



# Impact Of Space And Isolat Ion In Paul Auster's Works

**Reshma R Krishnan** Research Scholar, Department of English, Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. Email: [reshmarkrishnan2015@gmail.com](mailto:reshmarkrishnan2015@gmail.com)

**Dr. Sangvikar Nanasaheb Vasudev** Research Supervisor, Department of English, Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. Email: [drnvsangvikar@gmail.com](mailto:drnvsangvikar@gmail.com)

---

## ABSTRACT:

Space is very important in determining the behavioral pattern of individuals in life. A confined space or a room is a place of closure where the mind and souls of people get focused on thoughts. Depending on space and time, people become free from several rules and restrictions of society. They become free in their decisions and will achieve a new version of their thoughts. This also brings development in their mind to some extent. This free space may give an opportunity for writers to develop their personalities. By getting free from the norms of society, they become free to live as they wish. Some of them developed their mind to that of a writer and some made developments in their views and thoughts. In some of the post-modern works, the writers make use of the theme of the cave, tomb, room, etc. to depict the different behavioral patterns of their characters. Through these themes, they are trying to make the readers realize how they are affected by the fake life which they go through. Another thing is that the act of writing implies two movements. First, it makes a deeper investigation of the characters to understand their minds, thus moving further toward the very center of their circle. Then it makes the characters reconnect themselves to society, hence moving back towards the larger circles. However, the writing of a literary work creates an imaginary world in the real world. On the graphical plane, it boils down to drawing a new circle within the series of existing circles. Space and isolation often work as agents of behavioral changes for many post-modern writers including the celebrated American author, Paul Auster. Auster's major works utilize the elements of closed surroundings like rooms and other places of confinement to draw his characters' response patterns.

**KEYWORDS:** Space, room, isolation, behavior, etc.

## INTRODUCTION

Space is an important component in the making and manifestations of human emotions. Literary works have identified the importance of space and many renowned writers have used the theme of isolation and confinement in their works to express varied emotions of their characters. This often leads the characters to hallucinations or illusions. As a result,

they undergo some changes in their attitude. The theme of isolation and confinement is present in Eastern as well as Western literature. Such works make the readers understand and relate to their inner selves. Everybody hides a character inside. There may be some wishes in our life that cannot be satisfied due to the restrictions of society. So, when people are alone, they try to satisfy their wishes without being bothered by societal rules. This results in their inner development and free articulation. Thus, isolation and confinement make literary characters and real-life people realize and express their inner selves in a better way.

Free and unfettered movement and behavior of humans always depend on the space and time to which they belong. Everyone can express his or her emotions freely and effectively with the support of comfortable space and time. Self-imposed isolation is different from externally forced isolation in its nature and effects. Paul Auster, the illustrious writer of post-modern American literature is an expert in the art of visualizing the impact of space, time, and isolation through the life and actions of his literary actions. A brief analysis of the major works of Paul Auster may light into the striking journey of his characters through time and space.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**May Sarton (1973)** The greater part of *Journal of a Solitude*, Sarton's 365-day diary of her time spent writing in New Hampshire during the bitter winter of 1970–1971 when she was also dealing with depression, covering that year. In this journal she asserts that “Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self.” “One can be instructed in society; one is inspired only in solitude.” “Solitude, whether endured or embraced, is a necessary gateway to original thought.” “I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.” She claims that everyone has the chance to become aware of their true behavior. Everyone's perspectives and ideas develop when they are alone. When individuals are left alone, they have more time to consider their character than their actions. As a result, they will be able to see how ludicrous their life is and take steps to make them significantly better than it was before.

**E. M Forster (1924)** There are other writers also in the history of modern literature who used the theme of closure in their work. One such work is E.M Forster's “*A Passage to India*” (1924). This story highlights the colonial legacy, the tension between morality and spirituality, and the inevitable nature of evil. As a result, the story shows how the British treated Indians. It also underscores the challenges that two very different societies face. Also discussed is the internal and external conflict between Indian and British societies. The concept of closure or a cave in this situation changes the perceptions of the characters and moves the story into a new phase. The main characters Adela, Aziz, Fielding, and Mrs. Moore are all impacted by their isolation inside the cave. As they entered the cave, they heard the echoing sound, and Mrs. Moore abandoned her search out of fear. The only time Adela and Aziz are afterward seen is while they are in the cave. After that, Adela's mind began to go into a world of illusions, where she considered leaving her fiancé Ronny and

marrying Aziz instead. Aziz believed Adela's behavior was strange, so he walked away. Later, while Aziz travels back to Chandrapore, he is apprehended. The strange thoughts of Adela had led to this. She thought Aziz had violated her sexually within the cave. She acknowledges during the trial that Aziz did not inflict any harm on her. As a result, Aziz loses patience with Adela and stops speaking to her. He leaves the scene in this manner. Aziz is an Indian male and Adela is a British woman. This is yet another example of how the British ultimately harmed the Indians. Following that, the close friendship continued to deteriorate, and these incidents gave the story several depressing moments.

