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Recovery of Pain: Psychoanalytic Reading of Stanley Kunitz's Selected Poems

A B S T R A C T

This research examines Stanley Kunitz's poems in the light of psychoanalytic reading. In particular it tackles the topic of recovery and past wounds in Kunitz's poetic texts. Kunitz has suffered from disordered childhood because of his father's suicide few weeks before his birth. This event is an important point which causes Kunitz's plight and is responsible for shaping his tattered identity. Kunitz is unaware to this pain, since it is buried in the unconscious mind, which is the store for hidden pain, repressed feelings and dark wishes to reappear in his adulthood. Kunitz's uniqueness and bravery are located in the way he confronts his wounds. This research concludes that Kunitz revisits the roots and seeds of his pain and its cause and tries to recover it.

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التعافي من الألم: قراءة التحليل النفسي لقصائد مختارة من ستانلي كونيترز

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الخلاصة:

يقوم البحث بدراسة التحليل النفسي في قصائد الشاعر ستانلي كونيترز. ويعالج على وجه الخصوص موضوع معالجة الألم وجروح الماضي. كونيترز عانى من طفولة مضطربة بسبب انتحار والده بأسابيع قليلة قبل ولادته بسبب الافلاس. هذا الحدث كان نقلة جوهرية سببت مشكلة نفسية للشاعر والتي كانت مسؤولة

عن تكوين شخصيته الممزقة. كونتز كان غير واعٍ لألمه تماماً لأن هذا الألم كان مخزوناً بالعقل اللاواعي الذي يعتبر المخزن الرئيسي للترغبات المقموعة و الألم المخفي والترغبات المظلمة لتظهر مرة أخرى وتلازمه في مرحلة النضج. شجاعة كونتز تكمن في مواجهة ألمه والعودة لبذور هذا الألم من أجل معالجته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ستانلي كونتز، الألم، الذاكرة، المواجهة، التعافي، الطفولة.

1.1 Introduction

After his long suffering with years of deprivation and loss, Kunitz decided to skip his pain and get remedy. Kunitz's bravery lies in the way that he confronts his pain and eliminates it from its roots. Kunitz's pain adopts various forms to appear like depression, need, anger and revisiting the past and painful memories. This chapter concentrates deeply on the idea of recovery. Despite his pain that has rooted in his personality as a poet and as a person, he can get recovery by healing the seeds of this pain by revisiting the wreckage of his childhood to recover and cure the opened wounds and confronts his loss.

The theory of "getting through" and "acting out" by the theorist Dominick Lacapra has been adopted in Kunitz's poems. The final poems which reveal the spiritual peace prove that the triggers of pain can damage the individual completely. Despite Kunitz's isolation and loneliness, his decision of confrontation has pushed him to realize peace and recovery.

In fact, self –disappointment is considered the basic emotion which correlates the mental pain. The psyche in its depth is a state of psychological pain which is associated with feelings of anguish, fear, loneliness, guilt, panic, angst and hopelessness. Frustrated psychological need is the primary source of intense and severe psych ache, as in the state of Stanley Kunitz . Despite the hardship in life , he continues to resist such miserable feelings about his father's death ,mother's carelessness and harsh treatment which left nothing just damage and leads to devastation .After a long exposure to suffering , need , loss of self , tattering identity and lack of affection, Kunitz directs his attention to overcome such feeling and suffering and fighting the ghost of the painful past which chases him in every minute details of his life. Even the failure of his matrimonial life results from his clinging with negative effects of his painful events. Kunitz's perfection lies in the ways and the power to return to the past and confronts this imprisoned memories and adopting child's voice after his indulgence in the year of deprivation and self-denial.

