

A Cultural Materialist Reading of Paul Auster: Sunset Park

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Abstract

The aim of the present research is to unveil how a “dissident” reading can be perceived by a Cultural Materialist Reading in the selected novel Sunset Park. Paul Auster is one of those writers who is always multitasking. His stories are never about just one thing, and you can never be sure what's going on behind the scenes until you turn the last page. In fact, the novel entails some clashes serve to conceptualize the term “dissidence” as observed in the approach of cultural materialism. Cultural materialists argue that literature does not reflect only one cultural formation and is able to entreat other ideologies and subcultures.. In Sunset Park, Paul Auster has skillfully exhibited such a verbal game to represent his own concerns regarding the subject of the identity, ideology and power caught in the novels, leading to a “dissident” reading which is potentially opposed and threatening to those social oppressive norms which the protagonists are suffered. Indeed, by investigating selected novel in details to find out how the cultural materialism notions can be applied to them, this research demonstrated that cultural materialism concepts are applicable to the characters and contents of selected novel.

Keywords

cultural materialism
dissidence; identity; capitalism
ideology outcomes



I. Introduction

In this paper, the researcher tries to analyze Paul Auster's novel through the Sinfield perspective. In doing so the researcher is going to highlight different layers of the selected novel under observation to show how it criticizes capitalist societies and their ideologies which propagate false consciousness. Second, it analyzes how the writer himself has been affected by those ideologies and his works are entangled in the web of capitalist ideologies. Therefore, social identity and language effect on Auster's novel within the framework of cultural materialism. The focus of this study is on Sinfield's Ideology in Paul Auster's Sunset Park.

Alan Sinfield's theory of cultural materialism which describes culture is inseparable from its conditions of production and reception in history. Sinfield calls it, 'culture is political'. The state and ruling capitalist class, the bourgeoisie, use cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies. Selection of Sinfield's theory as a theoretical basis of this thesis is due to his transparent discussion on cultural materialism and ideology has such a central position in the thinking of Sinfield. Our point is that the idea of cultural materialism by Alan Sinfield is not only focused on, but also deepens and supports his

other major theoretical innovations. According to Alan Sinfield based on ideology all people behavior is taken from their ideology.

II. Review of Literature

The books that are written on Auster's works are various such as *The practice of solitude: agency and the postmodern novelist in Paul Auster's Leviathan* by Emma Hegarty. In this book the writer depicts the development of self-awareness as an intense, almost transcendental, practice or endeavor. In the Reviewing Sunset Park, Sally Bissell says balances minute details that evoke New York City, post financial meltdown, with marvelously drawn characters bruised but unbowed by life's vicissitudes. New Yorker considers that Sunset Park is a story more rooted in time and place than most of Auster's existential yarns. Auster's usual motifs, a figure who disappears from his own life, a prominent role for chance and coincidence, an obsession with baseball and old movies, eventually take over the novel, with familiar results. Kirkus Reviews says that Sunset Park is a very different novel for him, rooted in the realities of contemporary America most specifically an ongoing war in Iraq and an economic recession that threatens employment in general and the publishing business in particular. Frances Coady, Auster's editor, calls this a passionately lyrical novel exploring America's predicament today as it follows the inner and outer struggles of a cast of unforgettable characters through the dark months following the 2008 economic collapse. Jonathan Boulter in his book, *Melancholy and Archive; Memory, and History in the Contemporary Novel*, talks about the meaning of archive for the characters of Auster and three other contemporary writers. The focus of the Christopher Donovan's *Postmodern Counternarratives* is on the realism, postmodernism and literary theory. It tries to bridge the gap between accessible storytelling and literature.

"*Connecting the Dots: Paul Auster's Representation of Invisible Characters in Selected Novels*" is a dissertation by Joane F. Gous in which she discusses how characters meet each other by chance but afterwards these encounters gain importance. It also compares Auster's novels to each other and shows how they interact with each other. The parallel discussed in the book makes readers to have a better understanding of the situations and characters. It shows how the characters are misled about the world they live in. Dominic John D'Urso in his thesis in title of *Postmodern and existential ethics in Paul Auster's Moon Palace and Leviathan* (2006) states that The Postmodern and existential ethic developed in Moon Palace and Leviathan is anecdotal. Taking into consideration postmodernism's fragmentation and existentialism's abandonment, it seems impossible for any ethic to be anything but situational. Consequently, Auster's ethics are displayed through the telling of stories.

