his Uncle's advice as a motivation to move on in his life. Another man to stand in the line of protean men in this novel is Solomon Barber who is a son of Thomas Effing and father of Marco Fogg. He is a bright man who gets higher education and teaches in many colleges and universities. He falls in love with a girl who leaves him after developing an intimate love relationship with him. He insists on her marrying him but she denies it. She is the first and last woman in his life as he loves her truly and deeply. He dreams to get married to that girl whose name was Emily Fogg but she disappoints him throwing blame upon him for ruining her life. Emily blames: "you've destroyed me, and I'll be damned if I ever let you see me again." Her rejection does not push Barber into the ocean of dejection. As a protean man, he explores himself in his life and he moves on to be a great scholar and professor. Though, he searches for his lost love again and again and finally discovers her after thirteen years when she is already lying in the grave. He makes clear to Victor that Emily never revealed anything about her pregnancy to him and now when he knows about their son he is ready to take custody of his son. But Victor stopped to make further contact with him.

Identity diffusion or role confusion seeks to escape from difficulties using multiple masks on self. Accordingly, the protean self is very essential for individuals living in this postmodern world. Protean man is not an outcome of a single day but it comes out from a lot of factors which may be emotional, social, financial, cultural, and individual. Uncle Victor has put on several masks on his face. Individually he is a nice person, he a good relative also. He tries to prove himself a good Uncle. But as a husband, he fails to play his fair role though his wife was his wrong acumen as a life partner. So he has different aspects of personality with every different person. His

multiple personalities are a good reflection of Proteus, a Greek God who was able to reflect multiple shapes or faces. The same case is there with Stanley Fogg, who has multiple faces or masks over his personality. As a student, he is a different kind of person. With Uncle Victor, he has a different aspect of his personality and as a lover with kitty Wu, he has a different face to show and the same thing is for his friends. He carries different aspects of personality with different people. Effing has also covered himself with multiple masks. He is a different kind of person from Fogg as they have established mutual and friendly relationships instead of their age gap. But for people Effing is a respectable man who has earned a lot of dignity in life.

In Lifton's view, a protean man is a victim of "a historical or psychological dislocation". There is a breakage which individual faces "in a sense of connection which men have long felt with the vital and nourishing symbols revolving around family, idea system, religions, and the life cycle in general" (14). There is also a type of disappearance of the sense of super-ego which Lifton defines as "the internalization of clearly defined criteria of right and wrong transmitted within a particular culture by parents to their children" (19). Thus, there is a lack of sense to fit between what a man feels himself to be and what a culture or society, expects him to be. In *Moon Palace*, Marco Stanley Fogg is facing this kind of disruption. He is dislocated from historically as he has no roots to belong, and he is also psychologically dislocated due to a lack of social and emotional support in his life. He knows nothing about his family or father because his mother never tells him anything about his father throughout life. He was already a fatherless child and at the age of eleven, he lost his mother in an accident. He tries to seek emotional support from his Uncle but after few years when he was in college, his only relative in the world passed away to the world of no return. He was living in New York for his study when he invited Uncle Victor to meet him there. Uncle Victor promised to be there on Wednesday but he never came. Uncle Victor leaves him when he is going through a very tough time of life.

"The possibilities for disaster seemed infinite to me. I imagined all the things that can happen to a man between Boise and New York,



and suddenly the American continent was transformed into a vast danger zone, a perilous nightmare of traps and mazes. I tried to track down the owner of Victor's rooming house, got nowhere with that, and then as a last resort, called the Boise police. I carefully explained my problem to the sergeant at the other end, a man named Neil Armstrong. The following day, Sergeant Armstrong called back with the news. Uncle Victor had been found dead at his lodgings on North Twelfth street- slumped in a chair with his overcoat on, a half-assembled clarinet locked in the fingers of his copy hand" [30].

He falls into grief and depression because of his tensions related to his future and financial life. This dislocated him historically and psychologically in a very harsh way. Trauma and sufferings are the basis for rejecting occupied versions of historical sense including as Nandy puts it: "the oppression which comes as 'history', and the state of being 'victimized'...by the idea of history itself." Bitter experiences or pathos of the past hurt the individual and force to uproot himself from his historical ground.