1.2 "The Layers"

Kunitz's first step of recovery lies in his poem "The Layers". This poem carries the title of its collection in (1978). This poem in actuality carries the meaning of loss and death which covers Kunitz's work, but at the same time it implies the resolution and confrontation of pain and leaving the past behind and forwards for the bright present and the future. It is a kind of moving and emotional journey that depicts the speaker's choice to overcome his miserable past and recover his pain and suffering . In fact, the speaker visualizes his life by using series of stinging images . This poem presents Kunitz's firsthand experience . Despite its sad tone , this poem carries the meaning of hope and brightness in its undercurrent meaning. The poet's overwhelming idea of need ,agony and the obsession of the deceased father enables him to build up his own kingdom which has been scattered away :

Oh , I have made myself a tribe
Out of my true affections and my tribe is scattered (Stanley Kunitz, 2020,17-19)

Despite this loss and distraction by the poet and the submission to his traumatic memories , he tries his efforts to turn this pain into something positive and as a point to set out to remove any tarnishes inside him and forwards to get rid of this negative energy and power which have imprisoned him for years and crippled his soul . His process of "self- discovery leads him inexorably to offer some disclosure , partial or complete of what has been long buried , but not totally forgotten" (Lijunquigust , 2013 , 22 , 23) . The poet in this poem tries to create peace out of loss and suffering. He summons the will to keep going in spite of sadness and sorrow . He tries to outstrip his hardship and adversity . This poem is a kind of "a journey to the interior " (Gale , 1997 , p.5). It is actually "an exploration of the poet's inner psychic realm using the metaphor of a journey through a difficult landscape" (Gale , 1997 , P.5).

The first speaker in this poem looks back to the journey of his life and the changes that he wants to create which include visiting the difficult situations that has undergone his losses. In spite of "these losses , the poet looks forward to the roaming years , he expects more transformations and changes and he embraces whatever awaits him next" (Gale , 1997 , P.1). Kunitz's later works including "The Layers" are entirely from his early works in the way that

Kuntz's poetry together in this book is that it lets us watch the quest of a poet in search of his true voice . The early poems lack it . They are intellectual and dense , sometimes you crack the code , sometimes not . They are tightly rhymed and metered in a way that sometimes feels by

the numbers , But as times goes on the Kunitz
voice emerges . (Cambell , 2000 , 3)

The poet's inner voice is about the quest for the father and to encounter his painful fate and recover it. Kunitz's later poems are considered the best because they contain the poet's quest to reconcile with himself and achieve the inner peace. Cambell states that Kuntz's later poems are

composed in simple relaxed English , usually in
loose three beat lines , without rhymes but with
inner music . They are clear on the surface , with
much going on down below . Perhaps the only
blemish is an occasional tendency after the real
poem is over, to add few words or lines to raise it to
some epigrammatic epiphany it hasn't fully earned .
(Cambell , 2020 , 3)

Certainly, all these descriptions befit "The layers". This poem provides the reader with the power and atmosphere to meditate his own life with its meditative tone . Kunitz here has created powerful images from his past and tried to describe them through clear language . He describes the struggle that has gone through in order to escape from his painful memories . This poem is considered as a direct and personal one that in its depth gets the heart of what it reflects to be changed and removed in one's life.

The images that the poet displays convey the idea that life is full of transformations and change . He states :

I have walked through many lives
Some of them my own
I am not who I was ,
Though some principle of being
Abides from which I struggle
Not to stray
When I look behind I am compelled to look
Before I can gather strength
To proceed on my journey,
I see the milestones dwindling
Toward the horizon
And the slow fires trailing
From the abandoned camp- cites
Over which scavenger angels

Wheel on heavy wings (1-6)

The speaker of the poem lives different roles in his life. Now if he looks back to his past pain , he will see nothing just wasteland and ruin . He endeavors and struggles to overcome his crisis. As Kunitz has stated in an interview with Marry Jo Palumbo stating that:

as time goes on , we keep stripping the excesses
 , the diversions , and the waste from ourselves.
We are reduced to mere phenomenon of
survival and that's at the center of one's whole
being . The real fight is to save one's soul and
keep it alive. (Palumbo , 1974 , 42)

