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English Language Literature and Civilization

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Investigating Trauma and Memory in Franz Kafka's  
*Letter to My Father* and Paul Auster's *The Invention of  
Solitude*

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## **Dedication**

Thanks to Allah

My Family

And,

The hopeless years gone by, and the unknowns to be arrived

The one who molded me with notions and the one whose words rescued me

Preciously to those for whom I pray every day

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## Abstract

Trauma has been theorized in the field of literature to explore the relationship between the wounded psyche and the dictated words through unfolding the uncanny of memory and time. Franz Kafka and Paul Auster are among the writers who manifested their childhood trauma through recollection and narrative. For instance, *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention of Solitude* reflected a set of confessions and a disturbing father-son relationship. The father's presence and absence had the deepest impact on both writers. Therefore, this dissertation is concerned with investigating the manifestation of trauma and memory in Franz Kafka's *Letter To My Father* and Paul Auster's *The Invention Of Solitude*, demonstrating their direct impact in shaping Auster's and Kafka's narratives. The purpose of the demonstrated research is to examine the impact of putting traumatic memories into words on the wounded psyche.

**Keywords:** Trauma theory, Memory, Franz Kafka, Paul Auster, *Letter To My Father*, *The Invention of Solitude*.

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## General Introduction

The Postmodern era is the age of agony, terror, and sadness which this has been perfectly manifested through community and reflected in its artistry. This last is communicated through trauma narrative. Thus, the concept of trauma attracted much literary studies' interest as it became a leading term in the present times and has been theorized in the field of literature. Trauma theory represents a critical approach that defines the suffering as a psychological wound induced by agonizing events, or the fear of hurtful happenings, that wounds the mind. And these wounds, like words, need to be understood and allow for new readings and interpretations. Since it has been affirmed that The World Wars and The Holocaust are considered to be the ultimate trauma happenings, they are the pioneers of trauma narrative history, as the survivors communicate their traumatic experiences through words reconfirming the firm relationship of trauma and literature since words gave a sort of relief from the wounded past. Therefore, the main concern of artistic trauma studies is the representations of trauma in the lives of the traumatic ones. Demonstrating the interconnection of trauma, memory and words, with investigating the narrative encouragement of healing from this sort of wound.

This last provoked the rise of memoirs, confessions, and testimonies which solidify trauma to memory through words. The act of trauma narrative through memoirs is fulfilled through the process of remembering and recollecting, thus representing a series of unfolded traumatic memories perfectly shaped in a number of pages. Yet, memory research has progressed from the idea of remembering as the retrieval and remembrance of faithfully preserve stable information, to seeing memory as a fluid and inventive process in which the memory is remade every time it is used. It operates in the present tense and discloses a past that has been rewritten in light of contemporary wants, anxieties, desires, and wishes.

Memory denotes a connection to the past that is molded by, and hence has a significant impact on how one think, feel, and live in the present. Thus, significant memories are recollected from childhood to the vivid day.

Depending on what have been discussed earlier, Franz Kafka and Paul Auster perfectly build their confessions and portray their narrative. Both authors experience childhood trauma within the arms of their families mainly their fathers, their traumatic upbringing manifests fictionally and none fictionally throughout their literary production, they manifest their wounds through recollecting childhood memories and articulating them in words. They are equally lost in the uncanny and alone in the crowded memory

Kafka, profoundly, lives in his nightmarish writings and within the dimension of his traumatic memories. In his *Letter To My Father*, he exposes the intimidated upbringing and the insignificant relationship he has with his father, as he refers to by the trial, the sentence, and the judgment. Similarly to Kafka, Auster's portrays throughout his first memoir *The Invention of Solitude* the disturbing relationship with his father, in which his father is a ghost in his life, who lives in his own solitary existence away from everyone yet, there for every task. Their confessions and memoirs are the essences of their artistry and a reference to each literary production.

The traumatic memory of a patriarch is the core of both works. In Kafka's *Letter To My Father* and Auster's, *The Invention of Solitude* trauma is the portrayal of agonizing torturous and wretched memories. The latter goes beyond mainly describing or recollecting trauma, yet embodies the traumatic self. The fathers' presence and absence has the deepest impact on both narratives, and once the memory becomes traumatic words it could be the way to heal the wounds. Therefore, this dissertation aims at answering the coming questions: How trauma is presented throughout the narration of *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude*? And how did trauma influence the narrative of Franz Kafka and Paul Auster? What

memory represents for both writers? And how the act of writing their memories saved them from their past?

For the purpose of satisfying this study, a trauma and autobiographical approach had been held. In which the writers' literary production and biography will be a case study in terms of impacting the composition of the concerned narratives. This research will depend on the literary materials in its favor, and library documents as well as the variety of books in the field of the research. An overall reading of Kafka's *Letter To My Father* and Auster's *The Invention of Solitude* shall be done.

This study aims at investigating the manifestation of traumatic memories in Franz Kafka's *Letter To My Father* and Paul Auster's *The Invention Of Solitude*, with demonstrating their direct impact in shaping Kafka's and Auster's artistry. The study also intends to highlight the different representation of memory for both writers. However, the main focus of this research is to investigate the role of writing in helping both writers overcoming their past.

This research is partitioned into three well-planned chapters that serve the significance of the study, a theoretical framework that thoroughly explains the illustration of trauma and memory in Postmodern narrative, and exemplifies the history of trauma literary theory, memory literary theme along with family and childhood trauma literary theme, as far as Postmodern literature is concerned. A biography of Franz Kafka and Paul Auster will be asserted since their life history is the resemblance of their trauma and the essence of their memory. Also, a brief summary of the intended narrative *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude* shall be discussed to end the chapter.

The second chapter will be a pure analysis of the representation of family and childhood trauma in Kafka's *Letter To My Father*, and Auster's *The Invention Of Solitude*, this chapter will discuss and analyze the traumatic events which are present in both works, along with depending on their different writings to demonstrate the influence of father-son

relationship on the different reconstructed plots, thus, how trauma impacts their narrative, and how this last is presented as merely a memory.

The last chapter is a dedicated examination of Kafka's and Auster's solitary memory, the role of articulating memories through notions and placing them in papers. Lastly, the chapter shall portray how Franz Kafka and Paul Auster understood the nature of their trauma by tracing their memories, and how memory provides them with an explanation, each with his words and narrative which in the end healed them both.

# Chapter One

## Trauma and Memory

## 1 Introduction

All happenings are portrayed in literary works and tied to the world through simple aesthetic notions as far as both literature and religion are concerned. There seems to be no reason to suspect that agonizing ecos have been a part of human challenges since the dawn of time. Trauma existed since the human first existence and "From the beginning of time, trauma, which can be experienced in various forms, is ascribed to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from heaven (The Garden of Eden) to earth." (Art as Narrative: Recounting Trauma through Literature 120) in accordance with the Quranic and Biblical narrations of men's growth, their shocking and unexpected heartbreak left them traumatized.

All human occurrences are recollected through remembrance and generally reflected by the literary narrative to tell the shady details of history and surface the memorial. Trauma has been theorized in the field of sciences long ago, only soon it has been a theory in the stream of literature by Cathy Caruth and Geoffrey Hartman in relation to memory studies in Postmodern narrative. This chapter will discuss the demonstration of trauma and memory in literary studies, the history of trauma as a literary theory, and memory as a literary theme in the shades of Postmodern narrative with literary references such as *The Cage* (1986) by Ruth Minsky Sender, *Le Manteau Noir* (1998) by Chantal Chawaf and *A Thousand Acres* (1991) by Jane Smiley. The chapter will tackle family and childhood trauma with regard to Postmodern literature, Mary Shelley's *Mathilda* (1819) and Toni Morrison's *God Help The Child* (2015) will be mentioned as far as childhood and family trauma is concerned, in accordance with a biography of the childhood trauma novelists and Jewish references Franz Kafka and Paul Auster. Simultaneously, a brief summary of their works, *Letter to my Father* (1959) and *The Invention of Solitude* (1982) shall be explored to end the chapter.

## 1.2 Trauma and memory in Postmodern narrative

The concept of trauma became a focus in Postmodern narrative history in relation to memory, which played a major role in conceptualizing trauma as a literal theory. To draw the difference, trauma theme in literature claim to create a distorted and destroyed personality and identity, whereas, trauma theory in literature studied the direct relationship between the wound and the produce words. Fundamentally, trauma is a fixed wound by involuntary flashbacks and through reliving the traumatic events through memories. Hence, the shift of trauma culture in Postmodern literature can be traced back to the events of that period mainly World War II and the holocaust. As Chris Brewin observes, the dramatic shift in attitudes toward trauma is contingent on "the sheer amount of exposure through the media to the realities of the war, the Holocaust, childhood abuse, and other telling examples of horror and cruelty" (Posttraumatic 221). Furthermore, In Postmodern literature, traumatic occurrences are constantly resurfaced through experienced remembrances. The latter makes trauma and memory connect and normatively portrayed as two interdependent theories. As Susannah Redstone argues that the obsession with memory in the context of both trauma and postmodernism should be seen as interrelated:

Trauma theory is associated with the 'turn to memory' in history as well as in the humanities more generally; Postmodernism's problematizations of grand narratives, objectivity, universality and totality prompted a turn to memory's partial, local and subjective narratives (Redstone 81).

Furthermore, Cathy Caruth English literature professor at Culler University and the developer of trauma theory in literature, in her seminal (1995) collection of essays *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* can be marked as the beginnings of Postmodern literary trauma and memory studies, by focusing on the interaction of trauma and memory away from the Freudian psychological diagnosis.

Also, Caruth's injury hypothesis may be a pivotal point of reference, since she employs injury to characterize a specific notion of history that has emerged within the Postmodern age. She reconceptualizes history as, basically, a "history of trauma" and as a history decided by "indirect referentiality" (Unclaimed 18). This last has been affirmed through the different fictional and non-fictional narrative by the pens of number of writers. As it has been demonstrated through Anne Michaels's piece of narration *Fugitive Pieces* (1996), it tells the Holocaust horrors and its agonizing heritage through two devoted sections. Furthermore, Anne Michael explores the sadness of the traumatic Jewish history, mainly in connection with the Holocaust and the World War, with exploring the Jewish memory and manifesting it all in pages.

Moreover, Silke Arnold-de Simine investigates how comprehending trauma necessitates a particularly intimate engagement with memory concerns, and how, as a result, many of the questions posed by trauma studies overlap with those raised by memory studies.

Like trauma, memory involves past events – more correctly, interpretations and representations of those events – that profoundly impact how we live in the present. Like trauma, memory is inveterately connected with identity. (Trauma and Literature, Trauma and Memory 9)

Therefore, traumatic events are linked to history and memory in the context of trauma theory, the concept of trauma as a temporal disturbance, breaking or fracturing our existence narratives. Postmodern history arose from the Jews traumatic events and distorted reality, due to the aftermath of WW2 and the holocaust. Thus, as the holocaust survivor and writer Ruth Minsky Sender unfolds in her devoted memoirs, *The Cage* (1986), and *The Holocaust Lady* (1999) how the Jewish historical memories are formed through the events of the holocaust and the religious division, Ruth Minsky narrates how her traumatic past haunts her present day and night dreams.