III. Research Methods

The applied critical approach in this thesis is Cultural Materialism. Cultural Materialism appeared in 1960s in Britain and its term formulated by Raymond Williams, the professor of drama at Cambridge University from 1974 to 1983. Cultural Materialism situates the literary text within its socio-economic and political context. Irena Makaryk in her book, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory*, defines Cultural Materialism as it stresses "the interaction between cultural creations such as literature and their historical contexts, including social, political and economic elements...Cultural Materialism influences on the cultural activities and on the consequent need to ground culture in its

historical context” (430). Cultural Materialism and New Historicism are two forms of Historicist criticism which take into account Foucauldian and Neo-Marxist theory. Raymond Williams as a chief pioneer of cultural studies examined literature as a mode of cultural production. Literature for Williams was not the highest expression of human nature, but rather was an effective social practice which used language in a specialized and privilege way.

Cultural Materialists try to find the context of exploitation from which the literary text emerged. They use the combination of Marxist and historicist approaches in order to fracture the previous dominance of conservative social and political assumptions in the literary texts. Abrams declares that Cultural Materialists “lead their interpretations and their discussion toward the explicit political end of reforming the existing power-relations which dominated in the society by privileged class” (254).

Beside Raymond Williams there are other practitioners of Cultural Materialism who could be categorized as the first generation of cultural materialists. Jonathan Dollimore, Alan Sinfield, Catharine Belsey and Richard Hoggart spent their life in the elaboration of the theoretical ideology of Cultural Materialism. While Dollimore and Sinfield focused on the reflection of gender, race and class on their social-historical discussion, Williams prescribed three elements for each cultural system: the dominant, the residual and the emergent. Wilson argues:

Cultural Materialism aims to subvert the ideas of humanist criticism with attention to the democratic ideals of potential, difference and the definition of social and political ideology. Cultural Materialists by considering the concepts of dominant, residual and emergent of a system represent literature as participating in politics: active in reinforcing, dissenting form or opposing, and conservative behavior. (22)

Cultural Materialist scholars such as Alan Sinfield take issue with the idea that literature reflects and promotes social power or embodies in an unproblematic way the interests of a ruling class. All power structures are contingent; that is, they lack a logical ground or a natural foundation. As a result, they must rely on cultural narratives that assure their legitimacy. Such narratives strive for plausibility, but they must work against the contingency of the institutions they defend, a contingency that leaves them open to counter-narratives that suggest different social possibilities.

Moreover, all class-divided societies project into culture the instabilities on which they are built. Those instabilities register in literary works as dissidence and as dissonance.

Jonathan Dollimore and Allan Sinfield in the introduction of their book, *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, distinguish the diverse and developing fields of work that a Cultural Materialist in his critical examination can concentrate on them. These subjects propose the more understanding of the essence of Cultural Materialism. They classify these main tasks as:

Enclosures and the oppression of the rural poor, State power and resistance to it, reassessments of what actually were the dominant ideologies of the period and the radical countertendencies to these, a feminist recovery of the actual conditions of women and the altered understanding of their literary representations which this generates, conflict between class fractions within the State, and correspondingly, the importance of a non-monolithic conception of power. (6)

Marxists critics study literature to examine how a literary work reinforces or undermines the current social structure. After the Second World War contextual approaches, especially Marxism, are considered as the outdated approaches. They have

had a major comeback over the last two decades in approaches like New Historicism, Cultural Materialism and Cultural Studies. Thus, Cultural Materialism is somehow the revision of Marxism.