The "sites" and "milestones" that the poet mentions stand for his painful moments and stages in his personal history which stick out . They refer to turning points as well as the moments of hardship and solidity where he has been in one place or one kind of individual through specific period of time , but now , he is no longer so. They are now left behind and "abandoned". Even the fires have been left to band themselves until they transform to ashes . Kunitz's painful memories rekindle inside him until there are nothing to be left ,just peace and tranquility. The poet's realization to reach the point of content about himself and his past is the turning point to transfer him to the safety land where is no sorrow and worry and cast his burden behind . Kunitz accepts the idea of surrender and the inevitability of death. He states :

Yet I turn , I turn
Exulting somewhat
With my will intact to go
Whatever I need to go
And every stone on the road
Precious to me
In my darkest night
When the moan was covered
And I roamed through wreckage
A nimbus – clouded voice
Directed me "Live in the layers,
Not on the litter"
Though I lack the art
To decipher it ,
No doubt the next chapter
In my book of transformations
Is already written

I am not done with my changes (The Layers, 26-44)

The poet tries to achieve reconciliation with his past and he makes transition and takes decision to accept the layers of his life and not live off in the litter. The poem ends with reconciliation determined and hopeful note. The speaker's determination is to go on and transfer himself into positive state of mind despite "feast of losses" stems from his positive outlook about his past . He wants to move beyond the past . Even the "stones" on the road of his past are considered "precious" because they no longer torment him. In the final lines, while he is roaming through the wreckage of his painful personal history a god – like voice directs him "a nimbus –clouded voice". This voice is the voice of resolution and the voice of peace which stems from his inner psyche and invites him to improve himself and liberate himself from the shackles of sorrow, anguish and replaces this inner pain with hope and happiness. It invites him to stop looking back to his negative memories which have burdened him heavily and go ahead . This voice , in fact tells him to elevate himself and "live in the layers, not on the litter". He should take the strength from the experience and the layer of his pessimistic life. This experience should fuel him not to stay hanging in the litter , the memories of his past and worrying over the messy that has happened to him . The conclusion of the poem is "I am not done with my changes" (L, 44) refers that the poet will continue to grow and move away from his depressive state of mind and disappointment to the most prosperous one.

This poem "is definitely not about death, but a marvelous expression of encountering, then rising above life's most devastating experiences of loss and death" (Al zwelef , 2014 , 132). Embracing pain for Kunitz is the first step to defy his sorrow. Owning that pain, revealing its embarrassing details participate fundamentally in putting his steps on the right path of complete recovery. It is a rule of thumb that there is no healthy jumping to recovery or peace without going in the discipline of treatment . He undergoes the premature pain in which he has only pain without indulgence in its roots then his bravery to check his hidden spots of pain that are locked by his mother and community. Finally , the confrontation of sorrow on its true land is the actual land of pain . Steps can be skipped in treatment of pain . Foot should be put in front of another foot since there is no shortcut in treating pain. All these stages appear elegantly in his poetry which turns to be a field or a means for healing his ailing soul.

It is obviously , that recovery from psychoanalytic perspective is more closely of how the individual tries to relate to his depressive experience . Psychoanalysis goal is to treat the psychological problem from its roots . It is clear that

psychoanalysis therapy is used to release repressed emotions and experiences . The goal

is to make unconscious thoughts conscious .
This kind of therapy is meant to find the root
cause of the problem and cure it. (Bernan ,
2021 , 1)

Kunitz revisits the roots of his crisis and painful spots in his life in order to recover it and overcome his hardship. Kunitz has determined the location of pain and diagnosed it and set out to treat it . Sigmund Freud's theory that psychoanalysis is:

a type of therapy that is used to treat
depression and anxiety disorders . This type
of therapy promotes awareness of
unconscious , unproductive ,recurring
patterns of emotion and behavior . This
allows previously unconscious parts of
yourself to come together to promote healing
, healthy emotions and behavior , and creative
expressions. (Brenan , 2021 , 1)