### 1.2.1 History of Trauma as a Postmodern literary theory

Presented by Cathy Caruth and critics such as Geoffrey Hartman and Shoshanna Felman, the literary trauma theory is developed to be the responses to traumatic events and experiences taking into consideration the cognitive chaos and expected division of consciousness as the traumatic experience and memory side effects. As Michele Balaev notes in his book *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* (2014):

The field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained significant attention in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Early scholarship shaped the initial course of literary trauma theory by popularizing the idea of trauma as an unrepresentable event. A theoretical trend was introduced by scholars like Caruth, who pioneered a psychoanalytic poststructural approach that suggests trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language. (Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered 11)

Thus, artistic trauma is largely concerned with the savagery and outrage not only of the traumatic events and horrific tale, but also for the realism of a horrific experience that cannot be carried within a plain mind and left to be articulated through narrative. Since traumatic events occur over time, trauma history is at the forefront of writing. Furthermore, Dominick La Capra the American historian explains in his article entitled *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001). That "Trauma and its often symptomatic aftermath pose serious issues for historical representation and understanding,"(1).

Additionally, Geoffrey Hartman literary critic and the co-founder of *The Fortunoff Video Archives for The Holocaust Testimonies* (1978), *Trauma within the Limits of Literature*

that: "trauma study in the arts explores the relation between psychic wounds and significance"(Hartman 81), which gave the trauma studies in literature a further confirmation. He further asserts that "As a specifically literary endeavor trauma study explores the relation of words and wounds. Its main focus is on words that wound, and presumably can be healed, if at all, by further words"(Hartman 65). Conveniently, in his book *Wounds and Words* (1981) Geoffrey Hartman expresses the significance of trauma narration for the distorted ones. The last is deeply communicated by Trezza Azzopardi's in her novella *The Hiding Place* (2000). The writer portrays guilt and suffers at its fines, she further confirms the healing abilities of notions, through the act of remembering and writing the terrorizing past.

To exemplify, Ruth Minsky in her Biography *The Cage* (1986) lived through the wounds and horrors of the Holocaust to recall her traumatic experiences at the Ghetto camp through writing, which helped saving her humanity and maintaining her sanity. Yet, her trauma still visits her in nightmares causing a disturbance, as Kali Tal writes in *Worlds of Hurt* (1996) "Accurate representation of trauma can never be achieved without recreating the event since, by its very definition, trauma lies beyond the bounds of "normal conception" (15). Therefore, trauma studies overall examination is upon the effect of trauma in literature by analyzing its psychological, cultural significance, and the relationship between the wounded psychic and its produced narration. Thus, Memoirs, testimonials, and confessionals have grown in popularity in recent decades, paralleling the growing interest in the intersection of memory, trauma, and literature.

Moreover, Terdiman asserts that memory is "the present past" (Present 8), more accurately, the past is something that cannot be said to exist separately from the presence of the individual consciousness that has a sense of it, the past can be singular or collective event shared remembrance or a certain memory that have a deep impact on the characters' current

lives. As Ruth Sender recounts in her memoir *To Life* (1988) after, at last, freedom her memory is held hostage by the past through reliving and reacting to each flashback. Writing was no longer a mean of expressing trauma, yet a mean to bleed and ease the burden of the memory in words, for the hope of finding peace.

### 1.2.2 History of Memory as a Postmodern Literary theme

Headed by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, memory studies emerged closely linked to that of the Holocaust and its implications. Thus, the early studies of memory by Halbwachs, the field founder, (Lustiger Thaler 2009) emphasize the notion of "collective memory". In addition, Robyn Fivush through the development of autobiographical memory and narrative affirms that "concept of collective memory has changed the way in which researchers in both the social sciences and the humanities understand what it means for individuals and groups to remember" (Fivush 78). Too, in his book *La Memoire Collective* (1950) Halbwachs serves the significance of the "group memory", conceptualizes the memoirs that are shared, witnessed and participated by a group of community or society, and stresses upon the individual's memories within the vast praxis of the group.

Although memory, or better yet, the act of remembering, is fundamentally an individual phenomenon, he emphasized it is always dependent on social structures. We participate in a collective symbolic order which provides us with cognitive schemata, concepts of time and space and thought patterns with which we interpret and remember past events. (Mandolessi, *Cultural Memory* 1).

Furthermore, as Lovro Skopljanac affirms in his book *Literature through Recall: Ways of Connecting Literary Studies and Memory Studies* (2012), that the eloquence of memory studies in literature expresses itself in their interrelationship. Memory is introduced through historical narrative, "The desire for narratives of the past, for re-creations, re-readings,

reproductions"(Present Pasts 5). Too, Andreas Huyssen argues that the evolution of a postmodern society "was praised as a new step beyond the moment "and into a society "haunted by memory" (Trauma 18). Therefore, this adaptation of memory focuses on the witness's memories, emphasizing subjectivity and personal experience. This is in line with a trauma culture that is concerned with the moment, the testimony, and the victim.

Although the Holocaust and WW2 are not distant historical events, survivors are still among the living to narrate the tale, memoirs as *Rescued from The Ashes* (2019) the diary of Leokadia Schmidt and *The Dead Years* (2017) by Joseph Schupack, Holocaust and WW2 survivors decide to tell their terrifying testimony as victims of the World War who have witnessed the horrors and have endured to recollect their terrifying stories. Thus, the essence of memory is covered through the process of remembering, forgetting, and recollecting. However, Memory studies have progressed beyond the concept of remembering as the retrieval and remembrance of accurately preserved stable information, depicting memory as a fluid and inventive process in which the memory is remade each time it is recollecting. Accordingly narrates, Leon Kleiner among the few Holocaust survivors through decades he could not find the strength to recount his frightening survival story in depth for decades, for what it takes the memory to remember and relive the events in the present, like many others authors Kleiner finds solace in words to articulate his memories.

Arguably, memory operates in a constant present, revealing a past that has been modified in accordance to contemporary wants, anxieties, aspirations, and wishes. (Trauma and Memory 140). For instance, Silke Arnold de Simine explains that "Memory indicates a relationship to past events that is shaped by, and in turn profoundly impacts, how we think, feel, and live in the present."(Trauma and Memory 140). Thus, memories are generally introduced through historical narrative, "The desire for narratives of the past, for re-creations, re-readings, reproductions"(Present Pasts 5). Andreas Huyssen argues that the evolution of a

postmodern society "was praised as a new step beyond the moment "and into a society "haunted by memory" (Trauma 18). Accordingly, ST Augustine throughout his *Confessions* (397- 400AD) emphasis on the memory as a sort of imagination a reflection of the soul, Augustine states in *Confessions* 10 that memory is the component of the soul that allows us to have any kind of awareness, whether it is perceptual awareness, soul, or divinity. He also asserts that memory includes the mind and the soul. Moreover, he provides a theoretical guide for the treatment of memory thus, helping treating the soul and revising its history. This last is considered through the narration of the Parisian writer and feminist Chantal Chawaf's *Le Manteau Noir* (1998), the protagonist embraces her past memorial to unfold her present and overcome her childhood trauma. The writer's highly exercised themes are communicating the act of writing through recollecting past memories allow the senses to be partly healed.

Last but not least, the recollection of each memory recalls the happenings from that last memory and back to the first one. Most memories are factored through the childhood phase the first enthusiastic feeling and the first regretful expressions, the onset of all reactions the infant experiences are indeed raising the child's rational and creative production consciously and unconsciously, *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) the biography of the Jewish child Anne Frank as she writes her daily journal in the Ghetto camp during WW2 hiding with her family for several years. Hence, the bleeding childhood psyche can affect the maturity and up bring wounded generation from within the arms of families.

### **1.3 Family and Childhood Trauma as a Postmodern Literary Theme**

Childhood and the family emerge as prominent theme exploring sexual abuse, incest and domestic violence in Postmodern fiction. More importantly, the examination of childhood trauma from the child's standpoint and from the adult's standpoint, surviving the trauma as individuals is crucially shaped by their familial setting. These narratives are deeply concerned with the wounded psyche of their protagonists and the production of the traumatic past for

instance Autodiegetic narration emphasizes on the individual's life-story and psyche. As the Spanish writer and narrator Rafael Blanco Novoa describes in his short story "*My Brother*" (2001). Rafael Novoa narrates the tale of his twin brother, who his mother clearly adored the most. This last was confirmed in the accident where his twin past away, and the mother shouted Rafael's name instead. Thus, traumatizing the writer who felt it was him who died that day, and yet his brother lived forever with his neglected mother. He narrates his self and childhood in a short tale with a few vivid plots.

Therefore, in Postmodernism, the concern with childhood and the family can also be traced back to be as a part of general cultural interest in subjectivity, self-narration and life writing. Therefore, trauma narrative tends to be profoundly political, often giving a voice to the oppressed and calling attention to wounds that have been hidden under the grand narratives of history and to pain and suffering that has been ignored (Schönfelder). Depending on what has been argued, Toni Morrison the Nobel Prize winner for literature (1993) exposes in her latest artistic pieces *God Help The Child* (2015) the Contemporary realistic society. She introduced concepts as child neglect, internalized colorization and mainly number of childhood traumas through different characteristics whether black or white, children were killed, neglected and abused by relatives.

Consequently, the inspirational writer Jane Smiley vividly interprets in her Shakespearian-inspired novel and complementary plot, *A Thousand Acres* (1991) Smiley explores through the Postmodern rewriting of Shakespeare's *King Lear* the father-daughter relationship. Smiley's reinvention of Shakespeare's classic alters the original story's father-daughter storyline, recasting the two elder daughters as victims of familial mistreatment. The daughters are trauma victims striving to come to terms with their chaotic familial background and current life within the family, not cold-blooded pelican daughters. Moreover, Christa Schönfelder affirms in her book *Wounds And Words* (2013) that the novel reacts to one of the

most ferocious disputes in trauma history, the "Memory Wars," which focused on whether rebounded trauma memories should be viewed as dependable and true or as unreliable, manufactured, or perhaps even fake.

Furthermore, Geoffrey H. Hartman expresses "despite the miracle of maturation, adults do not overcome that childhood phase"(On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies 3). It is surely not the accountability of the historical acts nor has it been framed before human creation, "rather creation itself is the catastrophe"(New literary History 538), the newcomers fall into a world of postwar and psychologically damaged generation through endless trauma resulting in a convoluted childhood and bitter reality, written as the history of mankind " helping us to "read the wound" with the aid of literature"(New Literary History 537).

Annelies Marie Frank the well-known Holocaust victim, the young writer who lived through her writings and narrated the sad reality of the events of WW2 from a Jewish child perspective, her *The Diaries of A Young Girl* (1947) became the world's most famous diaries, she found hope and solace with her pen. Anna's only fault that meant to be born in a chaotic creation.

After all, to comprehend the nature of one's traumatic event, one's life must be examined from childhood to adulthood, an important aspect in which literary studies tend to prioritize the role of the human mind evolution through the years and events such as physical and moral treatment to identify the placement of the trauma, Childhood is considered to be the fundamental part when it comes to the human psychic and sanity, as argued in *An Inquiry into the Human Psyche*. As argued in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Mental Derangement* (1798):

Should also be able to take a calm and clear view of every cause which tends to affect the healthy operations of mind, and to trace their effects, He should be able to go back to childhood, and see how the mind is

modeled by instruction. (*An Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Mental Derangement* 561)

Similar to Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1991), Mary Shelley in her novella *Mathilda* (1819) ominously states that the work is about the cherished monuments of a devastated girl on the edge of death. She writes her tragic history, a tale of mystical terrors. The protagonist's tale is among many traumas, fatal repetition, and endless cycles of pain. The early loss of her mother, a tragic and lonely childhood, an incestuous father-daughter connection, and her father's suicide are defining events in the life of Mathilda, the autodiegetic narrator of this fictional memoir. Mary Shelley discusses throughout the narration and construction of the plot and characters the history of manufacturing childhood trauma. It also investigates the impact that trauma on the functionality of the mind and identity. Thus, the fictional memoir portrays the manifestation of parental loss and absence. This last is the core of Paul Auster's narrative.