In the way of interpreting literary texts as cultural practice Cultural Materialists especially Williams establishes the model of cultural systems which involves three main elements: “the dominant, the residual and the emergent” (Barry 236). Brannigan in his book, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, explains: Williams invites us to make distinction between the dominant features of a cultural system, which are determined by the dominant social group, and the movements and tendencies of the whole cultural system which do not belong essentially to the dominant social group (40). There may be elements of the previous dominant system residing in the current one or there may be emergent tendencies of the new cultural system in the current dominant system. Williams defines Residual as “some social or cultural practice which has been formed in the past, but it is still active and effective in the present cultural system like organized religion” (qtd in Barry 237). A residual cultural element is usually at some distance from the effective dominant culture, but it is some part of it which is embedded in cultural system. The concept of emergent for Raymond Williams means “the creation of new meaning and values, new cultural practices and new relationships within the dominant structure” (qtd in Newton 135). It is important to distinguish between those emergent which are elements of new stage of the dominant culture and those which are actually other element or oppositional to dominant system.

Cultural Materialism in achieving its political goals adopts two methods. In some cases, it begins to interpret literary texts from the standpoint of oppositional or dissident subculture. In other cases, it takes the form of an examination of the material incidents in which conservative ideologies function. Thus, the first way relates to the dissident viewpoint, and the second method is from conservative outlook. In recognizing the sense of dissidence, the essential point is that it is not thoroughly opposed to power, and it is not an antithesis that seeks to overturn power ideals and tactics. Instead, it is very similar to the power structures and is indeed created by the internal contradictions of these structures. Of course, this means a divergence from the laws of the dominant society, but it may be that no response from authority is achieved through dissidence.

Hegemony is a key concept developed by Antonio Gramsci in his Prison Notebooks (1929-1935), hegemony refers to the domination achieved by a ruling class through force and, more importantly, through moral and intellectual leadership and alliances with other classes in what Gramsci calls a “historic bloc.” For Gramsci, ideology plays at least as important a role in maintaining the rule of the bourgeoisie as does force. Schools, churches and the media are key institution in the creation of consent to bourgeois rule. The implications of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony include a key role for intellectuals both on the side of the bourgeoisie in developing and propagating an ideology that engenders consent, and on the side of the proletariat in disputing bourgeois ideas and developing an alternative. Hegemony also implies an expanded notion of the state as an institution that is more than simply an instrument of repression, and a greater significance attributed to the arena of civil society where much of the ideological struggle for hegemony takes to have a concrete understanding of the novels, the method which is used, is exposing the dominant class and totalitarian system’s ideologies, showing how through their ideologies and apparatuses, they control and oppress all actions of the masses and specially the working class and finally highlighting those elements of society of the time most affected by such oppressions. Library and Internet sources will be used to carry out this study.

According Sinfield in *Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading from Faultlines*, every change which happens in society we should change by them social

events influence our mind cultural events influence our life. People are dolls made by power structure some people are in trap, they are Entrapment model. Surrounded by power do everything by law. Faultlines don't like power structure and you are always in conflict with that power but you can't escape. People are divided in two groups. First group love power structure and live by it doing everything by law. Second group can't accept it and are in conflict with society they can't accept it and these are the fault lines of power structure they can't accept it (power structure) and they suffer.

IV. Discussion

4.1 Quest of Identity in *Sunset Park*

Sunset Park's protagonist Miles Heller and his three friends seek refuge in a house in Brooklyn. Martha Nadell (2011) describes in "Writing Brooklyn" while Miles and his friends move to Brooklyn, "the site for mediations on the language befitting modern urban life; on the contrast between an imagined New York cosmopolitanism and an ostensibly authentic ethnic, working-class; [...] on the spatial and temporal construction of collective and individual identity" (110). In *Sunset Park*, the new environment provides a different approach to the process of identity forming and provides the opportunity for the characters to turn their moment of crisis momentarily into a moment of peace and efficiency. Auster replaces Manhattan with Brooklyn. The struggle in New York City neighborhood for self-construction of one's personality continues as a journey for an alternative living setting, inextricably linked to the quest for the characters for individual personalities of their own. By moving into the *Sunset Park*, Miles, Bing, Ellen, and Alice create a heterotopic entity in which they can materialize temporarily. However, this ephemeral heterotopic object reflects various forms of heterotopic areas that depend on the personal circumstances of each character. The struggle to support themselves financially and the effort not to lose themselves in the house in Brooklyn are brought together in their existential struggle. This house's occupation becomes the project through which they strive to constitute their Identity and revolt against their personal working and living conditions at present:

When Ellen Brice told him about the abandoned house in *Sunset Park* this past summer, [Bing] saw it as an opportunity to put his ideas to the test, to move beyond his invisible, solitary attacks on the system and participate in a communal action. It is the boldest step he has yet taken, and he has no trouble reconciling the illegality of what they are doing with their right to do it. These are desperate times for everyone, and a crumbling wooden house standing empty in a neighborhood as ragged as this one is nothing if not an open invitation to vandals and arsonists, an eyesore begging to be broken into and pillaged, a menace to the well-being of the community. By occupying that house, he and his friends are protecting the safety of the street, making life more livable for everyone around them. (*Sunset Park* 77)

To explain their possession of the building, Bing cites the present collective economic condition. He imagines that this act is a service to the residents of the *Sunset Park* community. Bing and his friends are allowed to regain partial control of their lives through this act. The recapture of partial influence motivates them to pursue their individual goals and ventures, and in order to structure their own little community, they produce their own routine and rules, Bing is telling [Miles] about the various routines and protocols that have been established since they moved in. Each person has a job to perform, but beyond the responsibilities of that job, everyone is free to come and go at will. (*Sunset Park* 126) The understanding of Miles of what movement and occupation mean varies from that of his friends. Miles is in a relationship with Pilar, an under-age

high school student in Florida, The family was compelling him to leave her alone. Afraid of being arrested for incarceration. He seduces a minor and escapes to New York City. The Metropolis and the Brooklyn Building represent a place of refuge, but the house feels like a jail as well:

The only problem is cash, the same problem all the others are facing. He no longer has a job, and the three thousand dollars he brought with him amount to little more than pennies. Like it or not, then, for the time being he is stuck, and unless something comes along that dramatically alters his circumstances, he will just have to make the best of it. So, his prison sentence begins. Pilar's sister has turned him into the newest member of the Sunset Park Four. (*Sunset Park* 127)

The condition of Miles varies from that of his friends because he had to abandon his established living and working environment to protect himself from potential capture and a possible arrest.

Therefore, he sees the housing situation in Sunset Park as an option. Miles does not identify with the neighborhood. He is from the "West Village in Manhattan to be precise" (*Sunset Park* 16) and his opinions towards the neighborhood in Brooklyn shows that, while he physically left Manhattan and Florida behind, he never did mentally. Miles says he can't accept culture of the metropolis. His behavior is a reaction to the incidents and conditions in his life and the fact that Miles does not have the courage to challenge and take on responsibility for his history and his problems: "He has turned himself into a black sheep. That is the role he has willed himself to play, and he will go on playing it even in New York as he wanders back to the flock he left behind." (*Sunset Park* 68) The new condition still bothers Ellen for numerous reasons. While she moved into the building, the financial burden is lifted and the inner conflict triggered by her emotions. Her mind is engaged: "she is advancing now, traveling deeper and deeper into the netherworld of her own nothingness, the place in her that coincides with everything she is not" (*Sunset Park* 215). Ellen, unlike Bing, acknowledges that the living condition in the Sunset Park house is temporary. She is persuaded that "sooner or later you will be gone from Sunset Park, this ratty little house will be torn down and forgotten, and the life you are living now will fade into oblivion, not one person will remember you were here, not even you." (*Sunset Park* 224)