Thus , Kunitz's intense effort for recovery is revealed in "The Layers."
Kunitz here follows psychological track towards the point of liberation . Kunitz
states that "I am more interested in what I perceive to be the persistence of the
self through all my changes" (Lijungquist , 2013 , 27). The point of perception
of what Kunitz has achieved is so important to his turning point towards
skipping his anguish. Kunitz's self-reconciliation does not mean to admit the
fault of his father and tries to amend it , but instead it means Kunitz's self –
confidence and his ability of confrontation and accept the reality with its good
and evil and what it carries from psychological variations . Kunitz tries to
achieve balance between his psyche ,his body and what both of them entail to
be satisfied and to fulfill the spiritual stagnation. In order for, Kunitz to
achieve self – reconciliation , he should absist the ring of illusion that relates
him to the past and its impurities. The self-reconciliation looks a philosophical
idea and indicates to Kunitz at the beginning of his indulgence in his pain and is
surrounded by an illusion of mystery and he is unable to accomplish it.

Kunitz's idea of recovery comes from his decision to visit the places and the
wreckage of the past physically in order to root out the pain. Kunitz "admitted
openly in his later poems that his own early experiences in life were shocking"
(Alzwelef , 2014 , 132) . His feeling that world is neglectful and unresponsive.
He felt that he has alienated from the young aspiration and he has only paid
little attention to them. However , Kunitz:

has come into good terms with life despite its difficulties , and who has adopted a belief in change that enabled him to be more responsive caring and sympathetic at heart, mind and soul .
(Alzwelef , 2014 , 132)

Kunitz's intense feelings towards his father and his struggling in order to reach the stage of recovery reaches its highest. He began step by step in getting remedy until he achieves peace and tranquility.

1.3 "Father and Son"

In his poem "Father and Son" , Kunitz gains perfect recovery from his past wounds. This poem is from the collection *passport to the war* 1944. It is the outstanding poem in this collection . Kunitz tries to "pick up the lost-father motif" (Goodyear , 2003 , 8) and to achieve self –recovery by confronting his father's ghost . He describes how to pursue his dead father to his graveyard through "twilight fields of suburban Worcester" (Goodyear, 2003 , 8). He imagines restoring to the lost time. In this poem the quest for the father and the bid for therapy are embodied in the highest form. Kunitz endeavors to encounter his dead father in order to tell him how life is difficult without him . He states:

Now in the suburbs and the falling light ,
I followed him , and now down sandy road ,
Whiter than bone-dust, through the sweet
Curdle of fields , where the plumps
Dropped with their load of ripeness, one by one
Mile after mile I followed , with skimming feet
After the secret master of my blood
Him, steeped in the odor of ponds, whose indomitable love
Kept me in chains. Strode years; stretched into bird;
Raced through the sleeping country where I was young
The silence unrolling before me as I came,
The night nailed like an orange to my brow (1-12)

Tracing childhood fields and the ghost-like father are the first stages to prepare therapy and get rid of the painful chains of past which shackle him . Kunitz tries to reach the secret master of his blood. His bid behind this quest is" to discover the secret self – the hidden self , the voice behind the mask" (Lijungquist , 2013 , 26). The implicit irony of Kunitz's situation is that he

pleads for instruction on how to lead his life from the dead one who has destroyed his life and himself by his own hands.