Paul Auster's first major work a memoir entitled *The Invention of Solitude* (1982) explores the sanity of his father through his legacy after his sudden death, by remembering his and his father's childhood in order to answer a family mystery. The latter, at last, was managed by Paul Auster's grandparents. Thus, Traumatized child's narrative establishes a tradition of the childhood trauma narrative throughout the American literature (*Childhood Trauma and the imagination in American Literature* 6) and is fostered by the holocaust studies.

In closing, traumatic childhood guides the words of most Postmodern writers, from the works of the American enigmatic literary figure Paul Auster narrates his traumatic childhood in his memoir, to Franz Kafka who had a strong influence on Paul Auster.

## 1.4 Biography of Franz Kafka and Paul Auster

### 1.4.1 Franz Kafka

Born in Prague July 3rd 1883, Franz Kafka is one of the greatest writers of the Twentieth century, considered the foremost vital exposition author of the so-called Prague Circle, a freely weave gather of German-Jewish journalists who contributed to the socially ripe soil of Prague amid the 1880s until after World War I. However from the Czech point of see, Kafka was German, and from the German's he was, over all, Jewish. He shared the destiny of much of Western Jewry individuals who were generally liberated from their particularly Jewish ways and however not completely acclimatized into the culture of the nations where they lived. In addition to his German, Jewish and Czech heritages, there is also the Austrian element into which Kafka has been born and brought up into.

He owes a great deal of his recurring themes of human alienation to Prague and his experiences as a social outsider, a victim of tensions between Czechs and Germans, Jews and non-Jews. To appreciate Kafka, it's necessary to understand that the environment of medieval mysticism and Jewish orthodoxy persisted in Prague until after World War 2, when the communist state began to eradicate most of its remains. This is strongly implicated in most of his timeless and unique masterpieces like *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926). Kafka's personal grief and issues reflected upon his narrative. *The Metamorphosis* (1915) in which Franz Kafka introduces Gregor Samsa's adapting his life far from the betterment of his loving ones, breaking out the norms of reality as being rejected and demonized for it mainly by his family, Gregor's transformation is a metaphor for how his loved ones treated him, Franz Kafka found a part and an experience of himself in Gregor Samsa. The latter helped him to express his family alienation caused by his emotionally abusive, narcissistic and hypocritical father Hermann Kafka. Franz Kafka articulated it all in none surpass 100 pages entitled

*Letter To My Father* (1959) which his mother never delivered to Hermann Kafka, the latter is the closest narrative of his to be an autobiography of the very difficult life and the very bright afterlife of Franz Kafka.

### 1.4.2 Paul Auster

Paul Benjamin Auster was born in February the 2<sup>nd</sup> 1947 in Newark, New Jersey, for Queenie (born Bogat) and Samuel Auster, Jewish middle-class parents of Polish origin, he attended Columbia High School in Malplewood and grew up in South and Newark, New Jersey. He spent four years in France after graduating from Columbia University. He has been publishing poems, essays, novels, and translations since 1974.

Influenced by Kafka, Jack Darida and Fydor Dostoevsky, Paul Auster is regarded as America's best known postmodern author for his well known works, *The New York Trilogy* (1985), *Brooklyn Follies* (2005) and *Moon Palace* (1989). Despite the long list of his literary pieces, the preface of each work never contained lots of biographical facts, it says little about the American author whose existence, he believes, is directed by chance. Reading Paul Auster's literary work is all it takes to gain a complete picture of him. Auster's life is revealed in his fictions, translations, essays, and even films. each tale Auster writes reveals a few incidents from his background.

Auster's father sudden death in 1979 caught him on the verge of financial and emotional collapse. He was suffering from writer's block, was in the midst of a failing marriage, and had a newborn son named Daniel. Auster was suddenly floating instead of drowning, owing to the little inheritance that came on the heels of his father's death, Auster expressed that "For the first time in my life I had the time to write, to take on long projects without worrying how I was going to pay the rent. It's a terrible equation, finally to think that my father's death saved my life." *The Invention of Solitude* (1982) became his debut memoir and the reference of each literary work he published, his memoir was a touching search for

his father's identity along his. Exposing the father son unemotional relationship, the book served as a guide to Paul Auster's narrative, through his father's legacy.

## **1.5 Summary of *Letter to My Father* and *The Invention of Solitude***

### **1.5.1 Letter to My Father**

*Letter to my Father (Dearest Father)* is a letter written by Franz Kafka, who was 36 years old at the time, to his father, Hermann Kafka, who was 67 years old at the time (Kafka 1966). It is a son's response to his father's queries about why Kafka maintained that he was terrified of him (Kafka 1966). It is a document that began as a letter, which his father never actually received, but grew into a manuscript of more than 50 pages.

The text examines the factors that lead to the estrangement and enmity between father and son. Kafka travels back in time to his childhood and adolescence. While attempting to avoid directly blaming his father and instead considering his father's perspective and understanding his actions in the context of his temperament and origins, the writer asserts that his father shaped him into the person he is today a weak, insecure individual with a strong sense of guilt, shame, and inferiority.

The letter is an emotional outburst, and Kafka's attempt to remain fair and unbiased gives way to heartfelt insights. His claim is that his father's tyranny and persecution rendered him a person incapable of marrying and becoming a father. *Letter to My father* (1959) is considered to be the ultimate example for childhood traumatic memories and served as an autobiography for Franz Kafka.

### **1.5.2 The Invention of Solitude**

Paul Auster's first major work, *The Invention of Solitude*, was published in (1982), at the very beginning of his literary career. This unclassifiable work, based on an autobiographical experience, mingles the key topics that the American writer has indeed dealt

with via his writings. As an outcome, loss, writing, reading, and remembering take center stage in this long personal narrative, ushering the reader into a fractured universe where language's very utility is called into doubt. This work is divided into two parts, the first of which is titled:

### **1.5.2.1 Portrait of an Invisible Man**

In regard to Auster's recently departed father, Samuel Auster, the first piece is a meditation on the nature of absence. Stating that He had been missing even before his death, and the individuals closest to him had learnt to accept this absence long before. Auster uses his father's faults as a father to justify his own life and relationship with his own son, reconstructing his father's life from objects he has left behind.

### **1.5.2.2 The Book of Memory**

The second piece is a genuine thought, a profound study on the topics of paternity and memory. *The Invention of Solitude* is far more than an autobiographical work; it explores the various ties that the narrator, who is easily identifiable as Auster himself, had both with a father whose pervasive absence is constantly alluded to and with a son who grew up apart from his father due to his parents' divorce. Absence provides the framework for the writer's long tale, which, as the title suggests, leads to the formation of his own solitude. Whilst Auster's portrayal as "A." makes *The Book of Memory* appear less autobiographical than *Portrait of an Invisible Man*, it is his personal depiction of concepts and feelings and contains ties to his life.

## 1.6 Conclusion

As it has been portrayed trauma narrative is introduced through the horrors and misfortune of Postmodernism, recollected through pieces of the memory and eventually explored through the inherited literature. Trauma is a prominent theory in psychology equally to literature depending on its literary importance. The theory manifests the wounded psyche through analyzing the wounded words. It also studies the influence of the trauma on the produced narrative, and the effect of the writing the wounds on the psyche. Artistic trauma is retrieved through recollecting memories and organized through words, thus confirming the direct relationship between memory and words as it has been exemplified during the chapter with the different literary references, and through the explanation of Franz Kafka and Paul Auster's work.

Traumatic memory narrative represents Franz Kafka's and Paul Auster's suffering, horrors and deep implicit thoughts and wounds. Mainly, in their devoted works *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude*. Thus, their childhood memory and disturbing fathers are mirrored upon their different writings, articulating their memories launch their artistry and closed their Pandora's Box through sharing their trauma in words. They live inside the father memorial which manifests consciously and unconsciously in their writings, each significant agony is perfectly written tale, since Franz Kafka and Paul Auster haven't only shared religion or literature, they shared unemotional fathers who bittered their childhood and distorted their futures at once.

# **Chapter Two**

Present trauma, absent trauma

## 2 Introduction

Most beings are petrified from confronting the inner unknowns and diving into the darkness of the soul to review their memories and do their justice. The self only counts its agonizing memorial, which the infant's memory couldn't process or dissolve. Franz Kafka and Paul Auster blessed their childish terrorizing memory through confessions and narrations. They manifested their trauma gladly with the help of their disturbing fathers. The father-son alarming relationship is the prominent ground of their writings and a reference to each plot they create. Both writers clearly were influenced by their childhood trauma and their adulthood agony.

It was Kafka who created the whole new genre of nightmarish artistry. His narrative is disturbingly difficult as he serves reflection and contradiction, complication and explanation, sympathy and apathy all at once. Kafka's literary production is merely a reflection upon his traumatic childhood and solitary youth together as he confesses in his *Letter to My Father*. Influenced by the Kafkaesque literariness, Paul Auster invaded the self to testify the meaning of the absolute truth and reason. His novel *The Invention of Solitude* is a bear witness of his childhood trauma, and acts as the oyster of his narrative.

This chapter will discuss the patterns in which childhood trauma is presented in both works. Also the chapter will interpret the impact of traumatic memories on Kafka's and Auster's narrative. The last will be exemplified through the writers' various works and such as *The Trial* (1925), *The metamorphosis* (1919) by Franz Kafka, and *Moon Palace* (1989), *The New York Trilogy* (1985) by Paul Auster. Most importantly the significance behind sharing their wounds in words shall be questioned to end this chapter.

## 2.2 Trauma from a present father in *Letter to My Father*

The totalitarianism in *The Castle* (1926), the family conflict in *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and the injustice in *The Trial* (1925) act as the fictional aspect of Franz Kafka's upbringing, not until his prominent letter that elucidates the works. Agony rules the most of Kafka's narrative; the traumatic father son relationship is manifested past an actual letter he addressed to his father explaining how come he is frightened from his patriarch father and to question his prejudice authority, he further more succeeds in connecting the fragmented portrays of a Devine incomprehensible parental attitude in his *Letter to My Father* (1959) originally written in (1919) and dissolves the image of his terrorizing father on the stands of his live, upbringing, occupation, existentialism and marriage.

Kafka confessions throughout the letter resembled his sad father-son relationship. While Kafka's relationship with his father may be the root of his inner alienation, he asserts a number of facts that conveniently serve as key themes in his fictional stories such as the authoritarian parents, inheritance and its responsibilities, the notion of sacrifice, gratitude, and guilt. The father's oppression bloomed in an anxious child and an isolated writer who only produce wounded words. Franz Kafka's infancy was characterized by ill-treatment and unexplainable agony, the act of writing his childhood memories made Kafka a bear witness to his own trauma.

The letter starts with ailing Kafka hovering over hollow sheets replying his father the reasons behind his terror "you asked me recently why I claim to be afraid of you. I did not know, as usual, how to answer, partly for the very reason that I am afraid of you"(1). Kafka addresses his father with the argument to his fear of being timidly unable to answer that as well, perhaps because of Hermann's impotent communication, or his egotistical sense of self which prevented Kafka from plating it all in face. Kafka's relationship with his father is

governed by domination, oppression and dictatorship, the feelings which are dictated through his words. He expresses how his father lords even upon his bound with his paper.