**William Wordsworth (1850)** William Wordsworth has long been regarded as one of the most illustrious Romantic poets. He wrote excellent poems on nature. The poem "Stolen Boat" is an excerpt from William Wordsworth's well-known autobiographical poetry "The Prelude", Book I (1805), which was released in 1850. A ten-year-old boy steals a boat off the edge of a lake in the poem. He initially found the trip through the lake to be enjoyable. Later, the boy becomes afraid due to the echoing sound. His imagination entered a fantastical world as a result of this terror. As he draws closer to the rugged ridge, a new, enormous, and black peak raises its head purposefully, like some sort of living thing. Additionally, he senses that the peak is after him. All of these events took place in the boy's subconscious mind. The poetry has a mystical aspect to it as a result of the terror. Later, he came to assume that all of these might have occurred as a result of his sin of stealing the boat. Another poem by Wordsworth, "Solitary Reaper," features a lonesome girl singing in a field while experiencing the height of self-expression. Even Wordsworth's celebrated poem "Daffodils," which is about a lonely person traveling across the sky like a cloud, starts off with this fantasy of embracing loneliness and solitude.

**Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1970)** The time period covered by "One Hundred Years of Solitude" ranges from the early 1800s through the early 1900s. In addition to other recurrent themes, these years include the Colombian civil wars, neocolonialism, political brutality, corruption, sexuality, mortality, and loneliness. The history of the Buenda family, who founded the remote village of Macondo, is told in One Hundred Years of Solitude. Most of the events that Garcia Marquez depicts are the main turning points in the lives of the Buendas—births, deaths, marriages, and romantic relationships—because more than a century passes during the novel. Some of the Buenda men are raging and greedy in their sexual behavior, frequenting brothels, and seducing women. Others are quiet and solitary, choosing to remain alone in their rooms to craft miniature golden fish or study old manuscripts. Ursula Iguarán, the family's indomitable matriarch, continues to work tirelessly to keep the family together despite its disagreements because she still believes in the family's potential for greatness.

The Buenda family also starts its last erasure process as the city, worn down by years of violence and false progress, starts to fade away, driven by yearning for bygone times. The town is once more alone and secluded as the book ends. The few surviving Buenda family members isolate themselves from the outer world and engage in incestuous behavior,

doomed to a life of solitude. The last remaining Buenda translates some old predictions in the book's final scene and discovers that everything had been predicted: the village and its residents had only been following a predetermined cycle that combined amazing beauty and great, devastating tragedy.

### **ISOLATION AND SPACE IN PAUL AUSTER'S WORKS**

Paul Auster frequently employs the themes of cave, room, space, isolation, etc. to display his literary skill. His art occasionally explores the idea of solitude. He is a writer who, in many ways, stands out from his peers. He does a superb job at fusing classic and contemporary themes. His recurring themes include loneliness, identity crisis, and familial loss of affection, particularly highlighting the rift between father and son. Moon Palace, Leviathan, the New York Trilogy, the Invention of Solitude, and the Book of Illusions are some of his best works that address the issue of room. According to Auster, the room is where the human mind develops and where people pick up their actual behaviors. But these kinds of developments also take place in other enclosed and closed spaces aside from the room.

### **CLOSURE: THE DIFFERENT PHASES IN HUMAN THOUGHTS**

A famous Postmodern writer, Soren Kierkegaard has proposed that "each individual – not reason, society or religious orthodoxy – is solely tasked with giving meaning to life and living it sincerely, or "authentically." People live their lives by abiding by both the religious and societal laws that govern them. All things are connected. People obey it out of necessity rather than will. As a result, people always have the desire to be alone in order to break free of societal expectations.

Paul Auster appears to suggest in his work "The Invention of Solitude" that "our concept of self is generated by the pulse of consciousness within us- the unending monologue, the endless discourse we have with ourselves. And all of this occurs in complete solitude. Our subconscious minds generate the stories we tell ourselves, some of which may not be real. One can only leave this state of mind and live in reality by becoming aware of what actually happened in their life both before and after entering a condition of solitude.

