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# Intermediality and Narrative Identity in Paul Auster's Oeuvre

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**INTERMEDIALITY AND NARRATIVE IDENTITY IN PAUL AUSTER'S OEUVRE**

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The art is the thing itself, a life in its most naked delineation. And if there is beauty in this, it is because of the beauty we feel inside ourselves.
(Auster, “On the High Wire” 439)

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## Introduction

Contemporary critical opinion regarding intermediality[1] between different forms of art reflects a continuous awareness of the blurred boundaries between film and literary text, pointing at their interconnectedness, intermingling, as well as transmutation. As film and literature have different signifying systems, comparative analyses between the two are often limited to issues of adaptations, modes of engagement, and the ways of changing apparatuses of enunciation. Paul Auster is one of those writers whose works offer a compelling vision of the nature of literary works strongly influenced by the cinematic/graphic medium and of films that incorporate elements from other art forms: literature, photography, and concept art.

Criticism on Auster generally focuses on the literary texts, often following a few recognizable trends; for example, psychological crises that the characters of Auster's novels often face have drawn increasing critical attention in relation to mostly psychoanalytical as well as poststructuralist theory. Several scholarly articles and books have been dedicated to the complex and rich relevance of spatial theories (e.g., Baudelaire's, Jameson's, De Certeau's) as related to key themes prevalent in Auster's oeuvre.[2]

During the last two decades a great number of scholarly articles have been devoted to Auster's works. Notable critical attention started with the publication of the first collection of essays, *Beyond the Red Notebook: Essays on Paul Auster* (1995) edited by Dennis Barone. A great number of books followed, focusing on Auster's entire oeuvre through analyzing one or more recurring themes, such as the self-reflexive tools that consistently deconstruct and destabilize traditional interpretation (bringing about fragmentation, lack of closure) of the texts, undermining epistemological confidence, and reformulating the meaning of aesthetic values. Aliki Varvogli discusses intertextual connections with great precursors from the literary canon and with other cultural texts as well. Ilana Shiloh's study examines eight texts and analyzes them through the motif of the characters' futile postmodern quest. Mark Brown

[1] Interpreting Rolf Kloepfer, Ágnes Pethő prefers the term *transmediality*, to denote the blurring boundaries between film and literature and the continuous shifts regarding their apparatuses of enunciation. The term is also an analogy with Genette's concept of transtextuality (*Képátvitelek* 34).

[2] One of the most thorough analyses is Markku Salmela's *Paul Auster's Spatial Imagination*. Also relevant in the present context are: Markus Rheindorf's "Processes of Embodiment and Spatialization in the Writings of Paul Auster"; Tim Woods's "Looking for Signs in the Air: Urban Space and the Postmodern in *In the Country of Last Things*"; Dennis Barone's *Beyond the Red Notebook: Essays on Paul Auster*; Steven E. Alford's "Spaced-Out: Signification and Space in Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*."

offers an extended examination of Auster's essays, poetry, fiction and films, while looking at key themes such as identity, language and writing, storytelling and illusion.[3] Bernd Herzogenrath proposes a combination of Lacanian and Derridean reading of Auster's novels, while Brendan Martin's monograph investigates Auster's literary postmodernity in relation to a wide range of his factual and fictional writings. Stefania Ciocia and Jesús A. González's most recent collection entitled *The Invention of Illusions: International Perspectives on Paul Auster* intends to be a polyphonic volume bringing together transatlantic contributions eclectically.

Although there has been a continuous interest in the intertextual dimension of Auster's writing, no research investigating the intermedial references in his oeuvre has been attempted. What justify the chosen theoretical foci of my dissertation are, on the one hand, to fill this gap in the critical body of Auster's oeuvre; on the other hand, to understand the cultural underpinnings and the motivations behind the various representations of artistic/narrative acts—whether literary, graphic, or cinematic—in his works. Thus the basic aim of my proposed thesis is to answer a deceptively simple question: can the various media forms in Auster's oeuvre (film, photography, literary narrative, concept art) reinterpret and influence each other in a state of in-between existence? Is there an interactive chemistry at work in Austerian intermediality? By "in-between existence" I mean a mutual influence, an interactive relationship in which media do not exclude or dominate but reinterpret and still preserve one another. Regarding the concrete analysis of Auster's works, the justification of my investigation can be found in the different ways through which the participant-narrators can construct and deconstruct their (artistic/narrative) selves[4] with the help of media forms, can double one another, while thematizing the mutually reflexive relationship of the media they become part of. The dynamic medial interplays denote a particular formation of cultural meanings that enable the characters to construct a specific artistic universe for themselves. Evija Trofimova observes that the "two main critical approaches to Auster's works, which could roughly be described as the humanist and the postmodernist, result from a schizophrenic reading experience: the humanist themes of loss, fate, chance, identity, and creativity appear at odds with the postmodern intertextuality, self-reflexivity and open

[3]About Brown's contribution I have written more thoroughly in a review: "New York City Anxiety" that appeared in the *HJEAS (Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies)* in 2009.

