from the Greek pre-Socratic philosophy through the 19th-century American writers.

His works frame a conversation that underlines the narrative's use of these works as one of the main aspects of postmodernism—its reference to Anunt's

"...of postmodern literature". The mixture of features from modern and modernist

Paul Auster (New York, 1947) is said to be a prime example for the discussion

of features from the Jewish tradition in literature.

Everything connected and linked by the methodology of the author and the whole set

cultural and philosophical learning. And the self whom we have said is able to choose "this" own

and whose knowledge goes further then the knowledge any ordinary dog could have acquired,

his homily through the lenses of a dog with the name of a man, with a soul, with knowledge

take us to the house of Nero. When we get to the land of the pre-Socratic philosophers, we find

Tamburlaine whole meaning: a polylog and make concrete symbols which will give

Our aim is to deal with those words, with the identity and the self, aspects with which one

Austen is to be read by the author

a thorough lexical analysis, those symbols, that tip in Tamburlaine and how the option of these

have suggested. The outcome is more symbolic. The purpose of this article is not the collection

Tamburlaine or Ilios, i.e. the definition of the seminal perspective in Africa, as the reader may

If I am a tip in Ilios, i.e. a tip in Tamburlaine, even. The issue is something of my

the influence of a human being. And the same issue is a great risk, a "person" identity,

Auster (New York, 1947). The experimental consists in providing a dog with all the information and

Tamburlaine (2007) is the last narrative experiment written by the post-modernist writer Paul

ABSTRACT

Emilio Canadas Rokniker

Paul Auster
IN TIMBUKLU, A NOVEL BY PERCEPTION OF THE SELF
IDENTITY AND THE QUESTION OF

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such as Nathaniel Hawthorne or Poe up to the Nobel Prize winner Saul Bellow in the 20th century. And it is that Paul Auster has always thought that “everything is connected with something else” (L51)². This aspect is not exclusive for any of Paul Auster’s disciplines and, therefore, he cannot solely be considered to be a novelist but also a scripter, film-maker or a columnist. In his stories, he reminds us that “every story overlaps with every other story” (L51). This means that Auster’s readers must draw and complete the writer’s universe book by book and that any new story is required and needed as the key to questions which may still be unanswered.

Timbuktu (2000) is the last novel written by this North American writer³. Any reader could beforehand expect a story on a trip to that African city as in Bruce Chatwick’s or a story about women living there, their lives and feelings, etc... as the books by Manuel Villar Raso or, otherwise, a mythical or mythological story. Due to the fact that in Auster everything is connected with something else, the novel, indeed, is a trip to Timbuktu. However, this time is different. Even though Auster’s Timbuktu has something of mythological or illusory, it is definitely not the real geographical place in Africa, as the reader may have suspected. The outcome is more symbolic. Our purpose is to analyse those symbols, that trip to Timbuktu and how the question of identity and the self is treated by the author.

The symbols, the identity and the self are the features which give Timbuktu whole meaning. Meanwhile, autobiography (as it happens with other American writers like, for example, Truman Capote, his autobiography is hidden, masked, or spread all over his works. Auster says “I am the place where everything begins” (L51). Most of his characters like in a “bildungsroman” are writers; when they are not, they are people living in New York or people who, somehow, resembles the writer.) and magic realism (the appearance of a magic moment which frames his narrative around and which, simultaneously, determines and changes the development of the story and characters as in Lulu on the Bridge or Timbuktu.) are the basis which complete and fulfil the idea of the author. Both features are, as everything else, linked for a double aspect: first, randomness and fortune, which have always played an important role in Paul Auster’s life and, second, philosophy.

Timbuktu is the story of a dog named Mr. Bones. He is a clever dog who will have to make his own decisions and take his own chances in life. He is companion

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(2) We will use in this essay the letters L in order to refer to Leviathan and T to refer to Timbuktu.