### **THE IMPACT OF THE ILLUSIONARY PROCESS IN THE CHARACTERS OF PAUL AUSTER**

Paul Auster uses the themes of cave, room, closure, confinement, etc. to explore changes in attitude and advancements in the human psyche. This reality might be more apparent in a brief examination of his best works.

#### **1. The New York Trilogy**

The New York Trilogy which is a famous work of Paul Auster which runs into three parts namely;

##### **1.1 City of Glass**

Quinn is the main character of City of Glass. He uses the pen name William Wilson when penning mysteries. The protagonist of his book is Max Work, a private investigator. Quinn takes on Peter's case while posing as Auster of the Auster Detective Agency. Quinn started

following Peter Stillman for many days, which made him live a ridiculous life. Quinn begins to lose his sense of reality as the case develops. Quinn is disappointed when Stillman suddenly vanishes. After that, he relocates to a little alleyway next to Stillman's former residence. The book's plot and Quinn's life both became even more ludicrous at that point, and he started to become disoriented. This further demonstrates Quinn's tragic existence. Quinn finally enters Stillman's home and takes up residence in one of his rooms after Stillman ends his life. Quinn uses isolation from the outside world as a means of self-discovery and the room itself as the setting for the reassertion of Quinn's identity. Quinn eventually meets his true nature in the room's dark confinement.

**1.2 Ghosts:** The story takes place in 1947 in New York and is the second part of a trilogy. It also has detective elements. 'Henry David Thoreau' and his book *Walden* are the inspirations for this section of Auster's writing. Blue and Black are the two primary characters in this section. Black frequently reads *Walden* at his flat by himself. In order to better comprehend Black, Blue purchases the book. However, he found the book uninteresting and says that reading *Walden* is like "entering an alien world." Unlike Thoreau, Blue's life has become lonelier. His solitude has both advantages and disadvantages. The reference to *Walden* is not a coincidence. It can be viewed as a Ghosts-related tale. From a different angle, *Walden* also discusses the impact of solitude on people's lives. Thoreau traveled to the woods in order to live more deeply and to fully savor each moment. Thoreau saw it as an opportunity to experience a sense of oneness with nature. He "is always alone but never feels lonely" because of his friendship with nature. Thoreau enjoys his seclusion because it made him feel free and in charge of his life. Additionally, the trilogy's main characters all strike a balance between sanity and insanity to some degree. Although their solitude aids in self-discovery, they fail to identify a stable, cohesive self. Instead, they find a weak and disjointed identity. In general, postmodern philosophy embraces the idea of fragmentation. Fragmentation in Auster's characters frequently results in disarray and confusion. In *Ghosts*, Blue is seen to be unwilling to accept his shattered nature, and his solitude is more compulsive than intentional.

**1.3 The Locked Room:** The third and last part of the trilogy is told by an unidentified narrator. The narrator looks for Fanshawe, who vanished a long time ago. The narrator lived with Sophie (Fanshawe's wife), whom he believed to be dead, and published Fanshawe's novels, which went on to become well-known. Later, Fanshawe writes him to let him know that he is still alive and hiding. As a result, the narrator finds it difficult to get rid of recollections of Fanshawe and decides to write the history of the man to free himself from the ghost's spectral presence. Auster's personal life is frequently referenced in *The Locked Room's* account of Fanshawe's life. Fanshawe writes alone, in contrast to other characters in Auster's work. He describes his writing as "an attempt to explore the nature of the world." Introspective creative activity can be utilized as a means of self-discovery. After reading Fanshawe's letters, the narrator concludes that given Fanshawe's situation, "solitude becomes a passageway into the self as an instrument of discovery."

In a way, the author also does not have a separate life. The author occasionally makes the impression that he is present when, in fact, he is not. Auster frequently adapts the issues they investigated and sets them in the urban environment of the 20th century. He refers to Wakefield, a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It concerns a man named Wakefield who one day deserts his wife and then vanishes without a trace. Although he lives close by and keeps an eye on what happens when he isn't home, his wife believes he is dead. He's unable to stop himself even if he's not sure why. He attends his own funeral while living alone. He returns to his former home many years later. In this instance, the lonely protagonist returns to his home at the conclusion of the narrative. However, despite being alive, Fanshawe never returns to his house in Auster's writing. The stories of Auster and Thoreau share certain similarities.