The use of the word "claim" interprets Hermann's ego towards his son who knew his father won't take his confessions grievously. Imperiously Hermann tyrannizes his son from his early upbringing for the fact that he was brought up in a financially comfortable family, His father guilted him into feeling selfless and worthless as a man and most importantly as a son. Thus betraying frantically his childhood as he further asserts " you reproach me as if it were my fault, as if I might have been able to arrange everything differently with one simple change of direction, while you are not in the slightest to blame, except perhaps for being too good to me"(2). The father son disturbed image is portrayed through Goerg *The judgment* (1913) and Gregor *The Metamorphosis* (1919) in which both narratives sketch the fictional representation of Franz's authoritarian relationship with a God like father, Heinz Politzer asserts that "In both narrations the father-son relationship is described with much psychoanalytical acidity, increased, almost beyond endurance, by the superhuman dimensions of the father figures."( Politzer 165).

Franz Kafka blames his father for what he came to be under such an influence of his, he writes "I would have been happy to have you as a friend, as a boss, an uncle, a grandfather, even indeed as a father in law. It is only as a father that you were too strong for me"(4). Considering Kafka's poor health, weaken body and mostly his depressed nature, Hermann Kafka is strong, tall and vigorous, he appears to be a source of insecurities and agony which he used smartly in manipulating Franz, uniquely when he is the only son preceding the death of his brothers a conflict where he feels doomed before merely intending being a part of. Illustrating Gregor's father in *The Metamorphosis* (1919) and him as an insect is the inferno and alienation kafka lives through in the relationship with his father, he seems to artistically shape his struggles in his narrative.

Mostly the danger is taken on the part of Kafka for being the fresh odd comer, who supposes to follow the father's steps and act accordingly. Yet, as he asserts "you, by contrast, a true Kafka in strength, health, appetite, loudness of voice, eloquence, self satisfaction, worldly superiority, stamina, presence of mind, understanding of human nature"(4).

Describing his father in more than ten lines one can only assume the fault of an inferior son, who felt timidly unworthy of any attention. Hermann is evidently ashamed of his own creation, but what an infant could ever wish for besides caring parents, this is what Gregor Samsa displays concerning the wound he feels towards his father, Kafka wishes for kindness instead of terror as he states "could have used a little encouragement in those days, a kind remark"(11). The atmosphere which Hermann couldn't possibly provide "I cannot believe that you, by directing a friendly word my way, by quietly taking my hand or giving me a kind look, could not have got everything you wanted from me"(5). Kafka is clearly eager to a close to normal father son relationship, but all what he is assigned with is a traumatizing, frightening and stricken father figure to cope with, the most damaging story as he remember when he constantly asks for water, but the father lifted him to the balcony with a locked door in a nightshirt. The incident which made damaged him the most left the thin, powerless, rejected son with amount of constant sense of guilt to grow up with, and leads Kafka to illustrate the image the nightmarish father with whom he could never get along with.

The little Kafka embraces the crucial sense of alienation and anxiety through his short life, his mother is a slave like woman to an abusing, emotionally never physically, husband. In a strict Jewish society patriarchy, obedience and "ultimate authority"(7). Is fundamental in marriages, the mother thus couldn't help her child, who in return considers her as a sympathetic follower, manifesting, unconsciously interjected terrors of both parents, evidently he felt as a burden and unworthy. Unambiguously the father acts as the malevolent force, Erich Fromm declares that "His conflicted childhood—dominated by a powerful father

and a submissive mother, traumatized by the birth and death of two brothers before he was five years old"(Literature And Psychoanalysis 257). The suffering is shared by all, but the degree of influence varied, Kafka by being the oldest carries the burden.

The controlling father couldn't give his son support with the simplest thing he showed interest in "you only to encourage me in something when it engages your interest, when your own self-esteem is at stake, threatened"(8). It seems that Selfishness blinds the father. He builds a family and a business with embracing an attitude with his threatening character he simply terrorized family and workers. Hermann admires only himself, narcissism is planted in him as he influences fear in all people surrounding him, and he is empowered by shaking the helpless entities just to feel the firmness of his it is hardly sensible that the letter is intended for the eyes of Hermann Kafka, it is a confrontation of all what went down.

The letter represents each traumatic memory Kafka held on his father's obligations. As an example the table manners which he commands them to follow, due to his narcissistic self the haunted memories of that table manner didn't seem to interest Franz it is the frightening authority which remains consistent, as Cathy Caruth notes "the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will "(Trauma: Exploitations in Memory 2). Thus, the memory of authoritarian father manifested itself as a vital sense of fear, alienation and selflessness effecting Kafka's relationship with his father resulting in tyranny, It seems that Hermann's scarring threats and The lost of words and speech is precisely illustrated through the wounded childhood. This drives a direct comparison to Gregor Samsa who turns into a vermin which initiates a process of dehumanization starting with losing the ability to speak, he crawls to his room alone until death knocks on his door.

The letter recounts how the father treats his stuff. The father with his stuff is the same at home, Kafka's memory of the family business as he asserts "came to torment me and

embarrass me"(28). It seems that he never let go of the frightening feeling. Geoffrey H. Hartman adds that "despite the miracle of maturation, adults do not overcome that childhood phase."(On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies 3). Thus, it appears that Kafka didn't grow up he paused through childhood all of his life, and through his writings since it reflects his reality. Kafka's memory of unhealthy parental experience frequently manifest in his fictional works, each artistic character is implicitly embracing the actual Kafka's identity. "An identity with which he struggled, according to Anz"(Hannah and Richard Stokes 2008).

Kafka's dark and traumatic artistry, with all its parts, is a reflection of his own suffering. Cathy Caruth argues that the traumatic event must be written and communicated with words, "if the traumatic experience cannot fully assimilated at its inception or in its subsequent remembrance/repetition, it can and must be spoken in a language that is always somehow literary"(Caruth 5). Franz Kafka unfolds the childish agony to articulate his tale, the occupation which his imperious father refuses, thus he escapes his trauma through exiling his father as he writes "I ran away from everything that even remotely reminded me of you" (27). As if Kafka didn't want anything that reminded him with his father even what it is called family. It sounds that the overwhelming relationship he had with his father had the deepest impact on his relationship with others, mostly woman, as he never maintained a relationship with a woman.

Franz Kafka blames his father on his marriage failure, after three doomed engagements, Kafka is unable of maintaining a healthy female company. He developed a sense unworthiness and darkness that he couldn't feel worthy of being admired or loved, the last is merely is among the unfortunate results of the frightening childhood he experienced, "all the negative forces in me that I described are resulting in part from the way you brought me up, and that raised a barrier between me and marriage"(53). He was genuinely haunted by the idea of growing with the same attitude as his father's, and repeating the same mistakes for his

children and carrying his trauma along through history, he didn't accept the idea of serving his pain to another one.

Kafka's fear and intense guilt towards his father escalated into intense paranoia towards him being a parent. Just as if by marrying his significant other and escaping that tyrannical childhood, thus leading Kafka experiencing fatherhood and most likely maintain Hermann's attitude, which he wouldn't dare to wish upon any child of his. He further asserts that "Marriage represents just such a potential danger"(65). Kafka realized considering marriage as a sort of annihilation for his father is unconsciously leading him to his nightmarish childhood. Kafka found himself again under the influence of inheriting parental agony, under the unmanageable youth curse.

The traumatic memories of an agonizing father destroyed any chance of being a partner or a father for that matter, Kafka believes that he made everyone in his company unfortunate and unhappy, he choose to be alienated and exiled as a repercussion of the father/son relationship he lived through. It seems that he didn't trust himself with other people because the frightening anxious child in him ever grows up to forget the nightmarish upbringing. Kafka confesses to his most prominent fiancé in their letters, "I am spiritually ill, my lung disease is nothing but an overflowing of my spiritual disease"(Letter to Milena 22). The same for his previous fiancée Felice, Kafka's indecision and uneasiness over Felice can be seen in a random selection of entries from his diary. Receiving multiple letters from her begging her to forget about him because he would only make her unhappy since he is "anxious, hesitant, suspicious"(61). Clearly Kafka, the scared enfant is constantly chasing what he knew he can't have.

Kafka dreamed of development and sublimation of his existence through marriage. The latter is an exile for Kafka as he confesses in his letter " in reality, however, my attempts at marriage turned out to be my most hopeful and spectacular attempts to escape you and

correspondingly their failure was every bit as spectacular"(53). Hopelessly, Kafka was trying to escape his trauma, thus his father, through finding someone who shows himself appreciation gives him love and affection, yet he couldn't overcome his darkness and fierce sense of guilt.

Franz kafka came to realize he couldn't equal the hypocritical subjecting father either through business or through founding a family. His life bleeds into each literary output; he simply found a third dimension in writing, besides his and his father's, where solace is. As he writes "Your loathing dealt a heavier blow to my writing and everything that, even unknown to you, was related to it"(46). Hermann Kafka didn't give any importance to his son's writing career, for him being isolated alone with books and words is as absurd as his son's upbringing. Yet for Kafka writing is the rescuer "I was to some extent safe, I could breathe freely; the revulsion that you felt for my writing was, unusually, a relief to me"(46). It seems that he found the secure bound in isolation with his words, by this manifesting a whole new genre "Kafkaesque" which refers to oppressive or nightmare experiences, as well as experiences characterized by a threatening, bewildering, and nonsensical intricacy. Kafkaesque conjures up images of anxiety, uncertainty, and alienation, of being at the whim of circumstances governed by bureaucratic and nameless power, of absurdity, shame, despair, and a sense of being trapped with no way out.

Kafka lived his later life in his chosen solitude among many professions, since freedom of choice was never at hand, Kafka didn't how to act this that lead him to question his existence as a writer, because he was used to exist only to do what his father asks him to do, he is not familiar with freedom of action, at least without judgments. As he confessed to his friend Max Brod in one of his letters "the most immediate escape, perhaps from childhood onwards, was not suicide, but the thought of it"(1917). He couldn't even make the decision of ending his life, since the last is held hostage by the purified father. He was sentenced to incapability a

prison of cruelty as Kafka panned in *The Trial* (1914) "he knew he had done nothing wrong but, one morning, he was arrested"(Kafka 1). Opening the fictional repression of Joseph K. the childhood mental pain is manifested in each character he created as if it all reflects the memories Kafka recounts in the *Letter To My Father* (1952).

Sliding far from his father's overpower would mark his freedom or destroy him endlessly. The same is portrayed through Kafka's short story *The Judgment* (1913) in which he utilizes his childhood experiences to tell the story about how he could not handle his agony and how it grows inside of him, it spreads out into the world and progressively eludes our control, to eventually turns against him and manifest in all of his writings. In other words, Georg's death sentence is the product of his father's fixation, the true source of his overwhelming remorse. Kafka concluded his letter, unforgivable guilt, with the predictable father's response to why he is afraid of him, "As I believe is correct, you choose to be both 'over clever' and 'over sensitive' and acquit me too all guilt."(68).

Franz Kafka's crises that he was left alone with his anxious self with his thoughts that manifested in a serious traumatizing childhood. His father was never to be fully blamed on his actions. He was just being the regular Jewish over protective and strict father. Thus, indicating that Kafka's trauma ignited from the first day that they moved, and the first brother that passed away. He found himself alone in a strange talking environment straggling to fit in as the depressed kid. He aimlessly blamed it all on his father, since it was his call to change homes despite that he was only looking what is best for him.

Through replying to himself, Kafka guilted himself as well by set himself a trap when he realized he couldn't blame his father without also accusing himself, that for whatever degree of anguish he attributed to his father's behavior, he had to implicate himself in the same extent of guilt just to find an argument upon his father's agonizing attitude, in order to "comfort us both a little and make it little easier for us to live and die"(70). The last, as Kali Tal notes in

*Worlds of Hurt* (1996), that "trauma is a transformative experience", and "those who are transformed can never entirely return to a state of previous innocence" (119). Similarly to Franz Kafka who wrote all of his fictional stories on the light of his personal trauma just to find a closure And to give a reply, Paul Auster was only trying to find the man he called a father, curiosity and not knowing led his narrative, according to Keppola Sarra "Trauma, and the narrative based on it, are kept up by not knowing the event that has caused them" (Sarra 2016). As Auster who was searching for his father's identity, starting from his traumatic childhood memories to the last breath of his.