After leaving his apartment he turns to be a homeless person. Being uncertain about his future, he tries to make a new beginning to his life. But it was not so easy at all. Having no place to live, Central Park becomes his abode. He reveals, "it became a sanctuary for me, a refuge of inward against the grinding demands of streets.[.....] the park offered me the possibility of solitude, of separating myself from the rest of the world."(p.56) Fogg's new accommodation was an abandoned area and it provided him a strange but soothing sense of freedom from all his worries. He finds a new notion of democracy from his surroundings: "The grass and trees were democratic, and [.....] I could have passed for one of picnickers or strollers around me. The streets did not allow for such delusions." The people who come there humiliate him harshly though he tries to consider all this "as spiritual obstacles [.....]. He takes it "as a challenge to the American way of life". His heart is torn into pieces by the loneliness he faces at this phase of life. Later on, his friends Zimmer and Kitty Wu try to save him from this hard treatment of fate but he becomes a rebel against the political system and social system. Fogg finds the political

system as a web to trap innocents. He gets several horrible experiences while being homeless. So he decides to resist political and social standards and criticizes capitalism. After getting healed with time he molds his thinking and decides to work somewhere to keep his body and soul together. With his friend's help, he gets a job looking after Effing, a rich old man who is physically challenged and alone. He is a man of great significance who has great aesthetic values. But still, he tries to survive in the company of Effing who is later discovered as his grandfather. Effing also leaves forever after few months. Then, Kitty Wu, his beloved brings stability to his life but she also moves on rejecting his idea of making a family and he is left alone to mourn over the instability and hollowness of life. But he proves to be a protean man. He faces many social, emotional, and financial challenges. He copes with every situation and problem in his life. He accepts his aloofness as an opportunity to explore himself in a better way. Lifton further tells that the protean man requires freedom from super-ego - he needs a symbolic fatherlessness and Fogg is fatherless, he even does not know the name of his father. Later he also becomes homeless after college and becomes a wanderer in the search of a suitable solace. Finally, the feeling of fatherlessness along with exile from home explores a protean personality. But to be fatherless, not only indicate autonomy but sometimes also implies anonymity. No doubt, Marco becomes independent after losing all relations and belongings in his life, he also becomes obscure in his life. After leaving college he also leaves his flat and becomes a wanderer to roam like a stray animal here and there. He quits the idea to opt for any profession or any job. He even tries to get rid of Army service due to his weak body. He starts to live and sleep in the park to face the blow of cold air and the heat of the sun like a hopeless creature. His troubling existence turns to be nihilistic: "I wanted to spit on the world to do the most outlandish thing possible". Moreover he sells all the books which Uncle Victor once gifted him as a mark of his love.

Most of the characters as we find in Auster's novels are either fatherless or motherless or they know nothing about their parents and their true identity. The real identity of their parents is hidden or the protagonists lose their parents in early childhood. The mingling of self

through the union of contrary aspects means dissolution of personality. Hence, protean man has quality to prefer to possess or shift his personality through anonymity or autonomy. Marco becomes able to go ahead in life with Effing though he knew Effing was completely opposite to him. He was quite rude sometimes and never liked to reactions of others: "Don't contradict me, boy. When I say we're done, that means we're done"[213] He tries to learn aesthetic views from him which changes his thinking a lot.

"For the next twenty days, I spent every morning in my room, typing out different versions of Effing's life on the old Underwood. There was a short version to be sent out to the newspapers, five hundred deadpan words that touched only the most superficial facts; there was the fuller version entitled "The Mysterious Life of Julian Barber", which turned out to be a rather sensational account of some three thousand words that Effing wanted me to submit to an art magazine after he died." [215].

The same case is with Effing. He has no one to look after him and living alone. He tries to understand Fogg and influences his life very much. Fogg gets so much influenced by him and this is Effing's influence only which inspires him to return the stolen money of Gresham Brothers. No doubt their relationship becomes stronger but it is established based on "a hierarchy of worthiness" and on finding the differences between people. Fogg finds the way to think of artistic perceptions and experiences in the mentorship of Effing. He concludes; "that no two entities are alike". Fogg realizes that though there is a disposition in their bound still something is there to learn by acting upon the suggestion that Effing provides from his own experience. Here Auster provides his readers a shade of didactic aspect in which Effing teaches some experiences which Fogg does not know. As a result, they feel that a hierarchical relation has been in between them. Fogg seeks an object of knowledge rather than a subject of knowledge. So it is a must to shift Fogg's attitude and Fogg makes effort to change his view: "I was monk seeking illumination, and Effing was my heir shirt, the whip I flayed myself with." He thinks deeply and realizes: "There was nothing inherently wrong with the activity, after all. If regarded in the proper way,