The Locked Room's narrator learns that meeting Fanshawe will be possible thanks to the biography-writing process. Later, the narrator separates from Sophie, Fanshawe's wife, and travels to Paris alone to track down new leads that might point to Fanshawe. He absolutely fails in his role as a detective and loses self-control. Fanshawe is finally seated alone in a closed room inside the narrator's head, doomed to a mysterious solitude. The narrator's isolation in this instance seems to be compulsive and obsessive.

## **2. MOON PALACE**

After losing his mother, Marco Fogg, the story's main character, now resides with his uncle Victor. He had a habit of reading his uncle's novels. Fogg sells all of his uncle's library books once he passes away in order to support himself. He lost his flat after a few days and is now disillusioned in his life. Later, he begins a new life in Central Park with Zimmer and Kitty Wu and develops feelings for her. With her assistance, he heals and agrees to take a position as Thomas Effing's manager despite being blind and paralyzed. Fogg is needed to assist Effing with writing his biography. Fogg begins to write Effing's biography, and shortly after it is finished, Effing passes away. Later, Solomon Barber, the son of Effing, receives the notes from Fogg. From this point on, Fogg realizes that Solomon is his father and that he lost control of himself. These are a variety of situations that call into question Fogg's place in society. Finally, he relocates to Central Park and sets up residence in the cave that Effing once called home. Here, the space in which he resides transforms into a dream world, and its walls are perceived as the skin of some additional body surrounding him as if his own body has been changed into a mind, a living, breathing machine of pure thought. This is how Marco's perspective is altered, and subsequently, he seeks to live outside of society's norms. Finally, he leaves the cave and travels across the continent in search of his old identity to rediscover the significance of his life and existence.

## **3. LEVIATHAN**

The story of a guy who chooses to use violence rather than words to spread his message to the world is followed in the novel by his estranged closest friend. Peter Aaron and Benjamin Sachs are the two key figures in this story. Peter recalls his memories of Ben, including their initial encounter in 1975. Ben worked as a writer in a Greenwich Village

pub at the time. Peter makes the decision to piece together Ben's life story after the FBI investigation team contacts him to learn more about Ben. They are both regarded as struggling novelists. With his "wheeling mind" and his "perfect marriage" to the lovely Fanny, Ben stands out among Peter. They both want to have an impact on the world. However, afterward, there are some rifts in Ben and Fanny's relationship. Ben experiences a shock as a result of one event. He narrowly escapes a fire before falling from a building's fourth level. This autumn is both literal and figurative. He is unable to talk as a result of the shock, and once he has recovered, he exhibits some odd behavior. However, this event makes him more likely to choose to abandon his previous way of life and adopt a new one. He started to run away from the ludicrous life he had been living. Then, as he wishes, his life started to be full of positive thoughts. Later, he walks away from Fanny and settles into a cabin in Vermont where he starts to write a new book. Later, he disappears. Finally, his cabin and all its belongings are gone, including his book, *Leviathan*. He stops communicating with Fanny, and at their final encounter, he tells Peter everything. Peter puts Ben's new life together using these details, including his relationships with Maria and her friend Lillian. The meeting between Ben and Lillian's spouse happens as a result of their friendship. Finally, a soldier named Reed enters Ben's life during the Vietnam War, and he changes the course of his life.

#### **4. THE BOOK OF ILLUSIONS**

The story of this book takes place in the late 1980s, and David Zimmer, a university professor who lost his wife and children in an aircraft crash, is the protagonist. David Zimmer's perspective is used to tell the story. Hector Mann is an actor who has been missing since the 1920s. Hector Mann's silent comedy is chosen by the isolated man to watch. By viewing every Mann movie and writing a book about them, he decides to make some adjustments in his life. However, he was also stimulated by a different set of themes that enable him to delve even further into the actor's past. Most of the middle of the novel is devoted to detailing Hector Mann's life.

#### **5. THE INVENTION OF SOLITUDE**

'The Book of Memory' and 'Portrait of An Invisible Man' are the two distinct sections of this memoir. As a son, he writes about his father's lack of concern for him in the first section. But he expresses his love for his father through his creative endeavors. The duties of a father, however, are never important to his father. Here, it becomes clear that the author is cut off from both his father's love and his own sense of self. He started thinking back on his father through the items left behind.

He reiterates his explanation of the father-son relationship in *The Book of Memory*. He uses the tale of a son who saved his father to illustrate his devotion, and this serves as an illustration of Auster's realization. Auster says in this passage that he could continue to live and cope with his loss only through writing. This implies his solitude, which he used as a retreat to start changing how he felt about his life and his father.