### **2.3 Traumatic memories from an absent father in *The Invention of Solitude***

*The Invention Of Solitude* is the story of absence, abandonment and neglect. Paul Auster exposes his childhood and its memories that are characterized by the loss of ties with his father. He is not only communicating his trauma, Auster is portraying the most profound distorted father-son relationship. Hence, the memoir manifests itself across time and generations carrying the wounded existence and passing it along with narrative. Auster throughout the communication of *The Invention Of Solitude* pinned his name as a writer and marked his narrative creation.

Paul Auster experienced childhood trauma with a ghost father. Samuel Auster was the shadow of a man wondering in the family's home. Therefore, it can be argued that his death influenced Auster to write about his father, and launched his artistry. As he confirmed that *The Invention Of Solitude* is the reference to all of his writings, the oyster of his soul and his life in a perfectly written words. The latter performed his journey of discovering the truth about his father, and the act of crashing his father's solitude in the hope of finding his traces. As Mohammad Amin Shirkhani states, all aspects the of self-discovery journey are meaningfully tied to Auster's self. Furthermore, the original trauma, which causes a distortion

between Auster, and what he is capable of coping with is not his father's death, but rather, the perception that his father was a visitor in his life, or an "invisible man"(Auster 1) within his childhood. This absence of his father is then revived.

In other words, similarly to Kafka, Auster manifested his father-son distorted relationship through the narration of his memoir, which characterized all of his writings. Each childhood memory that impacted Auster's psyche illustrated in artistry that made his absent father present in his writings, because All aspects the of self-discovery journey are meaningfully tied to Auster's self and his father's, understanding his own trauma needs going into his father's. For the reason that Auster is constantly trying to fulfill the unfulfilling memories related to his relationship with his father, and his need to understand the reason of the constant rejection he perceives as suffering as a child.

### **2.3.1 Traumatic memories from an absent father in *Portrait of An Invisible Man***

The sudden death of Paul Auster's father, Samuel Auster, is marked as the starting point of his artistry and unfolded sadness. He describes from the first pages that "the suddenness of it leave no room for thought, gives the mind no chance to seek out a word that might comfort it. We are left with nothing but death."(3). Despite the distant and cold father son relationship Paul Auster had with his father, he was traumatized by his death. The last acted as a motive for Paul to write about his father,"I thought: my father is gone. If I do not act quickly, his entire life will vanish along with him"(4). Implying that their relationship is not yet resolved, thus articulating all the parental agony and neglect in papers might end it. Since Paul couldn't confront his father while he was alive, he lived in his own loneliness isolated from his daughter and son, in this sense he became invisible.

Paul Auster's father wasn't present in the life of his son nor his daughter and wife "even before his death he had been absent"(4). The young Paul had to grow up with an

invisible father, just with the representation of a father. Samuel lived merely as a ghost with people surrounding him, but this had the deepest effect on his son. The memory of Samuel by mistake going back to the family old house and not noticing the emptiness or the absence of his wife or son is a clear evidence of the father's disrepair. The story seems to emotionally hurt Auster describes to be a childhood memory. For Auster the trauma was not merely by losing a father, he was traumatized by re losing his father, since he was already absent and not there his father was a ghost in his life.

The early memories of a father were distorted with absence, For Paul his father was detached, reserved and out of reach, though he appeared socially normal to his friends and companions. As he asserted: "He did not seem to be a man occupying space, but rather a block of impenetrable space in the form of a man"(5). A hollow existence with no feelings or expressions, the father's behavior was agonizing to his son. The disturbing father figure is represented in Auster's narrative, through which he links words to memories, secrets and most importantly to trauma and childhood scars (The Art of Hunger 285) one can clearly see Auster's mysterious narrative as a reflection upon his childhood memories and traumas specifically from a neglected father it appears that his father didn't know how to be a caring father.

Auster's first prominent work, after *The invention of Solitude* (1982), *The New York Trilogy* (1985) in which the cold hearted father is portrayed in *Ghosts* as the odd case of father in the ice. A case where the body of the father is preserved in ice, in the French Alps, he never aged a day. The son in the story saw his reflection through the ice. The idea of a frozen father acts as a mirror upon Auster's pain and torment, thus acting as glass for the reader to depict the true father in all fictions who is Samuel Auster. the story also reflect the state of Sam's life after divorce and being left alone in a massive mansion, which he had never managed to

change a thing, Auster recalls that "the house became a metaphor of my father's life, the exact representation of his inner world"(7).

Auster's parents' relationship didn't differ from his with his father. "love, in so many words, was never declared by either one of them. By the time the wedding came they were little more than strangers"(14). Auster grew up in a remorseless environment. Their union was doomed from the start, when his mother wanted divorce just after the honeymoon. Samuel Auster left his wife alone at hospital with her new born. Her sister was the one who took to the hospital his father only came to visit as a total stranger it meant nothing to him, being a grandfather was just like being a father for the first time, another reminder of parenthood trauma, Samuel Auster unsympathetic nature hasn't changed with fatherhood or grandfather warmth.

Paul Auster sought his father's affection and approval through talking into his father's interest and through having a son himself. The latter made him witness the scene of his own birth, neglect the new infant didn't matter for Samuel, he never holed or ever glance him with acceptance, for him it was just another human added to earth's population as he said "A beautiful baby. Good luck with it"(16). The worst men's enemy is his childhood memory. Auster was trying to find enter to his father's inner self, to reflect upon his silence, that became a manifested theme in his narrative, in *City of Glass* (1985) the main character Quinn is isolated in a New York apartment, questioning his existence.

Paul Auster resembles his predicted future and old father in Quinn, describing that "although in many ways Quinn continued to exist, he no longer existed for anyone but himself"(4). Quinn is his isolated ghosted father, in *Portrait of an Invisible Man* (1982) after the life changing call, Auster became Quinn, investigating his father's remains to find who his father was, and finding himself or at least managing to leave at solace in obtaining the truth of a shadow of a man, used to be called a father. Mohammed Amin Shirkhani Asserts that

"According to trauma theory, this creates a break between Auster's reality, and his ability to cope, which alters the way memories are stored and processed"(Shirkhani 71).

*The Invention of Solitude* is an artless memorial of a veiled father. Auster recounts his trauma through remembering the childhood agony. For him "one could not believe there was such a man who lacked feeling, who wanted so little of others"(17) he was a mutual being, multiple souls in one man, each is eager for life and none is experiencing it vividly. Auster's memories were either about neglect and loneliness or searching for parental care and appreciation. Memory do not age as the body does, Auster raised his hand for safety and warmth to each one he sees or at each hospital visit or check. Wishing to be valued in any mean, Paul Auster's childhood memories were terrorized by the childhood's neglect. The latter is strongly confirmed through the narration of *Portrait of an Invisible Man*, the memory of his father's practiced speech, giving the same instructions and replies to his son as if he were a stranger, "they were delivered without feeling, an exercise in decorum"(20) he was more of shadow of a man, than an actual existence. Auster came eventually to realize his father is the mystery, his solitude was never the issue it was the answer, and his dissociation from reality gave the narrative reason to pursue the truth.

Paul Auster's journey to reach his father began with crashing his solitude, house and legacy. He didn't believe that the shadow of a man he lived with was his authentic father, thus Auster's narrative is guided by the desire to know, to unfold the folded pieces to reach the absolute truth. His father's past remained hidden, "perhaps this is what really counts: to arrive at the core of human feelings, in spite of the evidence"(23). He decides to search for his father's childhood to know who he is, or who he was. Eventually, Paul Auster learned that Samuel Auster's isolation was merely a protection from his childhood traumatic memory that haunted him down through his life. The use of the word "invention" in the title is a further

confirmation of the absolute truth's futility and doubtfulness of the traumatizing shadowed father.

Paul Auster unexpectedly revealed the family's wound, as he expressed "it is not that I'm afraid of the truth. I am not even afraid to say it. My grandmother murdered my grandfather"(31). Through such hard confessions the blurred existence of Samuel Auster is exposed, he lived with a haunting agony and a wounded psyche which resulted in his odd isolation and disturbing attitude. It seems that Auster unintentionally inherited the trauma through his father's absence and through trauma narrative, due to this indicates that artistic wounds and themes or moods are giving a new personal perspective through rereading or rewriting certain trauma confessions and events, thus Auster never knew of the family's history. As Caruth powerfully and convincingly shows that "despite the fact that certain kinds of events can't be completely understood, these events consequently become significant in diverse ways by being expressed to others and perceived by them"(Abubakar 120). His father experienced neglect and terrors through his childhood. He witnessed the death of his own father by the hand of his mother, who he spent the rest of his life under her arm, she was described the absolute terror, it seems that the atmosphere he was brought up in unambiguously resulted in a damaging and nearly hallowed traumatized existence with a wounded psyche.

Paul Auster's constant need to mention his father in his writing was blessed with wounds and domestic violence and neglect, kept the pain unhealed. Artistry brought back his father and made Paul relive and witness his trauma again, thus the wound kept on bleeding through Paul Auster's narrative, As Maya Angleou declares "In all forms of art, part of you is in the trauma, and part of you is a step away from it." Thus meaning Part of Paul Auster is his trauma and the rest is how to articulate it perfectly in an artistry masterpiece. Each significant

traumatic memory manifested as a prominent theme where the past and the present meet to found a distorted reality and nihilistic future.

The father figure was present through his words and works and in each character, such as self lose and decentralization in *Moon Palace* (1989) through the narrative where the three main characters, Thomas Effing, Solomon Barber and Marco Fogg, reflected isolation and selflessness, all characters in *The Music of Chance* (1990) and *Leviathan* (1992) are portrayed through the constant search of truth and meaning and eventually achieving it by coincidence and chance. The latter is merely a reflection of Paul Auster's reality and narration of the second part of *The Invention Of Solitude, The Book Of Memory* (1984) which has been published after two years of *Portrait Of Invisible Man* (1982).

Paul Auster felt pain for his father's childhood, he was never to blame he choose solitude as an escape from the outer world to protect his family, he "realized now that I must have been a bad son. Or if not precisely bad, then at least a disappointment"(56). Paul Auster wished to be the solace to his father, yet he never downed his head from the clouded prejudice he lived in, at the end both him and his father existed apart and shared the same agony solely. The halo of trauma revisited Auster through the absolute honesty.

He did not know where to begin with his father but his death made the perfect start. Paul Auster first was traumatized by his absent father, then haunted with childhood neglect and agony, and finally when he managed to step away from his childhood all of his memories where distorted by falsified facts and flashbacks. His father's death was a holistic ceremony until the truth was known, the last acted as the final terror portion. He realized he never knew his father, and it was too late for that.

Paul Auster's trauma started with his father and never ended, it appears that it just has been solidified through simultaneous discoveries and maintained throughout the his youth and diction, For Auster the father agony started in his consciousness and memory and continued to

exist through his father and with him as a father. He crashed his father's solitude and embraced each truthful parental heritage, as he meditates in his own son Daniel "to end with." (64) The first part of *The Invention of Solitude* and eventually, seeming to adopt his father's solitude as an aftermath of deeply investigating through the past and the uncanny of memory, Auster seem to resolve his traumatic past through writing about his father, As Mohammed Amin Shirkhani concludes in his articles that Paul Auster's Memoir, *The Invention of Solitude*, is served as a framework for understanding the connection between trauma, memory, and language as a framework for expressing the psychological need to resolve trauma, and create meaning.