After the physical quarrel with the officers who have come to evacuate the home, Bing is captured at home and Alice ends up in the hospital, and Ellen and Miles manage to run. They lose their hope and confidence in a future that is promising in Sunset Park by losing house. *Sunset Park* depicts the struggle to reestablish identity through a self-created in New York City. Miles and his friends are allowed by Auster to turn their moment of crisis into a moment of peace and calm. They have Productivity in Sunset Park as they unite in the home. "The Sunset Park Four" shows the identity can be achieved temporarily and nothingness can be replaced by art, communication and solidarity can be replaced by concept of hope rather than desperation. Miles determines that "there is no future for them anymore, no hope for them anymore" (*Sunset Park* 307). Nadell (2010) in his book entitled *Writing Brooklyn* mentioned "Traveling back to the Brooklyn Bridge in Manhattan. The Brooklyn Bridge, particularly during the 20th century was a favorite motif for authors. Representing the hope of "moving literally from Brooklyn to Manhattan and figuratively from working-class ethnic culture to a sophisticated art life" (Nadell 111)

As we transition from Manhattan to Brooklyn, the emotionally ruined self has contributed as Bing perceives, "a throwaway culture spawned by the greed of profit-driven corporations, the landscape has grown ever shabbier, ever more alienating, and ever

emptier with meaning and consolidating purpose” (*Sunset Park* 72). Art, Education, communication and harmony have been abandoned in this hollow and empty society and culture of the metropolis replaced by modern technology. (*Sunset Park* 72) Baudrillard calls “Americans [who] have no identity” (Baudrillard 34). In the hell of a destroyed home, the story of Miles and his housemates is a story of mass identity versus Individuality, a dispute that not only has an impact as an existential crisis on the personal level but also on the community level as a topic of the human condition in society. Each house is a tale of bankruptcy and default loss, debt and foreclosure, and he [Miles] has taken it upon himself to record the last, remaining signs of those scattered lives to prove that once the disappeared families were here, that in the discarded items strewn around their empty homes, the spirits of people he will never see and never know are still there (*Sunset Park* 3).

At the end of the book, this initial picture of an abandoned house is replicated when Miles and his housemates have to leave their house and all they've got in it. So, in this book, the notion of location plays an important role when we think issues such as feeling at home and feeling alienated in a position are not isolated from the very physical framework of that place. When we read about their life stories, Miles, Bing, Alice, and Ellen do not feel at home in their own country. Either individually or in a rotten house by their shared living. This feeling of separation from them makes them objects of country's economic challenges as they do their hardest to retain their individuality.

4.2 Capitalist Society in *Sunset Park*

Ideology makes humans accept the natural order of things. Ideology is what is always present in every decision a human being makes, every thought process, every discourse, and it happens without the human race, or the human individual noticing, at least not until made aware of it. Understanding ideology and the ideological state apparatuses are pivotal to be able to account for what makes a subject take on various subject positions, and also what forces are at work when this process takes place. According to Terry Eagleton ideology is a concept that allows and constricts human behavior, and it is as mild as it is wild. “The very forces that are intended to subdue chaos are secretly in love with it” (*Ideology* 18). This could be interpreted to mean that there is self-destruct mechanisms in every thought humans have. When one breaks it down, what is at the core are human consciousness and human understandings of concepts and language. Ideology itself has not got a consciousness on the outside of the human grasp of what it is or is not, as it is an abstract manmade concept. Jean Baudrillard in his book *The Consumer Society* argues that

The capitalist society has entered consumption-oriented society since 1960s, “There is all around us today a kind of fantastic conspicuousness of consumption and abundance, constituted by the multiplication of objects, services and material goods, and this represents something of a fundamental mutation in the ecology of the human species. Strictly speaking, the humans of the age of affluence are surrounded not so much by other human beings, as they were in all previous ages, but by objects” (1).

Williams maintains: “Practical consciousness is almost always different from official consciousness” (*Marxism and Literature* 130). A given social group or generation lives differently to the ways in which the culture as a whole says that it is living. He continues:

Yet the actual alternative to the received and produced fixed forms is not silence: not the absence, the unconscious, which bourgeois culture has mythicized. It is a kind of

feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange. (*Marxism and Literature* 131)

And somewhere else he argues: “There is always, in varying degrees, practical consciousness, in specific relationships, specific skills, specific perceptions, that is unquestionably social and that a specifically dominant social order neglects, excludes, represses or simply fails to recognize” (Raymond 125). The critical theorist Alan Sinfield therefore analyzes the *culture industry* to show how popular culture reproduces liberal ideology and intensifies reification in late capitalist society. He comments on how the city invokes a demand for pleasure and work, which sustain commodity in capitalist society.