(3) In year 2001, Paul Auster has collected 180 stories from radio programme and published them like a book with the title I thought that my father was God., and also known as True tales in American life.
The question of identity and the perception of the self in literature: A novel by Paul Auster.

In his post-modern, intertextual journey, Auster’s novels often delve into the realm of memory and identity, exploring the relationship between the individual and the world. His characters, much like the reader, are engaged in an anarchical search for meaning and purpose in a disjointed, fragmented reality. Through the lens of the protagonist’s journey, Auster challenges the traditional narrative structure, inviting readers to question the nature of self and society.

With a keen eye for the absurd and the mundane, Auster’s novels offer a glimpse into the mind of a character whose identity is as fluid as the world around him. The protagonist, often a writer, navigates through a labyrinth of memories, dreams, and reality, seeking to make sense of a world that seems to offer no clear guidance.

In the first part of the novel, the protagonist encounters a series of events that challenge his perception of the world. The narrative is divided into two distinct sections, each offering a different perspective on the nature of identity and its relationship with the collective memory. The first part, set in a familiar, yet unfamiliar, landscape, explores the protagonist’s struggle to find meaning in a world that seems to have lost its coherence. The second part delves deeper into the protagonist’s psyche, revealing the layers of memory that underpin his sense of self.

Auster’s novel is a meditation on the human condition, exploring the tension between the individual and the collective. The protagonist’s quest for identity is a journey not just of the mind, but of the soul, as he grapples with the question of what it means to be human in a world that is both beautiful and grotesque.

In conclusion, Auster’s novel offers a profound exploration of the human experience, inviting readers to反思 the nature of self and society. Through its intricate narrative structure and its exploration of memory and identity, the novel challenges readers to confront their own assumptions and preconceptions, encouraging them to see the world in a new light, enriched by the complexities of human existence.
realities. Then, they insist on the point saying that “when Mr. Bones finds an exciting scent the rest of the world cease to exist.” (T37) It is Patrick Suskind, in his narrative *The Perfume* who also established that association in which scent and life have strong and outrageous connexions. Willy wants to know, in this sense, to what extent Mr. Bones’ sensory perception is active in the construction of the world and what the difference between men and animals is in this respect.

“How not to be fascinated by all this? A dog had roughly two hundred and twenty million scent receptors, whereas a man had but five million, and with a disparity as great as that, it was logical to assure that the world perceived by a dog was quite different from the one perceived by a man. Logic had never been Willy’s strength but in this case he was driven by love as much as by intellectual curiosity, and therefore he stuck with the question with more persistence than usual”. (T37-38)

Auster’s irony, mixed with that philosophical sub-level all his stories contain, led Willy to wonder what Mr. Bones feels when he smells something. To get a definite answer Willy spends a long time observing the dog and that close observation “...had led him to conclude that there were essentially three categories of interest to Mr. Bones food, sex, and information about other dogs” (T38). This idea of close observation of the elements of nature, follows the basis of the empirical approach. Pre-socratic philosophers as, for example, Thales of Mileto, wondered about deep concerns of that nature and anyone can picture the image of Willy (and also Thales) sitting on a chair or a stone staring at the dog or a cow and trying to reach a conclusion for their search. Later, other philosophers such as Locke, Hume or Hobbes would carry and, somehow, enlarge this vision of life.

However, the interests of Mr. Bones are deeper than predicted: the dog was keen on living the best possible life accepting the given quality of being more intelligent than most of the dogs. Once more, following his philosophical knowledge, in a certain moment of the book, Auster reminds or rephrases Plato’s famous statement “the form of the forms” when he says that Mr. Bones was “the dog of dogs” (T40). There is a kind of humanism always present and lurked in every line. In this sense, Willy wonders whether dogs, and particularly Mr. Bones, would be able to perceive and taste Art. This question is difficult to be answered, however, Willy, (admitting and accepting the fact of Mr. Bones’s good soul and despite the fact that Art is a human activity which seeks to reach that soul), says that

“And if, as all philosophers on the subject have noticed, art is a human activity that relies on the senses to reach that soul, did it not also stand to reason that dogs-at least dogs of Mr. Bones cali-
the sense of smell.