Eventually, experiencing agony has touched most of the humanity, yet not all react to it or handle it the same way. Each person's response to trauma is distinct and inextricably linked to their life experiences, memories, and personal habits. Writing is one way to deal with trauma and to help providing a sort of a narrative escape. Hence, Franz Kafka and Paul Auster were ambiguously trapped in their past, they only had their words to express their childhood terror through reliving and plotting their trauma through their narrative and through diving into their memory. Since memories are often stored through flashbacks and silent images. Could the act of sharing them on pages indicate the exclusivity of the past wounds to merely words? Or it is just another prison for the sour soul in its past reliving the constant agony?

## 2.4 Conclusion

Depending on what has been interpreted during the chapter, the traumatic childhood and the familial agony was the core of, nearly, every narrative Kafka and Auster have m,drnyj thoroughly written. Franz Kafka consistently confesses in his *Letter To My Father* how his disturbing relationship with his terrorizing father effected him as an existing soul, and reflected upon his writings. Also as Paul Auster recounts in *Portrait Of An Invisible Man*, how his father's existence in his life was merely a hollowed family mystery, and the act of diving deep into their memories trapped them, and communicating those memories in words provided a sort of an escape for both writers.

Thus, through narration of *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude* Kafka and Auster affirmed launching their art on the ashes of their traumatic memories their works were a fictionalized reality, each memory was celebrated through words, simply sharing their wounds in a collage of characters. Yet, each writes for a different closure and throughout a different existence, Kafka lived in his writings and Auster lived to write about his father. Their memory provided a sort of comforting solitude with a written solace

# **Chapter Three**

From Memory to words to  
healing

### 3 Introduction

Trauma studies went beyond connecting trauma narrative to recollection and memory. Yet, the later became an independent study and a literary theme. The process of memorization and recollection happens through the nick of time by remembering the detailed past and the bleared present, artistry gave memories criticality through sharing them in papers.

Articulating memories and bleeding out the past, the present or the future might be considered as an act of reformulation and reorganization, through diving in the perfect mass of childhood, adulthood, and all uncanny that is stored in between. Since memory can be highly deceiving throughout the processes of remembering, it cannot show the full truth, and even the act of deceiving is exposing the truthfulness of the self.

As outlined previously, trauma is stored without words. Hence, in order to resolve the trauma, memory must be connected with words in to fix the wounded psyche. Therefore, both authors connected trauma, memory and narrative and communicated it through their writings, which provided them with answers. Thus, Kafka and Auster manifested their memory on paper to understand the present and forgive the past. Throughout the narration of *Letter to My Father* and *The Invention of Solitude*, both writers investigated the details of their memories by constantly recollecting and remembering. This last provided both writers with reason and solace.

This chapter will study the importance of memory narrative for both writers, how they manifest the interconnection of trauma, memory and words. And also examine the role of different memory representations in exposing excuses and forgiveness for both writers. Most importantly, the chapter will demonstrate how writing down the process of recollection helped in saving both writers from their past and provided sorts of a narrative cure to close the study.

### 3.2 Memory about a forgiven father in *Letter to My Father*

Along with a traumatizing father, for Kafka memory acted as the inescapable prison for that he remembers every detail. The last is thoroughly exemplified through the narration of *Letter to My Father*, each childhood memory was described so critically that it seems to make the reader's effection present experiencing the memory accompanied by Kafka. He was the deceived by the recollected memories from his childhood, because his father might be a normal strict father who wished only health and wealth for his only son who preferred his room and his random childish remembrances for the words of his own father.

Kafka's memory resembles conscience, ethic and religion a proof of his present agony, solidified past and shattered future. He thought only for himself, since he was imprisoned in his childhood traumatic memories. The father figure and all of his recollections are a memorial for repression and sadness, despite the fact that they "were so different"(5). Kafka's anxious memories and sensitive pride forbid his reconsideration. He was a hostage of his selective memory. Since, fundamentally memory is the constructed past that reflects upon the present, and manages the sight of the future Kafka lived in his childhood memories and aged through them, carrying them upon his sleeves in every literary production he published.

As Suzanna Lalonde argues "After many repetitions, the moment comes when the telling of the trauma story no longer arouses quite such intense feeling"(Healing and Post Traumatic Growth 200). Writing the past memories, fictionally, normalized their intensity on the psyche. Kafka's plots which he carefully weaved mainly focused on his distorted relationship with his father, thus his recollections functioned as the tranquilizer for Kafka's agonizing memories. Lalonde further asserts that "The story is a memory like other memories, and it begins to fade as other memories do" (Healing and Post Traumatic Growth 200). It seems that Kafka's childhood memory was fading through time and his father won't impact him like he used to.

Kafka through his last years, which he spent in solitude, embraced his memories and dived deep into each memory to be slightly resurrected, or to be given a closure which do his father's justice. It seems that Kafka was searching for an explanation that "might comfort us both a little and make it easier for us to live and die"(71). It appears that Kafka's perception of time and memory made him realize that his short sight, his short future, will be merely mirrored through his subjective depressions. He chooses to put his memory to words, organizing and structuring his anxious self within the borders of a page. It manifested in each character he created.

Kafka's memory doubtlessly deemed his existence, and brightened his works. collaging his father-son memorial through a several fictionalized narratives, seems to make him directly question each memory he recollected, and questioning the memory of his father. Caruth argues that the possession of memories is the possession of the past, thus misinterpreting a memory illudes the present, and "becoming themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot fully possess" (Caruth 1991.4). The act of diving deep in solitude with his memories, supposedly allowed him to recollect numerous excuses for his father, in which he "saw further evidence of your enigmatic innocence and impregnability"(18). His recalled memories concerning his father's attitude merely reflected the father's own memories. The last was heavily manifested in a muscular personality. It appears that Hermann Kafka was not that much of a threat or a bad father, he was acting the way he was brought up in. It was never about Franz Kafka it was his own memory and his own past in which he was raised to be that way and act accordingly.

His father's most authentic memories were cherished excuses. Reaching the ultimate ground where memory meets the perfectly clear past and justifies the present. Kafka confesses that without his father, he still would grow up to be the same anxious depressed being. It was after all his choice to remember only the sadness during his childhood to be stored in his

memory. The memory of Hermann Kafka "when mother was seriously ill and I witnessed you shaking with tears, steadying yourself by the bookcase"(22). As if going through the past gave Kafka a new sight into his memories with his father. It has been argued that memory exists through time, the past for Kafka reflected trauma and the present was his solitude, he sought to dive into his past to save his present, to have a future where he and his father "can live and die" (71).

Kafka's *Letter to My Father* transferred his confessed memories from his inner self into artistic notions. The last was shared through various literary productions. His memories were giving him the power of domination over his life. Just as S Augustine in his famous *Confessions* (397-400AD) declares that "thou last gave this honor to my memory, to reside in it"(Confessions 287). Kafka cherished his memory and it unconsciously exiled him, yet it seems that he searched for the light of redemption inside the same memory that imprisoned him. Franz Kafka was given the blessings of a critical memory which molded him in the years gone by. Since memories caused a realization of time, he appears to realize the need for reconsidering his father-son relationship during his living days, mostly because Kafka didn't have much time due to his endured illness. He connected his memories with each phase of his life throughout the narration of *Letter to My Father* to find the truth.

The act of kafka's testifying for his father by himself is "so closely resembles the truth"(71). In which the father-son relationship is guided through solely memories that are randomly engraved in Kafka's thoughts. According to Herman "Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims" (Curative Fiction 117). It was the falsifying past that was filled with memories, who Kafka needed an escape from, not his father. Because even through the last years of his life he lived alone, better to say alone with his unforgettable memories he still did not overcome his past.

While memory can be defined as a recollection of previous events, actual remembered facts can change outside circumstances and greatly affect consciousness. Kafka eventually came to the realization of his recollected facts concerning his father that changed his perception of things, and acted as excuses for Hermann Kafka. Auster's autobiographical writings relate to the role of memory as a journey of self-discovery, a concept he explores in depth in *The Book of Memory*.

### **3.3 Aging through the memory of Paul Auster in *The Invention of Solitude***

*The Book of Memory* exposes Auster's past, recollects his present and sights his future in a 13 books of memories. Not until two years after the publishing of *Portrait of An Invisible Man*, in which Auster seeks to reveal the family's past to know who his father was. He ends up in his own kind of solitude, were he manifested the aspects of memory to save himself and be there for his son.

Auster mourns his father's death in *The Book of Memory* and muses on the domination of chance events, in an attempt to exorcise his own demons, he turns to memory. Through this, he discovers that the act of writing as an act of recollection. Throughout the narration of *The Book of Memory*, He unfolds his self-discovery journey in a collage of memories, each one acts as an exploration of the self and the fatherhood.

The father son relationship is portrayed in a wealth of instances that illustrate the numerous repetitions on a magical realism area, both through recurrences and through experiences, such as when Auster recounts a boy he and his companion met twice at the same place. The 13 stories that make up *The Book of Memory* emphasize the importance of "sons and fathers," as evidenced by the numerous duplicates that appear throughout the storylines of Gepetto and Pinocchio, Paul and his son, Mallarmé and Anatole, and Jonah and the Whale, Those who match the solitude of Helderlin and manifested his loneliness.

The three characters Samuel, Paul, and Daniel are tainted by the idea of the box because they appear to engulf one another: "When the father dies, he writes, the son becomes his own father and son"(82). The three of them are introduced at the start of *The Invention of Solitude*, however although Samuel is introduced in the first half, Daniel is mentioned in the second, leaving the writer alone in the chamber. Paul Auster's search for his authentic father through invading his solitude and memories lead him into inventing his own sort of solitude, through expressing remorse and infinite guilt, as if Auster the son decides to accompany his father together, and each traveling in his own memory. This last acts as the prisoner and the rescuer of both Paul Auster, the father, the son and the writer.

Auster starts his first *Book of Memory* declaring his realization with the sentence that "it was. It will never be again"(65). It seems that he realized the trauma of his father won't happen again. And the memory of his father's secret and reading about the accident made Auster another witness who will undoubtedly re-experience the trauma. The last, as the title suggests, leads to his own invention of solitude, as he became "hovering like a ghost around his own presence as if he were living somewhere to the side of himself not really there, but not anywhere else either"(67). The description that consistently was given to his father in *The Portrait of An Invisible Man*, it appears that Auster intentions towards finding the truthfulness of his father's past made him a bear witness of his father trauma. Similarly to Auster, Chantal Chawaf exposes in her novel *Le Manteau Noir* (1998) through which the protagonist, Marrie Antoinette, seeks to unfold her parents past and it explicitly offers a witness of a forgotten traumatic death. She, like Auster, found herself becoming not the victim, but the witness. Thus, in accordance with *Trauma And Recovery* (1991) by Judith Hermann, Auster's testimony serves as a sort of resolution.

### 3.3.1 Journey of self discovery through memory in *The Book of Memory*

*The Book of Memory* is Auster's own reflection upon his father's death and his buried family secret. Paul Auster represents his second own construction of the story narrated in the third person and goes with A. The memoir stands out as it represents a psychological voyage into the author's self and an attempt to describe the factors that have created him as an individual. Auster viewed his memory as his room, the container of his life and the oyster of his body. It connects the body with the outer world and contains the body itself, yet it randomly functions accordingly. The memory berries the self with the dead and brings it back to life.

Auster's manifested memories ill-fated and deemed him at once. The memories of his father acted as the ground of his existence, As if Auster was afraid of becoming the father he grew up with to his son, as he mentions "he cannot be anywhere until he is here. And if he does not manage to find this place, it would be absurd for him to think of looking for another"(68). It appears that Auster was the prisoner of his past memories and his hopefulness for the future. Implicitly the past for Auster resembles his father, yet Auster the son is resurrecting through this process of memorial manifestations out of his solitarily present.