Sunset Park follows a portrait of living in a post-9/11 and America is under Bush II’s presidency. Owing to the recession in the American economy during this period, many of the characters have to survive within their means. In addition, many members of the working class seem to be struggling badly with one of their basic needs which is accommodation. An unprecedented point in rent payments has resulted from the economic instability of the period. In the main characters of *Sunset Park*, we observe evidence strongly responsible for the existential crises. Auster (2005). In his book entitled *Autobiographical writings* says “For many others, the increases have spelled the difference between having a place to live and not having a place to live. For some people, it has been the difference between life and death” (502). Miles, Bing, Alice, and Ellen have to sacrifice their autonomy and privacy for the sake of a collective life merely to save more money and survive as far as possible within one’s means. The arrival at the *Sunset Park* house of each of these four individuals which is like a “prison” in Miles’ words (*Sunset Park* 127). In the *Sunset Park* Miles:

Miles Heller “is twenty-eight years old, and to the best of his knowledge, he has no ambitions. No burning ambitions, in any case, no clear idea of what building a plausible future might entail for him.” His only accomplishment, if ever, after quitting college and his parents’ house, is his “ability to live in the present, to confine himself to the here and now” like a vagabond. As such, he has tried to attain “discipline and self-control, . . . to have no plans, . . . to have no longings or hopes, to be satisfied with . . . [his] lot, to accept what the world doles . . . [him] from one sunrise to the next;” to “want very little, as little as humanly possible” (*Sunset Park* 6).

And also, in a collapsing world of economic ruin and relentless, ever-expanding hardship, trashing out is one of the few thriving businesses in the area. No doubt he is lucky to have found this job. He doesn’t know how much longer he can bear it, but the pay is decent, and in a land of fewer and fewer jobs, it is nothing if not a good job (*Sunset Park* 4). Miles’ would-be housemates suffer from identity crises. Bing, who plays with the group’s bright mind thinking about anything philosophically, is not better than Miles. No longer willing to pay his deposit, he accepts Ellen’s offer to live in a house in *Sunset Park*. In addition, he has satisfied himself with the least because of his own outlook on life. He is also against technology and argues against Capitalism. He also believes that human kind is “tangible:”

Human beings are tangible. They are endowed with bodies, and because those bodies feel pain and suffer from disease and undergo death, human life has not altered by a single jot since the beginning of mankind. . . . even if man has changed the world around him [through technologies], man himself has not changed. The facts of life

are constant. You live and then you die. . . . everything that happens to you from the moment of your birth to the moment of your death . . . has also been felt by everyone who came before you . . . (*Sunset Park* 73-74).

Bing seems justified in not yearning for dreams and merely attempting to offer a set formula for life on all grounds. With his views on simple life, he satisfies himself. With his over simplicity, he is like a pessimistic philosopher living in a cave and honesty. The popular goal shared in *Sunset Park* by Auster's characters is best summarized in the opinion of Bing about America, the *Sunset Park* house is microcosm in the opinion of Bing. Since the war in Vietnam, the concept known as *America* has played itself out, the country is no longer a workable proposition, but if anything continues to unite the fractured masses of this defunct nation, if American opinion is still unanimous about any one idea, it is a belief in the notion of progress. The technological developments of the past decades have in fact only diminished the possibilities of life. In a throwaway culture spawned by the greed of profit-driven corporations, the landscape has grown never shabbier, ever more alienating, and ever emptier of meaning and consolidating purpose. (72)