At the water's edge , where the smothering ferns lifted ,
Their arm , "Father " I cried , "return" you know
The way I ll wipe the mudstains from your clothes ,
No trace , I promise , will remain . Instruct
Your sun , whirling between two wars
In the German of your gentleness (1-6)

Kunitz is too bonded with his father . This poem is written in the time of the second world war. Therefore , Kunitz is overburdened with fear and anxiety. So he pleads his father to relieve him and at the same time to heal his wounds of the past by tracing and revisiting them physically . Returning to the injury and searching for them as Edward Hirsch regards as "one of the driving motifs of grounding truth , and takes on archetypal status" (Hirsch, 2004, 1). The poet in this poem addresses his ghost like father by saying that "no trace , I promise will remain " (Stanza 3 , Line, 4). This alludes that the poet submits to self-wake and he no longer follows his ghostlike father. In fact , the father quest for Kunitz has started in futility . He has searched for the father who would provide affection and help .This hints to his pursuit to his identity and self-awareness , but the father he has found could not respond. The implicit irony in this situation is that the living one pleads the mercy and support of the dead one who cannot even secure himself.

The reflective analysis of this poem suggests that Kunitz expresses his intense feeling for his deceased father. The tone and the powerful language of the poem exactly substantiate this view. It reveals the poets great bond to his father which has kept him in chains through the indomitable love that he has towards him to follow the path of his father. Kunitz in this poem deeply confronts his traumas and psychic pain . This reflects the poet's creativity to reflect his trauma by tone , language and imagery. Kunitz tells his ghostlike father that he has pledged himself to be a child for those who are in suffering and a father to fatherless sons. He states:

For I would be a child to those who mourn
And brother to the foundlings of the fields
And friend of innocence and all bright eyes
O teach me how to work and keep me kind (7-10)

This bid by Kunitz is a part of therapy to confront his fate and get rid of his past. Kunitz once was asked in an interview about how he has achieved inner balance and he replied by saying that "in a way I become the father"(Lijngquist , 2013 , 56). His decisive revelation that will no longer be a captive to his dark

memories . He admits the power of poetry and imagination in healing the soul. Kunitz asserts in an interview stating that

the distinguishing attribute of the imagination is its power to reconcile contradictions, and I came to believe that the way to become whole was through the exercise of that healing power. (Lijungquist , 2013 , 25)

As he continues to state that in these poems "I am trying to reconcile flesh with spirit , time with eternity" (Lijungquist , 2013 , 25). The impetus for change impels him to skip odds. Kunitz takes up his "central subject in earnest in his groundbreaking second book *Passport to the War 1944*" (Hirsch , 2004 , 1). In fact Kunitz's search for the father means the searching for the poet's lost self in the lost years . Hirsch states that "to find a father is to find oneself" (Hirsch, 2004, 2). Therefore, if finding a mother can build peace and relieve for any individual , finding a father can present a basis of existence for the poet. Kunitz's sense of quest for the lost father who in actuality can never be found and the impossibility of his achievement has reached its apex in in this poem "Father and son". It is hauntingly explicit confrontation of pain . In addition to that is "to become a father is to reenact an archetypal mystery . That is to become part of majestic drama" (Hirsch , 2004 , 2).

This poem is written from the perspective of the tattered and thirsty son for his father . This theme haunts the imagination of a whole generation of other poets. Correspondingly :

Male or female , poets are forever trying against the odds , to recapture their innocence. That arduous pursuit is one of the secrets of creative survival , a means of renewing and purifying imagination. (Kunitz , 1978 , 2)

This is filial relationship of Kunitz to his father , being "taken for granted in a mere stable society , simply , did no excite the poetic imagination" (Kunitz , 1978, 2). The theme of father –son relationship in this poem is considered an authentic cultural manifestation . This poem in its richness ,anguish and power of words provides "an insight not only into existential sources , but into the mythological heart of a culture in crisis" (Kunitz , 1978, 2). Mourning his father does not incline to idolize him , therefore "the death of the father is viewed less as an occasion for a devotional exercise than as a summons to testify about a

failed intimacy , a failed life , perhaps to redeem it through a new effort of understanding" (Kunitz , 1978 , 4).

Kunitz tries to unburden himself from the painful memories of his father. At the end of the poem , in his searching for his father, Kunitz announces a shattering revelation , stating:

Among the turtles and the lilies he turned his face to me
The white ignorant hollow of his face (11-12).