In the search of his self, Auster unconditionally surrenders to his memory and writing in a meditative loneliness. Auster dives in-depth into his memories to frame a sort of sincerity. It is argued that the memory never acts randomly it resurfaces images that matches the present situation. For Auster, solitude reminded him of Jonah in the belly of the whale as he asserts "Life inside the whale. A gloss on Jonah"(69). Thus, where "it begins, therefore, with this room."(70). Auster apparently deeply considers the chances of becoming his own father and becoming a haunting ghost, exiting his solitude means he have to start from the same place it all manifested, his room.

Auster manifested the act of loss and rebirth through the narration of *The Book of Memory*, as he asserts, by referring to "Memory as a room"(76). The room which resembled his journey where he lost himself into the folded memories, as he described "room and tomb, tomb and womb, womb and room"(147). As if what started with the memory of the father's, Samuel Auster, solitude ended up with his son's room which acted as his resemblance of solitude. As if Auster the son became the inner Samuel Auster, whose solitude was resembled in antiquated house. Auster's father embraced his solitude as a truce with his memory, as a piece offering through which he can live at peace. Since "all the unhappiness of a man stems from one thing only: that he is incapable of staying quietly in his room"(72). Unlike his father, Paul Auster decides to reach the depth of his memories to overcome his distorted past and formulate a vivid present.

Auster consciously invented his solitude by entering his own invisibility and hollowed existence, "it is as if he were being forced to watch his own disappearance"(67). It seems that Auster witnessed his own steps into a "black hole"(67). It was and still his room, yet it never resembled a room with walls, only memories since one is never alone, he is always a visitor of his past reviewing and recollecting his memories. For the first time Auster felt the agony of his father instead of his. As if his father, Samuel Auster, was never handed the choice of consciousness, he was forced to neglect his memories and through that neglecting his existence.

Auster's memory transferred him back and forth between him and his father. Between the past and the present, memory reflected a universe in which Auster practiced the self manifestation and meditation perfectly. Evidently, his memory became his solace despite all of its darkness and ambiguities. As if it was an instrument of flowing thoughts, a process that kept Auster alive. The great German poet Friedrich Holderlin is Auster's resemblance in *The Book of Memory. Book Four*. The story of Holderlin in his solitude when his dear wife

died seems to be engraved in Auster's memory. As he asserts "more than likely, it is the room that restored Holderlin to life, that gave him back whatever life it was left for him to live"(88). Holderlin lived most of his life alone and survived through his works and wrote his major works in that room. As if Auster sees his present life in comparison to Holderlin, another man's solitude similar to his and his father's, Similar to the story of Jonah inside the belly of the Whale.

Auster seems to recollect the story of Jonah who surrendered to the sea to be eaten by the whale. The narration of the story can't be separated from the narration of Auster's own life. As if he is telling stories throughout books of memories reflecting his manifestation, a book full of distorted memories of lost and recollection, comparably to Jonah who experienced death to be resurrected. Auster dived into his memory remembering the painful past to save his present. , as a result, he dedicates himself to writing as the only sort of help. Yet, it was writing about his father's solitude and going in-depth into the family narrative which lead him into his own kind of solitude, and his loss and recollections. Similarly to Jonah's solitude which ended with continuous prayers, it appears that Auster considered writing as a form of prayers that will redeem him.

The story of Gepetto trapped inside the belly of the whale mirrored Auster in his room, alone with his memories. It mirrored a trapped father and a trapped creator and a lost son, Pinocchio reminded Auster of his own son, it appears that he sensed the fear of losing his son in the journey of discovering himself. Auster needed to forget and forgive his father let go of the past, and be in the present for his son, in order not to repeat the same faults as his father's in the future. This last seems to remind Auster of the story of Pinocchio, in which he and his son admired each detail throughout the narration of Pinocchio's journey to become a real boy, and his father's, Gepetto, journey to find his son. The story of Pinocchio exemplified Auster the father and the son.

Since Collodi, the story writer, "write the story of himself"(161). Auster's memory projected him onto carefully chosen stories that mirror his past as he confesses that it is "an immersion in the past of the others"(139). The stories and literature that Auster reflects upon in writing his *Book of Memory* helped him keep track of his memories, understand his traumatic past and handed him multiple experienced conclusions. It is Auster's choice to give in to his memory, his room or his solitude for that matter, or not to and be saved like Helderlin, Jonah and Gepetto. To bleed solitarily his memories to be rescued a son of his, to consider narrating memories as a sort of survival of the self to the other.

Paul Auster unlike Franz Kafka embraced his memories. He used them as a sort of self discovery. He dived in his past to find himself. As he further asserts "he must make himself absent in order to find himself there"(152). As if that he found himself throughout his memories.

### **3.3.2 Memory as a redemption of Paul Auster in *The Book of Memory***

The story of Pinocchio reflected Auster's feelings toward his son Danielle, as if Auster didn't want to be the same father that he grew up with, despite that Samuel Auster failed in overcoming his past, it appears that Paul Auster found solace in the memory of his son, a "present of things present"(Confessions 273). As Augustine phrased it as being the Sight and the redemption.

*The Book of Memory. Book Two*, through those pages where the past meets the future in a conscious present, Auster explains the importance of being remembered, in the "Isreal Lichtenstein's Last Testament... 1942"(73). It appears that the absurdity of chance strikes deep to recollect the memories of Auster's son Danielle, whose name is similar to the Israeli lawyer. Memory travels back and forward in ambiguous reminders where he seems wanting to formulate a memory for his son, in order to be remembered and not forgotten as, Samuel Auster, his father.

Auster's son Danielle provides him with a sight for the future. It seems that he was afraid of his future as a father, and "imagines what the boy sees when he looks at him"(70), what will the boy finds in the presence of his father, ghost of a hollow existence. As if the past memories came to question and awaken Auster at once. The trapped father solitarily in his past desperately seeks his son's forgiveness, and Auster the son who is afraid to lose his father.

Auster implicates chance and coincidence to indicate and present his past, to portray the power of memory, and how everything that faced him is oddly connected to his inner self. That memory seldom acts randomly. Each memory of his became strangely attached to his son Danielle and each incident reminded Paul Auster of his fatherhood. It seems that Anne Frank's room which he visited evoked his memory and played with his emotions by reminding him of his son. He admitted realizing the initiation of *The Book of Memory* at that exact second (71). As if it was where all of his memories formulated the perfect equation of time, discovery, and healing.

Anne Frank provoked his past, his present and sighted his future in which his son is not excluded from the narrative. Since Anne Frank and his son shared the same birthday, the coincidence proved that in memory everything "happens for the second time"(72). The first time when the memory is formulated and the second when the memory is recollected through the act of remembering, chance and narration, It seems that Paul Auster feared passing his agony to his son unconsciously, especially after his marriage ended. Throughout *The Book of Memory Book Five*, The lost child headline in a magazine reminded Auster of his son Danielle, mainly the image the child resembled his son and the act of being lost resembled him, as if the headline on that magazine was meant for Auster, to remind him of his son and his lost fatherhood.

Danielle's sudden illness was a tough experience for Auster. He experienced the loss of his son, and his recovery was kind of "a miracle dealt to him by the cards of chance"(96). Auster's sense of parenthood exposed the lights of resurrection, an escape from the past towards a present of present things where him and his son will write their own story of the father son tale, a present in which the past came to an end, where the act of sharing a painful experience through narrative is truly finished. This reminded Auster of the poem of Mallarmé for the memorial of his only son Anatole, which Auster had translated earlier. His story stroked his deep lost sense of parenthood as she performed the act of praying for the dead as an art through her poem and through her words, similarly to Auster who realized the importance of his fatherhood as he confesses that it was "in that moment of fear that he had become, once and all, the father of his son"(97). As if the fears of loss have awakened him, the fear of losing his son, his fatherhood, his self and his future and present all at once. The narrator Auster, like the extensive list of reminiscences evoked in the 13th books, asks the reader to delve into contemplation on fatherhood as well as writing. Therefore, the room transformed into a shell dedicated to remembering, an allusion area for memory where the narrator Auster connects past, present, and future events in his life.

Fatherhood saved Auster from his past, which was his father. Unlike Samuel Auster, Paul Auster feared the thought of being a ghost, a hollow existence for his son Danielle. Articulating each memory he had and providing a narrative of his own, protected him from the being forgotten. *The Book of Memory* demonstrates the father son relationship throughout time and memory where he was the father and the son at once, despite the fact that they do not share the same area or time, the characters are intertwined. Even if there is a break between each of the three characters, the past, present, and future are juxtaposed.

His son's memory is reverberated by his father's, and so in the grandson's. Paul Auster's wound is reactivated not just when he remembers the death of his father and the

possible death of his son, but it is also when he realizes the full magnitude of his fatherhood. Auster's story has multiple sub stories that progressively reveal themselves, since memory not only establishes a fracture inside and between the individuals, but also unites them even more profoundly.

Thus, memory through artistry provided an escape where the father is forgiven and son embraced his fatherhood all through the act of diving deep into the uncanny of memory. It was writing, words and narrative that build a sort of a bridge for Auster to save him from his father and from himself, eventually it blessed him with a cure.

### **3.4 Healing through words in *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude*.**

Writing resembled the connection of the outer world with the inner self at its most sophisticated manners for both writers. Kafka and Auster lived a disturbing past each with his unusual father. They were equally traumatized, and recollected it all, fairly, through the act of narration. This last was practiced through sharing their traumatic fathers with each character they portrayed assuring that they found an escape from their sad childhood.

To begin with, both writers were dedicating themselves to words as a form of redemption, writing saved them from the uncanny of their memory, recollecting the details of their childhood in words provided them with new interpretations, excuses and self discovery, when they were living in their solitude. writing meant more than an ink and an empty page, it resembled their captive souls, Auster confesses that writing connected him with his absent father and with his son, Kafka as well assured that writing was a third realm where his father no longer oppressed him.

Therefore, writing their memories in a devoted memoir and honest confessions helped the writers to bleed their inner traumatized child into the emptiness of the pages instead of their hearts. Both writers testified on the behalf of their father for the hope of saving their

souls, through writing down their traumatic memories. Naadiya Yakoob Mir argues that "Traumatic testimony can be defined as a form of a personal retelling of a memory that is often tied in with the hope of healing from that memory"(Exploring Women's Traumatic Testimony 118). Thus, the act of testifying by themselves to themselves through recounting their trauma in words provided them a sort of narrative cure.

In order to practice writing perfectly and testify freely Auster wrote his memoir, *The Book Of Memory* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. Since he is unable to write in the first person "he decides to refer to himself as A" (65). Thus *The Book of Memory* project becomes fictional A, He wished to relive his trauma in solitude and from another's eye. Similarly to Kafka's *Letter To My Father*, ambiguously Kafka knew that his letter would not be read by his father, yet he carefully exercised each thoughtful memory into words and by the end of the letter he replied to himself, by himself, on behalf of his father.

Therefore, both writers dived in the uncanny of memory one to meet his father and one to free himself from his father's terrors. Yet Kafka and Auster ended up imprisoned by their past and deceived memory, despite the fact that they were reorganizing the past, it was writing that guided the path of healing and overcoming not only trauma but the past. Writing *Letter For My Father* for Kafka was the only way to find a version of the story where his father "suffered "(22). As if Kafka was seeking for the lost scenario where his father wasn't solely to blame.

