Existential Nihilism Revisited in Selected Novels of Paul Auster

By

Fatmeh Waleed Alawneh

Supervisor:

Prof. Fadia Suyoufie

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature and Criticism at Yarmouk University

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Thesis examination committee:

Prof. Fadia Suyoufie .................................. (Chair)
Dr. Hana Khassawneh .................................. (Member)
Prof. Tarek Musleh .................................... (Member)

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Dedication

For my parents and my fiancé

I love you
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Abstract

This thesis examines Paul Auster’s revisiting of existential nihilism in *In the Country of Last Things* (1987), and *Mr. Vertigo* (1994). It shows how the characters of these novels adapt to nihilism in what is called “active nihilism” through embodying a positive attitude in a nihilistic world. The characters are analyzed in light of Gianni Vattimo’s philosophical views of nihilism.

The thesis also demonstrates that the characters transform from a state of passive nihilism into a state of active nihilism through resorting to a form of art as a strategy of coping with hardships.