These lines are written in the feeling of elation despite the night marish quality of them. Now, the ghostly father has shown his terrible face and has gone back to his destructive element . Jopalumbo says that in this poem Kunitz

alludes to a father unknown or dead , a haunting or elusive figure. In this dream – poem , the narrator follows a ghost like father figure down a dirt road , pleading for some kind of guidance and direction . He asks this figure for instruction in how to be gentle. (Jopalumbo , 1974 , 41)

Thus, the end of the poem is the real encounter between Kunitz and his ghostlike father and this alludes to a "chilling encounter with death" (Jopalumbo , 1974 , 41). This simply gives a hint to the solution and self –reconciliation . Kunitz goes in searching for the ghostly father in order to be reconciled in a healing embrace. It is obviously that "death and life , continuity and change present another set of paradoxes that drive this poet" (Jopalumbo , 1974 , 41). kunitz states in an interview with Jopalumbo "we are all changing and holding fast to some kind of personal center living and dying at the same time" (Jopalumbo , 1974 , 41). This poem is a dramatic four stanza ballad that leans somewhat towards blank verse . The poem's tenor is understated by the neutrality of the "and" of the title which suggests either the son's worry in coming to terms with his father or the relationship's inevitable one-sidedness.

1.4 "Journal for My Daughter"

In "Journal for My Daughter", Kunitz adopts a new role to face his problem. This poem is from the volume *The Testing Tree* (1971). The poet here in this poem adopts a new role . He turns from the quest to the lost father and the excessive need to a father to a lost son to be "Waken to another role , a glittering new world of responsibility" (Hirsch , 2004 , 2). Kunitz tries to

compensate his feeling of lack for his father by giving his affection to his daughter. It is another type of remedy that Kunitz tries to adapt. Becoming a father to involve reenacting a mythic mystery. That is to be a part of a magnificent drama. He declares right away :

Your turn .Grass of confession
You say you had a father once
His name was absence
He felt but didn't let you go
Part of him , more than a shadow
Beconed down the corridors ,
Secret , elusive , saturnine
Melting at your touch
In the crack
Of a divided house
Grew the resentment weed
It has white inconspicuous flowers
Family of anthologists
Collectors of injuries (1-14)

The revival of father's anniversary as a way to get treatment is a vital way to heal his soul. This memory has no more injured him, but on the contrary gives him impulse to be a father for other fatherless children , to confront his traumatic experience of childhood by another trauma or getting through injuries and wounds which are the main causes and triggers of his problem. It is a type of therapy which has been adapted by Lacapra to eliminate pain and its triggers. In order for this to be applied , the individual should relive the same situation which causes his injury. The treatment of shock with shock aids the individual and the patient to leave from his coma and recover his consciousness and goes back to his senses. This type of therapy is the best way which has been followed by Kunitz to eliminate his pain and deaden it from its roots.

The concept of "working through" which has been developed by the theorist Lacapra (1939) includes childhood injuries and its recovery , is important with "respect to events or a series of events , that are heavily charged with emotion and value, and that always bring out an implication of the observer in the observed" (Lacapra and Goldberg , 1998 , P.1). In this poem , his daughter's situation resembles his own experience. Here , Kunitz tries to fill the gap and need of his daughter as a way of skipping his problem and to save his daughter from living the same situation and experience as his own. The last two lines suggests that "both father and daughter take a certain delight in collecting "injuries" in their mental anthologies : suffering all too easily becomes a way of life" (Perloff , 1972 , P. 94). His memories have an old habit of coming back to haunt him. Kunitz's mind circles back to the past as he ponders the difficult

world of the present. This poem is remarkable and brilliant because it takes the poet back to his past memories. This way of confrontation of pain and conveying the promise that enables kunitz to live victoriously over his plight and injury.