The mentioned humanistic appearance in the dog's answer to the question when he
would not in other words be able to appreciate an

...
city. Baltimore is also the symbol for the dramatic moment of recognition both characters experience when Willy dies.

Meanwhile, the scents of The Perfume come to us again when Mr. Bones discovers he dislikes the city just because of the smell, it does not smell as good as other cities he has travelled before. In this contrast we find encaptured much of the symbolism of the story, which simultaneously is recurrent in Auster’s works: the question of identity and the search for it as a clash between the never-ending dialogue of the rational and the empirical, the human and the animal inside us.

Auster gives dogs as well as men memory, sense of history and the fact of sentimentalising the past among other features and so Mr. Bones thinks, knows, understands, remembers, communicates, expects, dreams, panics, etc...as if he were a human being. This process of identity is taken upside down when we can read that “His master was a man with the heart of a dog”. Doubtless, identity and its combinations are one of the most important aspects not only in Paul Auster’s narrative but also in all Jewish literary tradition and, for example, in the case of Saul Bellow’s Herzog. In Auster, apart from Timbuktu, this happens clearly in The New York Trilogy and specially in “City of Glass” where, as an example, the writer, Quinn, is mixed up with Paul Auster who is not a writer but a detective. Quinn acts like Paul Auster’s detective to discover later that the only Paul Auster in New York is a writer which is the author itself and, at the same time, we discovered that the detective protagonist of Quinn’s books is dressed with the clothes of the most definite case of identity problems, “William Wilson”.

The perception of the world invades the story bit by bit at this point. And Mr. Bones makes his own conclusions about Mrs. Gurovitch, his son and in a wider sense, the world.

“As Mr. Bones discovered the differences between Mrs. Gurovitch and were much smaller than he had first supposed and it was true that their smells had nothing in common” (T30)

Auster, the narrator, masked sometimes as Mr. Bones, shows the development of the dog’s identity. In a new and clear example of the odd system of identities created by Auster in his narrative, the reader learns that Mr. Bones has inherited, as sons from parents, attributes from Willy: his irony, his humour, his metaphysical view of the world, etc... And even, from Mrs. Gurovitch (Willy’s mother) “the benefits of an occasional good cry”

Nineteen century writers such as Hawthorne or Melville, Thoreau or Emerson and, above all, Edgar Allan Poe are, apart from Saul Bellow, the major influences that
The reader is also present in the scene, as the house is described as being familiar and comfortable. The overall tone of the description is nostalgic and warm, reflecting the author's attachment to the place.

In the next scene, the narrative shifts to a different location, where the protagonist finds herself in a new setting. The description of this new place is vivid and detailed, allowing the reader to visualize the environment and feel immersed in the story.

The author's use of descriptive language and sensory details creates a strong sense of place, helping the reader to connect with the characters and their experiences. The narrative style is engaging and descriptive, making the story compelling and enjoyable to read.
constructs a language called Ingloosh. Therefore, he gives Mr. Bones the skills not only to speak it but also to understand human language. This irony and sense of humour reminds us of Bellow’s *Henderson and The Rain King*. Anyway, soon after, the same writer limits the idea.