the effort to describe things accurately was precisely the kind of discipline that could teach me what I most wanted to learn: humanity, patience, and rigor. Fogg learns to enjoy his surroundings with a very perspective vision and he also tries to make Effing feel this saying: Until then, I had always had a penchant for generalizing, for seeing the similarities between things rather than their differences". Just like a protean man his self feels a renewal feeling of self. He declares: "no longer saw it an aesthetic activity but as a moral one [...]." Fogg realizes: "the poor automatically deserved consideration over the rich". Effing tells Fogg about his son Solomon Barber who works in a university but somewhere in his thoughts he is sad and hopeless. Fogg comes to know a lot about the life of Effing and Barber. "I learned that Solomon Barber had received a Ph.d. in history in 1944, had contributed numerous articles to scholarly journals, and had taught at several colleges in the Midwest. The reference to 1944 was crucial. If Effing had impregnated his wife just before his departure in 1916, then his son would have been born the following year, which meant that he would have been twenty-seven in 1944- a logical age for someone to earn a doctoral degree". The union of two persons of contrary nature shows the ability of protean self in their character. Fogg's presence becomes very important for Effing. He starts to enjoy his company and considers him as a part of his existence. Even when he was on his deathbed in the hospital, he tries to keep Fogg around him. Fogg stays in the hospital and tries to comfort him.

"I spent every day with him in that room, sitting beside his bed because he wanted me to be there. Since the rainstorm, our relationship had changed to such an extent that he now dotted me as if I were his flesh and blood. He held my hand and told me that I was a comfort to him, muttering how glad he was to have me in the room. At first, I was wary of these sentimental outpourings, but as the evidence of his newfound affection continued to mount, I had no choice but to accept it as genuine." [240] He prefers to stay with Fogg and avoids listening to anything about Solomon Barber, his son who has gone away from him leaving behind nothing for his father. When Fogg asks him about Barber Effing replies: "a useless, implausible gesture for a blind man - and then snorted from somewhere deep inside his

throat. "Solomon," he said, "A truly awful name." But I had nothing to do with it, of course. You can't give someone a name if you don't know he exists, can you?" [216]. He leaves some amount for Fogg before his death. It is by the help of Fogg enjoys few awesome and peaceful days of his life.

The protean figures do not carry the traditional aspects of a male protagonist and act as anti-heroes and non-heroes. Stanley Fogg has no quality to be considered a hero. He lacks such typical traits of a conventional hero such as audacity, strength, determination, and vision for the future. He is an emotional and social wreck. He knows nothing about the past, present, and future, and he even has not a vision for the future in life. He fails in his life socially, financially, and emotionally. He even loses his love and girlfriend due to confusion. He is living a pathetic life and tries to find the aegis of others. He is a character who is carrying qualities which were once assigned to female characters like self-pitying, self-absorbing and helplessness. According to this perspective, the fluidity of character is helpful to survive in his life. His shifting identity is the fruit of a conflict between internal mummified conscience and external conditions created by social factors and conditions.

"That was the trouble. The land is too big out there, and after a while, it starts to swallow you up. I reached a point when I couldn't take it in anymore. All that bloody silence and emptiness. You try to find your bearings in it, but it's too big, the dimensions are too monstrous, and eventually, I don't know how else to put it, eventually, it just stops being there. There's no world, no land, no nothing. It comes down to that, Fogg, in the end, it's all a figment. The only place you exist is in your head". [176]

The most notable factor lies in the protean man is that he is not pessimistic at all. There are endless possibilities in protean man that can make him able to gain power or lose power and become indestructible. Uncle Victor in *Moon Palace* survives even after the failure of his marriage. He restarts his life and establishes his own business of music band. Efiing even after losing his wife and son remains strong and optimistic towards life. He has no sense of loss in his heart. Effing is a wealthy man who remained a part of the aristocratic crowd and elegant people. Fogg comes to know while encountering some people of surrounding that

Effing commanded respect throughout his life as he were "a nobleman who had come down from his castle to mingle with people of village". Effing is taking ahead patriarchy and representing hierarchy to society. His attitude is quite optimistic towards all the losses he faces in his life. When Fogg asks about his plan for searching his wife he retorts: "No regrets, no pity, no weak-minded sentiments. By refusing to find out about Elizabeth, I kept myself strong." [218]

He becomes a very influential man. Moreover, Marco Fogg who is the hero of the novel is very much optimistic and his hopefulness brings fruit for him in his life. "There's hope for everyone, sir. That's what makes the world go round" [216]. Though he is alone and left with no relation he still collects the courage to survive in his life. His mother dies in his teenage, his only relative Uncle Victor, and his only hope for love, his girlfriend Kitty Wu leaves him shattering his dream of living life full of love and social security. After getting some money from Effing's will, he starts his love life with Kitty Wu, with the hope of a comfortable family life which he could never enjoy in his life. He has not dreamt of much but only wants a life known as "a modern bourgeois life." When Kitty is expected, Fogg hopes to find a big chance to "undo the loneliness of my childhood, to be a part of the family, to belong to something that was more than my-self" [410]. He assumes his life as a father, his new life, and his fate as best. But all his dreams shatter when Kitty denies him to carry on his relation in this way. She aborts Fogg's child which was a ray of hope for him to live a normal lovable life and seeing his childhood in his child. Still, he faces all and adjusts himself to live in this world. He goes on exploring himself saying; "This is where I begin."