## CONCLUSION

Concepts like confinement, caves, space, isolation, etc. show how limited people's thinking is. However, people attempt to comprehend the meaninglessness of their previous lives by standing on these concepts. As a result, being alone allows people to discover and comprehend life's true meaning without being bound by social conventions and constraints. The severe social regulations have not improved people's lives in any way. Because of this, they want to live freely and separate from conventional conventions. The writers of the Romantic era also employed these ideas. They utilize this to illustrate how confined people's lives are, particularly in the post-modern era. The issue of the Indian people's restricted way of life has also been explored by authors like E.M. Forster.

Writing is viewed by Paul Auster as a lonely occupation, which is not a bad thing. He sees loneliness as having a great deal of creative potential. He also tries to highlight potential risks that could arise if an author spends too much time absorbed in his work. Auster's loss of control and perception of reality is visible in 'The New York Trilogy.' The word "isolation" in *The Invention of Solitude* refers to a way to avoid social interaction or a location to hide that has a negative effect on someone who is extremely near to us. The bond between Auster and his father is a prime example of this. In his work, Auster asserts that it is impossible for a person to enter another person's head. In this sense, we may argue that nobody is alone in this world and that no one can truly comprehend what another person is feeling on the inside. The mind therefore always moves alone.

Paul Auster frequently explores the idea of space and room in his writing. This is done to help people become more conscious of the need to incorporate new ideas and viewpoints into their lives. Being alone is being isolated. But everyone must embrace being alone for Auster. In order to achieve spirituality, he encourages individuals to be free in their decisions and think intuitively. 'The Moon Palace' exhibits something similar. Auster's characters are typically depicted in solitude in his works, although they are never depressed. To comprehend the true purpose of life, one must depart from social standards. People who live in isolation spend most of their time in rooms or caves and avoid interacting with other members of society. Their capacity to live in a world that benefits them grows as a result. Auster also led an isolated life and was a lonely man. He wants the public to comprehend their inner selves through his works.

Thus, a brief journey through Paul Auster's renowned works gives an interesting account of the author's immense ability to use the elements of space, isolation, confinement, solitude, etc. to enable his readers to experience the life and actions of the literary characters much related to real life human emotions. The intimate contact and communication, Paul Auster establishes and maintains with his own characters as well as readers makes him a craft man in the creation of emotions and images. Space, time, and varying life situations prompt the characters of Paul Auster to behave organically and thereby develop a passionate communion with the author as well as readers.

## REFERENCES

1. H. D. Thoreau, 1998b (1854). *Walden, or Life in the Woods*. In *The Norton Anthology*



- of American Literature (2 vols.). Eds. N. Baym et al. New York, NY: Norton. I: 1768-1943.
2. Auster, Paul. *City of Glass* in *The New York Trilogy*. London: Faber (1987). 3-132.
  3. Kornblatt, Reiser Joyce. *The Remarkable Journey of Marco Stanley Fogg*. New York Times Book Review (1989). 8-9.
  4. Auster, Paul. *Leviathan*. Paperback edition by Penguin Books, (1990). Print.
  5. Auster, Paul. *The New York Trilogy*. New York: Penguin Books, (1990). Print.
  6. Auster, Paul. *Leviathan*. London: Faber (1992).
  7. Auster, Paul. *Moon Palace*. Faber and Faber Limited. London, (1989).
  8. Auster, Paul. *The Invention of Solitude*. New York: Sun and Moon Press, 1982. Print.
  9. Auster, Paul. *The Book of Illusions*. Faber and Faber Limited. London, (2003).
  10. Sarton, May. *Journal of a Solitude*. (1973). Pp. 90-91.
  11. Chanda, S.M. *A Passage to India: a close look in studies in the literature* (Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi 2003).
  12. Villada, Bell. Gene H. (2002). *Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude: A Casebook*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-514455-4
  13. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. (2003), Harper Collins: New York ISBN 0-06-088328-6, the post-script section entitled: P.S. Insights, Interviews & More. pp. 2-12.
  14. Angel, Gonzalez Jesus. "Western Images in Paul Auster's Work: From Moon Palace to Later Fiction (Chapter 4 of *Beyond the Myth: New Perspectives on Western Texts*)" ResearchGate, January 12, [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net).
  15. Hegarty, Emma. "The Practice of Solitude: Agency and the Postmodern Novelist in Paul Auster's *Leviathan*." 23.5 (2009). 850-1