1.5 "The Guilty Man"

In his poem "The Guilty Man", Kunitz moves to another stage of recovery. This poem is from the volume *Passport to the War* (1944). It outlines the poet's spiritual encounter with the ghostly father which concludes the hint of hope and remedy from the darkness of life. This is truly was declared by Kunitz to speak about his recovery. It is a real address to the ghostly father. Kunitz declares :

The years of my life were odd that now are even
Think to be young , amused ,and not a fool,
Playing the world's game- think –with world's own rules,
And nothing lost , I think , I think ... but years
Heart against mouth is singing out of tune
Night's whisperings and blanks betrayed ; this is
The end of lies : my bone are angry with me (1-7)

Kunitz bluntly declares that these years of deprivation, excessive yearning for the father and overbearing pain are ended and replaced by plethora and fecundity after long suffering. Kunitz explains that his bones are unpleasant with him because of his lies. Kunitz proclaims this truth addressing his father saying that the darkness of the self and soul has faded away, the disease and pain that haunt his exhausted soul spread and scatter. He is awaked from his inattention in a cloud of darkness and whenever he kneels the darkness kneels with him. This is a very attractive expression which means that instead of his kneeling to his harsh circumstances , they kneel to him. They submit to his own desire . He no longer suffers. His only protection is his liberated self from the years of anguish. Kunitz states :

Father , the darkness of the self goes out ,
And spreads contagion on the flowing air
I walk obscurely in a cloud of dark
Yea , when I kneeled , the dark kneeled down with me
Touch me my fold and my defenses fall
I stand with in myself my shield (Stanza 2 , 1-6)

His only ammunition is his crossing over his ache. As Kunitz notes in an interview

when I speak of "The guilty Man" , I don't mean someone who has sinned more than anybody else . I mean the person who, simply by being mortal , is in a way condemned ; he's mortal , and he's fallible , and his life is inevitably a series of errors and consequences. (Davis , 1974, P. 35)

The poet has denied the innocence rapture because he cannot see the right path. It is not given to him to perceive it except in the revelation moments . Kunitz takes new direction in his later poems to be more blunt in his language and what it is called the drift of the age , a movement away from tortured formality towards prosaic relaxation , away from metaphor and indirection towards clarity, , the literal truth" (Stitt , 1980 , P.374). This style is the best way to express his pain explicitly and how to recover it. Kunitz himself has explained the change in his way stating that:

A high style wants to be fed exclusively on high sentiment. Given the kind of person I am , I came to see the need for a middle style – for a low style , even though that may be outside my range. (Stitt , 1980 , 347)

This statement that is mentioned earlier cruelly assumes that the poem's voice should in some way represents the poet's personality It describes "the struggle for identity , the complexities of love in its physical and spiritual aspects , the mystery of death –all themes which typically absorb young poets" (Parini , 1980, 370) and the solution of the problems because it contains self – assertion that the moon of the soul and its hope accompany the poet to give him blooming over darkness and relaxation after tiring and peace after chaos .In this poem one finds "a deepening of perspective" (Parini , 1980 , 371) and more self – distancing.

In this poem, guilt is presented on "a personal and family level" (Ljugquist , 2013 , 82). The title of the volume *Passport to the War* suggests "a wartime reckoning when the speaker in a sequence of poems confront the consequences of guilt and despair" (Lijungquist , 1993, 82). In response to his wartime and painful psychological crisis and the influence of the war, this poem opens the gate towards more revelation about self and awareness about the strayed and lost years in the poet's life. Kunitz conveys his opinion stating "my struggle is to use the life in order to transcend it, to convert it to legend" (Moss , 1993, XV). Kunitz's primordial goal is to reconcile with his reality and the roots of his

reality which causes his entire plight and effects his complete works. As William Packard, the interviewer, has asked him that the originality of any poetry lies in the "poet's finding his own key images , those that go back to his roots and traumas . Can a poet talk about those images" (Moss ,1993 , 11). He replies stating that:

not unless he's very sick , or very foolish.
Some poets are both . One oughtn't to try to
explain everything away, even if one could .
It's enough to reconcile oneself to the existence
of an image from which one never gets very
far. (Moss , 1993, 11)

Kunitz uses poetry as a means to survive. It has the power to heal psychological and spiritual disease . It is just like swimming in the sea , and swimming "through levels of darkness towards some kind of light" (Moss, 1993, 14) to reach the surface. The survival correctly lies in its surface.