The protean characters suffer due to an inner sense of complexity absurdity; hence they lampoon themselves or others. By their journey, they are, actually making the conventional heroes in search of something valuable. The protean men are familiar to the "wandering heroes". They fail to have a sense of heroism the conventional hero possessed. This is basically, due to the psychosocial dislocation they face in life. Marco is a psychosocially dislocated person who faces difficulties throughout his life. He has no job to earn; no



house to live in, even no one is there in his life to console him during his tough period of life. When he learns that his father, Barber tried to take his custody but Uncle Victor did not answer the second letter of Barber and broke all communication, he gets agitated and frustrated. He mourns more at this than he mourned over the death of his Uncle. He repents: "I might have discovered who my father was as far back as 1959." [274]. He understands the whole situation and concludes that only misconnection was responsible for his pathetic fate. Similarly, Solomon Barber considers his love as most valuable thing in his life and makes several efforts to find it. He fails in finding it never the less he never loses his hope to find it. He attempts many times to accomplish his life getting married with Emily. He also wants to take custody of the illegitimate boy whom Emily brought into this world with great courage. Effing feels that Fogg is valuable for him and he always try to find his company in which he feels soothing. So their characters show that loses in life never ends hope. Hope works as a fuel to build or rebuild the self providing suitable conditions.

Auster reflects postmodern aspects in his characters. Most of the characters in his novels are unable to find fixity or stability in their life. Many postmodern characters are unable to develop psychosocial relation through which he or she can find their identity or stability because they need a firm sense of identity as a precondition. Erikson also asserts: "the development of psychosocial intimacy is not possible without a firm sense of identity" (1968, 186). To establish this strong sense of identity, unlike protean man who merely focuses on empty action, social interaction is required. But if they are able to reach at the stage of no-interaction, their identities are blurred and end up in extra-social or isolated condition, often fragmented, impotent and immobilized. Vaclav Havel says that this condition arises a sense of loneliness in man. He adds: "Individual can be alienated from themselves only because there is something in them to alienate." Stanley Fogg, Effing and Uncle Victor are fine examples of this state of psychosocial dislocation. His troubles continue to hurt him. One day he discovered about his father while visiting his mother's grave. He learns that Solomon Barber is his father. He feels disgusted and feels a kind of burden on

his heart. He repents to know about all this and wishes he might have not discovered the truth and says: "My origins were a mystery [...]. this was what defined me and by now I was used to my own darkness[...] a shock had been sent through my entire system, and I didn't know how to absorb the blow." He gets troubled to find about the roots of his origin but somehow he tries to come out of the shock consoling himself. He burries Barber near the grave of his mother. He finds few changes in his self at the end. When Fogg goes on travelling after breaking up his relation with Kitty, he feels a new sense of self, constructing a new personality/self and he is something different from what he was. "... I had only to keep walking to know that I had left myself behind, that I was no longer the person I had once been."

This leads to the exploration of the self in new way. Moving away from fixities in characters, the postmodern man turns to be an icon of shapeless jellies. They are emblem of rudderless boat in the sea which has no confirmed direction or destination to go. To find the ability to survive in this world a person needs ability to be fluid or protean which is necessary as well as helpful to survive in the world of uncertainties and flux. Making someone able to transform discontinuity and pathos, protean self "allows the traumatized to speak, and to be heard".(Lifton.1926,232)

Conclusion:

Thus the analysis of the novel Moon Palace is provides the picture of protean self of Lifton whose contribution in the field of literature is substantial. What is grasped in this piece of research is proteanism that Lifton introduced us. The novel is the story of Marco Fogg, the central figure, who goes through several vicissitudes losing all he has in his life and living a pathetic life. The novel *Moon Palace* written by Paul Auster has been analyzed here to study the fragmented personalities in the novel. We are living in a world of flux and uncertainties in which fluidity of the character is most required thing. The Protean Self deals with postmodern life, which is full of unknown historical shifts. The ability or capacity of the protean self enables an individual to explore and find a new self of an individual to be settled in this world. The notion elucidates contemporary phenomena of fluidity in the self which has been reflected by Auster in his

writings. Paul Auster is a postmodern writer who has earned a world-wide fame and acknowledgment due to his literary works. He writes about American life, which is always changing and facing uncertainties. To be fit in this world it is necessary to be protean and fluid otherwise it's impossible to survive in this contemporary world. Auster's characters set an example of 'Protean Man' who survive in society even the face a lot of hardships in life. thus the protean person explores throughout life setting himself fit in the words of Orville Brim and Jerom Kagan, "Humans have a capacity for change across the entire life span".

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