

KÖNIGS



ERLÄUTERUNGEN

und Materialien

ERFOLG
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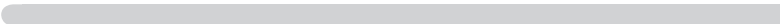


Interpretation zu
Paul Auster

Moon Palace
(in englischer Sprache)

C. Bange Verlag

Preface	5
1. Paul Auster: Life and works	6
1.1 Biography	6
1.2 Historical background	9
1.3 <i>Moon Palace</i> and other works by Paul Auster	14
2. Text analysis and interpretation	15
2.1 Genesis and Sources	15
2.2 Summary	18
2.3 Structure	43
2.3.1 Expository entry episode and final sequence	43
2.3.2 Main plot	45
2.3.3 Main plot and subplots	47
2.3.4 Structural elements	54
2.3.5 Leitmotifs	58
2.4 Character constellations and characteristics	68
2.5 Annotations	78
2.6 Styles and narrative	87
2.7 Approaches to <i>Moon Palace</i>	90
3. Topics and assignments	93
4. The Critics	95
5. Further Material	97
Literature	99



Preface

Paul Auster's novel *Moon Palace* was published in 1989. Marco Stanley Fogg's discovery of his heritage in a reality which is dominated by chance and experienced in fragments is the American author's most renowned work, along with his famous detective stories from the *New York Trilogy*. The reader is drawn into a diverse complex narrative consisting of reflections, biographies and allusions to historical and cultural-historical events and characters, with scenes from Wild West mythology and life in the metropolis of the East.

The purpose of this book is to facilitate an understanding of this work of contemporary American literature. It discusses the most important topics and structural principles and can be used either for additional background knowledge or as material in class. Given its rich diversity, particular emphasis has been placed hereby on the text analysis of *Moon Palace*. Complicated contexts are drawn together and are clarified in chart form (see chapter 1.3 and 2.3). The analysis is based on Faber and Faber's edition of *Moon Palace* (Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1990). Annotations can be found in chapter 2.5 and page numbers are cited to facilitate the understanding of the novel. Secondary literature is quoted in the footnotes. Finally, chapter 3 should enable the reader to put his/her comprehension of *Moon Palace* to the test.

1. Paul Auster: Life and works

1.1 Biography

Year	Place	Event	Age
1947	Newark, New Jersey	The writer and director Paul Benjamin Auster is born in Newark/ New Jersey on 3 rd February, the son of a middle class American family. His ancestors are Austrian Jews who immigrated to the USA around 1890. After his parents split in the mid-1960s, Paul and his sister live with their mother.	
1966	Travels through Europe	Following his graduation from High School in Newark Paul Auster travels to Europe (Paris, Spain, Dublin).	19
1966- 1970	New York	Auster studies English and Literature at Columbia University/ New York.	19- 23
1970		After graduating with an MA, he works as a sailor on an oil tanker.	23

Year	Place	Event	Age
1971-1974	Paris	Auster lives in France with his wife-to-be, Lydia Davis. He earns a living translating French lyrics as well as writing his own poetry.	24-27
1974-1980	New York	In 1974 Paul Auster returns to the USA with Lydia Davis. They marry on 6 th October 1974 and have a son, Daniel. Auster is given a teaching position at Columbia University and works as a translator and writer of French literature (<i>Blanchot, Dupin, Mallarmé, Sartre amongst others</i>). During this time, Auster writes foremost lyric poetry; <i>Unearth</i> (1974), <i>Wall Writing</i> (1976), <i>Facing the Music</i> (1980).	27-33
1981		After the end of his marriage to Lydia Davis, Auster meets the writer Siri Hustvedt (born in 1955, Minnesota) whom he marries in 1983. They have a daughter, Sophie.	34

1.1 Biography

Year	Place	Event	Age
1982		The autobiographical collections of essays are published: <i>The Inventions of Solitude</i> (1982) and <i>The Art of Hunger: Essays, Prefaces, Interviews</i> (1982).	35
1986-1990	New Jersey	Paul Auster starts a teaching position at Princeton University/ New Jersey. Additional work as a successful film-maker. During this time he writes the following novels: <i>The New York Trilogy</i> (1987), <i>In the Country of Last Things</i> (1987), <i>Moon Palace</i> (1989) and <i>The Music of Chance</i> (1990).	39-43
1995-1998	Brooklyn/ New York	Auster's screenplays <i>Smoke/Blue in the Face</i> (1995) and <i>Lulu on the Bridge</i> (1998) are released.	48-51
2005		The novel <i>The Brooklyn Follies</i> is published.	58
2006		Today, Paul Auster lives with his family in Brooklyn/New York. ¹	59

1 Cf. Paul Auster's homepage <http://www.paulauster.co.uk/> [August 2006] and http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Auster. [August 2006]

1.2 Historical background

The following summary gives an overview of the most important historical events against which the novel is set. This is intended to complement the reader's background knowledge, as well as to explain any unclear circumstances that may result from the subjective narrative of the first-person narrator².

The Vietnam War (1964-1975)

The Vietnam War is generally understood to be the deployment of the US military against the so-called Vietcong and the armed forces of North Vietnam between 1964 and 1975. However, the American mission in Vietnam really started in 1955 when a few US military advisors came to South Vietnam to support the government, which was under pressure from the Communist North of the country. North Vietnam was being supported at the time by the USSR and China. After Mao Tse-tung's victory in China, the US government, fearful that it might lose Vietnam to Communism (Domino effect theory), began supporting the South militarily as well as economically. The Communist resistance in South Vietnam responded by founding the *Front National de Liberation du Viet-nam Sud* (NLF, National Liberation Front of South Vietnam), the military wing of which was named *Việt Nam Công Sản* (Vietnamese Communists) or Vietcong. The Vietcong was at war with the government of South Vietnam and their army. Aware of the government's weak position and their lack of support from the predominantly rural population, the US government immediately increased their military aid.

2 For further study cf. e.g. Wasser, Hartmut (Hg.): *USA: Grundwissen – Länderkunde – Wirtschaft – Gesellschaft*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000, Coleman, William S.E., *Voices of Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), http://www.oberschulamt-freiburg.de/gym/faecher/english/engl_jae/auster/_start.htm [August 2006]