Auster's solitude was manifested through number of stories to emphasize on the role of words and how each story he mentions connects him to his father. Furthermore, Jonah resembled Auster the son and Samual the father both surrendered to their solitude, yet Jonah gave hope to Auster to be saved with writing as an act of prayer that is the most compatible exercise.

Auster who used the act of writing and remembrance as a meditation, similarly to Jonah inside the belly of the whale, For Kafka writing is devoted prayers, an act that must be held in private and never exposed. The only escape from his inner memories to his self, he never wished to be known for his words, for him it resembled authenticity. As it was passed on, Kafka asked for his own demolition before his early death he requested that all of his literary productions must be burned, yet thanks to his friend Max Prod, they were dedicatedly published. As if Kafka was keeping his words for himself as a prescript medication through a healing process. In *Letter to My Father* his writings helped him expose his past and reconsider his present just in order to peacefully sense the future. Suzette Henke admits in her book *Women's Life Writing* (1999) that articulating the wounded memories provided her with an escape from her inner shattered psyche.

Kafka and Auster belonged to words and those words defined and expressed them as traumatized sons and as writers since they have not experienced the normality of an infant belonging to a caring father or a family for that matter. It seems that Kafka lived in his writing which gave him closure and a space where he can make new memories where everyone is at peace. Auster as well was afraid of the idea of being a ghost, as his father was, for his son Danielle. Hence he created a narrative memorial throughout communicating his *Book of Memory*, because "the act of writing is an act of memory"(142). It seems that Auster practiced writing to escape his room, his memory, and his solitude. Thus the only reason behind writing his testament is to be remembered if not with his existence, with his words.

Consequently, Anne Frank perfectly reflected both writers and manifested the relationship between childhood trauma and the act of writing to present the childhood agony from a child's perspective, her story and her room saved Auster and reminded him of his son. It deepened the past wound as if it showed Auster the impact of words on the history of the one, Anne Frank's diaries didn't only give her hope for a better existence it also exemplified a

testimony for the world, which Auster believed he owed his son. Anne Frank also resembled Kafka's attempts of writing, unlike Auster did not want to be remembered he was merely transporting in each character he creates until he lands on a character who resembles the ecstasy of his sour eyes, since his literary memories were as an attempt to escape, to forget and thus, hopefully, to be healed. It can be argued that the same past which deemed him simultaneously launched his artistry and provided reason and justification. He asserted that his father's "effect on me was the effect you could not help having" (5). Kafka appears to understand that his father's influence is merely a mirror to his own, past, memories, and that his father was among the many characters he formulated with his own words.

Both writers knew they could not change the past but they can dictate the future and change the present with their narrative. As Kafka manifested through recollecting memories of a forgiven father and articulated them in words is foremost indicating a reestablishment of an updated present or a reality. It seems that Kafka at the end of his letter was for once and for all giving a fairly introduced closure. Kafka's allegedly excused his father for not being an "obstacle to your happiness"(70). He further asserts answering himself with the words of his own father concerning seeking an escape away from him through marriage. It was Kafka who timidly withdraws from that sort of responsibility. Hermann Kafka as Franz Kafka put it into notions "you wanted me to help you avoid marriage"(70). It appears that the father was merely obeying his son's hesitation.

Kafka and Auster apparently worked out of their solitude through the journey of writing down *Letter to My Father* and *The Book of Memory* The agony kept growing, yet artistry aided them bridging those memories into the empty pages. Thus, writing held memories instead of the oppressed self. Despite that they shared the act of writing as a sort of healing they practiced it differently, Auster embraced his trauma and memory and outlive

them, yet Kafka wished only for a peaceful life where he can understand his father and forgive him.

Writing as an act of memorial and possession and loss, is what resembled the path of Kafka and Auster, it served as Kafka asserts "a third realm where everybody else lived happily, free from orders and obligation"(Kafka 14). It seems that writing provided Kafka and Auster with a kind of solace. A form of breaking out of the memory and the self to be able, eventually, to write a reply from his father to mark the end of his letter and his life at once, and to be ensured that "it will never happen again"(Auster 170). As Auster marks the end of his devoted piece of the self, piece of the art.

Thus, *Letter to My Father* and *The Invention of Solitude* not only reflected the writers' childhood agony and mirrored their solitary memory. It helped them write their fathers on paper to prison their past instead of their selves. Writing aided enlightens their present and marked the start and the end of their artistry and their lives. Kafka selected writing as a spiritual instrument to behold his soul and save his childhood. He surrendered to the words and let them dictate him. Auster was lost, healed and redeemed through the journey of writing *The Invention of Solitude*, which made this last as a reference to all of his literary productions. They assured through their confessions the authenticity of their tale and their bear testimony of the past which provided a sort of a cure as Kathryn Robson "emphasize the importance of the 'narrative cure' whereby a survivor is 'cured' from the debilitating effects of trauma by putting her experience into words"(Curative Fictions 116).

Franz Kafka and Paul Auster were the prisoners of their own memories, their past and their distorted present. They found a third dimension where they can die or live in peace, which is writing. The later symbolized the bridge toward sanity and relief, narrating their sad memories in words released their artistry and themselves from the darkness of their memory.

### 3.5 Conclusion

As it has been argued throughout the chapter, memory was marked as the preservation of all wounds, happiness and all the unclassified thoughts. The act of diving solitary through the uncanny of memory can expose the memories to new interpretations. It also can cause the intensity of those memories to fade gradually.

Writing down and articulating memories through the empty pages provided solace, excuses and forgiveness in the case of Franz Kafka. The constant process of recollection deeply throughout the sketches on the walls of his memory showed him the objectivity of analyzing his own memories, in which his father was purely guiltless and his memories was deceiving him. Unlike Kafka, Auster discovered the truthfulness of his father's past which lead him into inventing his own solitude solely with his memories.

Paul Auster lost himself in the past of his memories. This last manifested as the prisoner of Paul Auster the son, who was trapped in constant remorseful memories. And the rescued Paul Auster the father who was rescued by the sight of his bleared future, a future where he is his father's resemblance, the memory of his son saved him from his solitude.

Kafka and Auster healed through the act writing and sharing their father son relationship with each character they portrayed, and through testifying in the narration of *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude*. They explored the significance of the wound through literature, and mirrored the direct relationship of the wounded psyche with the artistic self conveying the highlight of trauma narrative and theory.

## General conclusion

Trauma narrative studies, as portrayed, went beyond examining the psychological diagnosis and illnesses. Artistic trauma is much more sophisticatedly interested in the articulated notions and the recollected memories for their clear impact on the wounded psyche. Eventually, these wounds are like words, must be comprehended and interpreted. The theory manifests the wounded psyche through analyzing the wounded words. It also studies the influence of the trauma on the produced narrative. However, trauma narrative is introduced through the horrors and misfortune of the humanity, recollected through pieces of the memory and explored through the inherited literature. This last, blessed the writings of memoirs and confessions, mainly childhood's agony. As it has been portrayed in Franz Kafka's *Letter To My Father* and Paul Auster's *The Invention Of Solitude*, where the writers confessed their childhood traumatic memories in a devoted memoirs.

Depending on what has been discussed, Franz Kafka and Paul experience childhood trauma within the arms of their families mainly their fathers, their traumatic upbringing manifest fictionally and none fictionally throughout their literary production, they manifest their wounds through recollecting childhood memories and articulating them in words. They are equally lost in the uncanny and alone in the crowded memory. However, through investigating trauma and memory in *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude* this dissertation has confirmed that both writers put their selves in the words they were writing. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the childhood traumatic memories that are present in both works, with demonstrating their direct impact in shaping Kafka's and Auster's artistry, and the role of writing in helping both writers overcoming their past.

The dissertation aims at answering the questions that has been raised in the introduction. First, through what has been argued, the disturbing relationship with a terrorizing father effected Franz Kafka and Paul Auster as an existing soul, and reflected upon

their writings. Both writers thrived on the ashes of their trauma, the agonizing memories impact their artistry, thus Kafka's and Auster's traumatic experience manifested not only in *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude*, but in each plot and character they formulate and write. Thus, it can be declared that their works were a fictionalized reality. Each memory is celebrated through words, simply sharing their wounds in a collage of characters. Yet, each writes for a different closure and throughout a different existence, Kafka lives in his writings and Auster lives to write about his father. Therefore, their memory provided a sort of comforting solitude with a written solace, but the act of diving deep into the uncanny of memory trap both writers, and exposed the unknown of their memories where their fathers are forgiven and forgotten.

Second, Kafka and Auster have proved to find an escape from their trauma, and their past through performing their memories in notions. As it has been answered throughout this dissertation, Franz Kafka and Paul Auster were both held captive by their own memories, pasts, and warped present. They discovered a third dimension, which is writing, where they can die or live in peace. Writing represented a path to sanity and relief, as expressing their painful memories in words freed their art and themselves from the shadows of their memories. Moreover, depending on what have been portrayed in *Letter To My Father* and *The Invention Of Solitude*, it has been assured that both writers confessed the unfiltered authenticity, and perfectly draw the deep connection between trauma, memory and words and the impact of each one on the other throughout time, what started as a narration of tormented childhood became an invented solitude which eventually evoked a narrative cure, where writing traumatic memories healed Kafka and Auster

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## ملخص

نظرية الصدمة (trauma theory) عززت في مجال الأدب من أجل استكشاف العلاقة بين النفس الجريحة و الكلمات التي تملئها، و هذا من خلال دراسة خفايا الذاكرة و غرابتها عبر الزمن. فرانز كافكا ( Franz kafka ) و بول اوستر ( Paul Auster ) من بين الكتاب الذين احتفلوا بالأحزان طفولتهم و صدماتها، عن طريق التذكر و السرد. تعكس أبرز أعمالهم رسالة إلى والدي ( *Letter to My Father* ) و اختراع العزلة ( *The Invention of solitude* ) مجموعة من الاعترافات و العلاقة المقلقة بين الأب و الابن، حيث كان لوجود الأب و غيابه التأثير الأعمق على كلتا الروايتين. و لهذا، تهتم هذه الأطروحة بالتحقيق في مظاهر الصدمة و الذاكرة في رسالة لي والدي ( *Letter to My Father* ) فرانز كافكا ( Franz kafka ) و كتاب بول اوستر اختراع العزلة ( *The Invention of Solitude* ) مع إظهار تأثيرهما المباشر في تشكيل سرد كافكا (Kafka) و اوستر (Auster) . و تهدف الدراسة إلى فحص تأثير كتابة الذكريات المؤلمة على النفس الجريحة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** نظرية الصدمة، الذاكرة، فرانز كافكا، بول اوستر، رسالة إلى والدي، اختراع

العزلة.

## Résumé

Le traumatisme a été théorisé dans le domaine de la littérature pour explorer la relation entre la psyché blessée et les mots dictés à travers le déploiement de l'étrangeté de la mémoire et du temps. Franz Kafka et Paul Auster font partie des écrivains qui ont manifesté leur traumatisme d'enfance à travers le souvenir et le récit. Par exemple, *Letter To My Father* et *The Invention of Solitude* reflétaient un ensemble de confessions et une relation père-fils troublante. La présence et l'absence du père ont eu l'impact le plus profond sur les deux écrivains. Par conséquent, cette thèse vise à enquêter sur la manifestation du traumatisme et de la mémoire dans *Letter To My Father* de Franz Kafka et *The Invention of Solitude* de Paul Auster, en démontrant leur impact direct dans la formation du récit d'Auster et de Kafka. Le but de la recherche démontrée est d'examiner l'impact de la mise en mots des souvenirs traumatisants sur la psyché blessée

**Mots clés :** Théorie du traumatisme, Mémoire, Franz Kafka, Paul Auster, Lettre à mon père, L'invention de la solitude.