1.6 "Night Letter"

In "Night Letter" , Kunitz beseeches any power to give him the patience and motivation to confront his ghostly father. This is another step for getting remedy. This poem is from the collection *Passport to the War* (1944). In this poem , the poet speaks about how he remembers his painful memories and tries to amend them saying that he has lived the years of violence in his childhood that have shattered his dreams and his emotions have frozen by such harshness .He states:

Pardon , I plead ,clutching the fragile sleeve
Of my poor father's ghost returned to howl
His wrongs . I suffer the twenties century
The nerves of commerce wither in my arm,
Violence shakes my dreams ; I am so cold
Child by the persecuting wind abroad
The oratory of the rodent's tooth
The slaughter of the blue-eyed open towns (37-44)

Kunitz's quest for his father continues in this poem, his pleading to the ghostly father to grant him peace after long suffering in his lost years. He suffered the years of disgraceful because of his father's wrong deed . He was born and generated the oration of the lemmings and denial which have resulted nothing just havoc and destroying fields in his life. Now what he pleads and implores

his ghostlike father to grant him peace. Getting peace is the first step of therapy. Getting down with sorrow , agony and deprivation continues to the late age of Kunitz life. Kunitz's case to relive the past and his excessive quest for his ghostly father is a type of getting vital treatment .

As Lacapra has explained in his theory of "getting through" and "working out". Acting out in Lacapra's view is "related to repetition-compulsion –the tendency to repeat something compulsively" (Lacapra and Goldberg , 1998 , 2). This is very clear in the case of Kunitz who has undergone a painful experience of childhood injuries. The individual in this case has tendency to relive the past with all its details as if they are in the present , to

exist in the present as if they were still fully in the past with no distance from it. They tend to relive occurrences, or at least find those occurrences intrude on their present existence. (Lacapra and Goldberg , 1998 , 2)

Kunitz's physically existence in his past memories truly fits this type of therapy . Accordingly, Kunitz in this poem seems to ask for any super power that connects him with the ghost of his father . He wishes to inform him about the pain in his heart for his wrong departure from life. About the stultifying of his son's happiness, he questions if he can regain peace or it is over.

After his attempts fail in delivering a letter after writing it to his ghostlike father, Kunitz seems to plead the supernatural power to aid him to encounter his ghostly father. He states :

The urgent letter that I try to write
Night after night to you to whom I turn ,
The staunchless word , my language of the wound
Begins to strain the page . Here in my room
With my un kenneled need ,
The Faustian dog
That chews my penitential bones , I hope
And don't hope
I pray and mock my prayer
Twisting my coils , this dangling life of mine,
Now twelve years come of age , and me un pleased
with all my ways , my very littlest ones ,
My part , my lines , unless you hold them dear .
Where is your ministry ?
I thought I heard
A peace of laughter break upon the stairs (1-13)

The poet wants to deliver his internal voice to his father thinking this is the best way to express his sadness then to cross it successfully and without hesitation . Kunitz's writing is the means to reach his bid in order to recover from his pain.

1.7 Conclusion

After long exposure to years of need , depression and pain, Kunitz tries to save himself from these shackles of suffering. Kunitz as a poet does not describe his feeling of need and deprivation bluntly. His poems offer his pain metaphorically, but he no more can bear this anguish , therefore his poems reveal this painful and hidden fact. The triggers of childhood injury haunt Kunitz over the rest of his life , but Kunitz uniqueness lies in the way of his indulgence in his past and recover its seeds. He directs his attention by revisiting his childhood injury physically to get remedy.

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