“It wasn’t for the lack of earnest effort but biology was against him and what with the configuration of muzzle, teeth and tongue that fate had saddle him with, the best he could do was emit a series of yaps and yawns and yowls, a moaning, muddled sort of discourse” (T7)

In Baltimore, Willy is about to die. There, Mr. Bones remembers their life together. This moment, filled up with memories, brings the reader to another major aspect: the sense of History. And incredibly enough, Mr. Bones has it. And he recalls how Willy’s family comes from Poland, and that they came to live to New York and that, Willy, from an early age, became a drunkard and later a drug-addict, and that sometimes he was homeless and that Mr. Bones and that Mr. Bones was for Willy an angel, a salvation, or better, part of it. Like in the Jewish culture and the Jewish tradition, Willy acts like “the one chosen” not only in a clear reference to the individual but also to the whole community. In this sense, Auster creates the magical moment that we talked about in the introduction and that changes his stories and that will choose Willy as the centre. This time, that moment clearly resembles Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. Something odd, something unusual, difficult to explain makes the lives of the characters change: If in Dickens’ Mr. Scrooge is visited by three spirits in Auster’s Willy Gurovitch receives the unexpected and magical visit of Santa Claus when he was watching TV. Both characters learnt the lesson and changed. In this case, he changes his name, his life and turns alcohol and drugs into piety and charity.

The end of the first part of the book is the end of Willy. Mr. Bones after having been dreaming of what will happen, realized that Willy still is not dead. So, he tells the reader that Willy will go to Timbuktu. The process of humanisation that had started with the senses comes to a higher point when the reader finds that

“there was no doubt in the dogs mind that the next world was a real place. It was called Timbuktu, and for everything Mr. Bones could gather, it was located in the middle of a desert somewhere, far from New York or Baltimore, far from Poland or any other city they had visited in the course of their travels.” (T48)

That is the “other” “heiv-motiv” of the book. To Mr. Bones the afterlife and the fate of humans is a real place called Timbuktu. It is a trip that the dog presumed and
most intellectual part of his existence gives path and help to the most defied and
writhe human although it is true that becomes part of the "wild world" where the
few new world" that life on earth, and life on earth
"will be
even

He who keeps on

of his existence gives path and help to the most defied and
in this brave new world, that life on earth, and life on earth
his

writhe human although it is true that becomes part of the "wild world" where the

The Jewish people, seen so by declassified in the last and Air. Bons is not an exception,

races are always something to the extreme and they, with great similarity to

As we said, without "Willy". Air. Bons has to renounce his story, Austin's chas-

in the book after book below well about the business of ordering

which we can apply to another

writhe: the difference between heaven and hell. Above Raxin aplies for Below

It is essential to note that the reader can find another remarkable topic for the Jewish

for men but also a place for their place where they are like and does can talk.

"Life is the throungh, working in our He was intimate with the

According to the publisher of the ensuing, and in many intellectual wars, the

56  THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY AND THE PERCEPTION OF THE SELF IN TANRISIKA. A NOVEL BY PAPA ASTURE.
animal ways of perception through the nasal and the visual. His North, his South is not mind anymore but matter. He had never had contact with children and the first experience had a kind of bitter taste for him. Anyway, from this first experience he found a new human to love.

"By then, the speaker had poked his head in far enough for Mr. Bones to get a clear view of his features, and at last he understood that he wasn’t looking at his tormentor. The face belonged to a Chinese boy of ten or eleven, and in that first indelible instant, Mr. Bones felt that it was one of the loveliest human faces he had ever had the pleasure to gaze upon." (T98)

Right here is when Mr. Bones meets his new owner, after a surviving experience with aggressive children. Henry, a boy, is the one who would take care of the dog now despite the fact his parents did not know the existence of Mr. Bones. This “meeting”, this first stop in this trip of no return, this new owner means that after everything he had been through, this visualization does not avoid the beast to have an artistic concept of beauty and even of pleasure. But not only that but to have a gradation and evaluation of that beauty and it is by his thoughts that we find he’s got a sense of beauty almost romantic.

After having met him he takes another important decision that is to stay with him although clandestinely. The important fact here is that to stay with Henry means to break sharply with the past and to leave Willy’s teachings behind and this time is forever “And so it was that Mr. Bones went against his master’s teachings and wound up living by the gates of hell”.