Bing's choices are "small ones" but they are not unimportant; at least he tries "to adhere to the fundamental rule of his discontent . . . to resist the status quo on all fronts" (71). Part of his goal is to reject any high ideas; this makes the shabby *Sunset Park* house a perfect spot for him. These are desperate times for everyone, and a crumbling wooden house standing empty in a neighborhood as ragged as this one is nothing if not an open invitation to vandals and arsonists, an eyesore begging to be broken into and pillaged, a menace to the well-being of the community. By occupying that house, he and his friends are protecting the safety of the street, making life more livable for everyone around them. (77) Thus, the *Sunset Park* house gives Miles and others the only way out of their disastrous condition into a better one. That is why they all eventually agree to live in it with others. The positive aspect of it is that "pooling their assets, helps the problem is handled by them" (126). Unlike its shabbiness, the *Sunset Park* house thus becomes a reboot. With nothing to lose, Miles and his housemates concentrate on progress and not on the end as there is no progress. Inside their case and the end is plausible. Miles once tells his blood mother that: There's no way to measure your progress. So I kept at it, not knowing if I was better or not, not knowing if I was stronger or not, and after a while I stopped thinking about the goal and concentrated on the effort. . . . I became addicted to the struggle. (263)

The notion of migration has now become part of the character's life in this novel. As moving individuals or communities from one country to another they change their places and make them their own places. Their social and political norms changed as well. In the hegemonic conception of the state, the idea that everything should be in order is dominant, because it is easier to direct the fixed individuals to any thought and to keep them under pressure. Being an immigrant in a foreign place, in a country, getting lost among other people and becoming a homeless person is now a common situation specific to contemporary life. This situation sometimes involves the challenges. As in the *Sunset Park*, Miles, who blames himself for his brother's death and leaves the house and migrates to another city to begin to a new life by escaping from his real reality. He also escapes from his reality and an identity.

In the novel Auster describes Bing Nathan who has also a nomadic life like Miller, as the fighter of anger, the champion of discontent, a militant shedding the dirty laundry of the modern world. He is the one who dreams of building a new reality

from the ruins of the defeated world. Unlike most opponents of the established order like him, he does not believe in political action, he is not a member of any movement or party, he has never spoken in front of the community and has no desire to rage the angry masses on the streets to demolish buildings and to overthrow the power. His is a completely personal positioning and is confident that others can follow and imitate himself if he can continue his life according to his own principles. (*Sunset Park* 71)

Miles' colleagues claim ownership of the remaining belongings, even though they do not have rights, but Miles takes pictures of them. He believes that he is doing his last duty to the goods left behind. As stated in the novel his friends make fun of his obsession with taking photographs (*Sunset Park* 13).

Miles is different from his co-workers and has a disposition that worries for tasks that his peers find pointless, such as taking photographs. Miles accepts spiritual works that seem hollow and pointless throughout his life, amid his coworkers' mere materialistic world views. He knows that he will not stay in Florida any longer, that he will soon want to go elsewhere; but he is content with living today without looking forward until that desire forces him to act. Finally, his desire forces him to migrate to New York City (*Sunset Park* 14).

Dominant has significant connotation in Cultural Materialism generally and in cultural system specially. Dominant in Williams's terminology is very near to the meaning of Hegemony in Antonio Gramsci's ideology. Hegemony refers to the domination of one people or group by another.

V. Conclusion

To conclude the paper on *Sunset Park* is a novel of Auster that manages social materialistic methodology in light of Sinfield Ideology. Ideology impacts on subject positions in fictional characters within a given discourse. To Sachs his journey made complete sense, and all the choices he made until he either deliberately or accidentally blew himself up, were a natural progression in his life. The analysis showed that though it was a natural progression to Sachs, it was not so to his friends and family. People are presented and introduced ideologies; ideologies are taken for granted and unconsciously like elements of a good short story, book or a movie, have been lived and have made lives or have made critiques to different attitudes towards reading and writing or making movies. Identity of man is constructed in relation to others it is made through differences. It is not within us because it only exists as narrative, life as a narration. In *Sunset Park*, the main characters Miles and Bing, Alice, Ellen are Characters of identities created by social conditions, authority, and even capitalism, which correspond to the country system that involves the individual in it. Here resistance occurs when an element of the given society sticks out and goes against the norms; this cannot be conscious because it would be considered as Sinfield says another form of ideology but when it goes to the realm of unconscious it cannot simply be judged as another ideological form; since it does not go against fixed internalized norms out of knowledge but due to and through being unaware.

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