New master, new theories, new hopes, new topics that he couldn’t really understand as for example, why two types of births, the Orioles and the Blue Jays play a game called Baseball, etc... Everything kept on going up to the moment Mr. Chow, Henry’s father discovers that his son had had Mr. Bones hidden. Just for the noise, for the eyes of Mr. Chow, the dog knew that everything was lost. The world that Mr. Bones learnt to live after Willy’s death was starting to tumble down and Mr. Bones perceived it. Equally, that sensory perception made him aware of danger once more and his life again needs to make a new decision which, once more, is to run away and to continue his way. It is the fight for survival.

The last part is the meeting with the last family, the last owners and the last moments... The dream factor, so important in Auster determines this part and its beginning. He dreams over Willy again and again and in the dreams they converse as two friends, father and son or better like two souls. Conversation which had curative results in Mr. Bones. He was alone, he was sad, he was tired, he was old, he had
centered our thoughts, impressions, sensations, perception of the world, a world full of scenes
called out through the senses; sensory perception of the world, a world of scenes, once more,
for identity of the sense of history, another world, the whole of whom, once more,
reader also for some of the main scenes of the Jewish tradition including that search
through the influence of the Great Writers of the 19th Century, Auster takes the
human beings and on the other a search for the identity of a face of religion.
Like those two souls, An identity which is on one hand personal and individual as
for identity, a macroscopic in nature’s interior, is one of the main themes which
for identity, a macroscopic in nature’s interior, is one of the main themes which
is they are not only friends but souls they cannot do without each other. The search
deepen connections with the introduction of man, and man is almost completely
is the connection of man with the introduction of man, and man is almost completely
structure of a second philosophical building. In such a context of philosophy and
work, spans further elucidating interactions with the rest of his narrative on the
As a conclusion we can say that Thimblou follows the thematic patterns esta-

bucked Happiness.

pont where life ends, in the place where the border to paradise is a Hitherto, This

there is no longer building back the possessed all the way, all the
doors, this and an ever-enhancing life and the powers announce
is to dream in peace again of a very strange Wildly with this time, and he would announce
provide for him that they would live him in a dog-house, solitude came to his end,

they would love him, and at the same time they would encourage him. They would
meets a final family which will give him care, attention and also, pain and solitude.
in Mr. Bones long to search for freedom and correctness for Thimblou he

...thinks his baby, 1720-121

doesn’t found himself able to speak after so many years of silence.

buoyed as well. I think of the power that mean the dream had taken him to Tom

with Wildly, a power that mean the dream had taken him to Tom,

in that tensely Wildly was in Thimblou’s, and all the elements had just come
visions, and other mental phenomena, but he did know for cert-

Mr. Bones was ill-equipped to parse the subtleties of dreams.

has existential doubts as any human may have.

would be able to speak, and if does be allowed and if they are allowed, it be

Wildly be there is after that Thimblou is ready the answer and it is to say
Anyway, the one question Thimblou makes Mr. Bones wonder for the order of the

After him, "No longer told anything to go and the conversation with Wildly made him aware that Wildly was always gull-

After so many disappointments, he was hungry, he was fertilized, he didn’t know where
where Mr. Bones body is the ideal communication system to the outside world and where the senses act from the world to the knowledge, conscience and reason.

The language, the search for perfection or the trip to eternity are aspects that affects Mr. Bones as much as affects the Jewish writings and through his senses Mr. Bones is able to seize, to measure, to understand not only love, but necessary concepts as those of happiness, hate, beauty, pleasure or art.

Mr. Bones world is a world almost entirely perceived by the smell and learnt by experience, his life, and through his HOMOSAPIENSCNESS. So this perception is real enough, human, and even, intellectual and existential. Even animal, according to Auster, wonders if there’s life after death, which the limit between good and evil is or why a dog cannot be an angel or a god if the only thing, as Willy and Auster maintains that you have to do, is “to read the word dog the other way around”.

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