[4] Existing Auster criticism frequently concentrates on the analysis of selfhood from a metaphysical perspective, an approach I do not want to exclude; rather, I wish to view it from a different angle when examining the various possibilities of constructing or deconstructing a narrative as well as artistic identity and its implications with regard to intermediality.

semiosis" (32). Similarly to Trofimova's method the present thesis does not attempt to read Auster's oeuvre in terms of any of the above-mentioned categories (although it will be unavoidable to refer to them); rather, it will undertake to shed light on the driving mechanism behind their combined appearance in certain contexts, while it will constantly remain in-between them at the same time.

My dissertation is an examination of a completely unexplored facet of the Paul Auster canon, as it will discuss the aspects of intermediation between different media forms, in relation to the formation of narrative identity in this author's works such as literary texts, films, and collaborative projects. Although I will occasionally refer to Auster's critical writing too, my dissertation will primarily be concerned with a selected body of his fiction and films. It will offer an intermedial reading of Auster's various texts through theories of adaptation as well as theories of image and text, also seeking to discuss the ways in which the visual elements affect storytelling in Auster's fiction and stimulate an interactive reader engagement. What justifies an intermedial interpretation in Auster's case is that he exposes a heightened sensibility for, and awareness of, the materiality and mediality of artistic practices and of cultural practices in general. All of his characters become artists (writers, photographers, performers, concept artists) and are engaged in some kind of art form through which they not only express themselves, but also erase and restore their identities in a continuous cyclical journey towards self-discovery. Moreover, some of these artistic acts blur the boundaries between the lived experience of performing a piece of art and the representation of it. What is it that lies behind the urge of the artist to engage in a performance over and over again, even if that act threatens to rob him of his life? What sacrifices are everyday people able to undergo in order to create a work of art or to find pleasure in it? Is an artwork worth one's life? Is pleasure to be found in the public's euphoria bound to the anticipation of the artist's imminent death? In one of his essays Auster describes an experience he had in Paris, while accidentally watching one of the acts of Philippe Petit, the high-wire artist. Auster contemplates the man's motivations:

> Why did he do it, then? For no other reason, I believe, than to dazzle the world with what he could do. Having seen his stark and haunting juggling performance on the street, I sensed intuitively that his motives were not those of other men—not even those of other artists. With an ambition and an arrogance fit to the measure of the sky, and placing on himself the most stringent internal demands, he wanted, simply, to do what he was capable of

> doing. [...] The desire is at once far-fetched and perfectly natural, and the appeal of it, finally, is its utter uselessness. No art, it seems to me, so clearly emphasizes the deep aesthetic impulse inside us all. Each time we see a man walk on the wire, a part of us is up there with him. Unlike performances in the other arts, the experience of the high wire is direct, unmediated, simple, and it requires no explanation whatsoever. The art is the thing itself, a life in its most naked delineation. And if there is beauty in this, it is because of the beauty we feel inside ourselves. ("On the High Wire" 438-39)

What this passage divulges is precisely a private, interior journey that is exposed to the public: unfolding of life lived as art in every moment. In many cases, Auster's characters create artistic works that explicitly aestheticize their experiences in the fictional world of novels or films. Such characters do not create works of art solely to express themselves, but to orient themselves in their own lives. It is this mixture of artistic and physical necessity that is communicated to the reader/spectator. Through creating artefacts they also manage to stay alive, and by doing so, they inevitably bring together different forms of art, various forms of representations that are always in a constant dialogic relationship, calling for, and validating, an intermedial approach. Before addressing an intermedial understanding of Auster's works, however, it is necessary to delineate the main trends of intermedia studies in the critical literature.

In the last two decades intermediality has become one of the most challenging concepts in cultural studies, especially in media theory. It has also become a highly controversial term since a great number of definitions regarding its types and categories emerged. The concept of "intermediality," as it will be used in my dissertation, follows the German line of intermedia research. According to Werner Wolf's ("Intermediality Revisited" 17-18) and Irina Rajewsky's (51-52) theories, three qualities are ascribed to intermediality: media combination, medial transposition, and intermedial references.[5]

Rajewsky also claims that "intermediality[6] may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix *inter*) in some way take place *between*

[5] In a broader sense of the terminology, Friedrich A. Kittler attempted to provide a certain media history, seen from the viewpoint of the genesis and interrelations of each media. In his *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* Kittler develops the idea of how "media cross one another in time" (115).

[6] The term "intermedia" was coined by Dick Higgins in 1966, in his essay "Intermedia," in which he argues that the works produced nowadays "seem to fall between media"; and by which he means works "in which the materials of various more established art forms are 'conceptually fused' rather than merely juxtaposed" (qtd. in

media. 'Intermedial' therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media" (46). Rajewsky proposes the above-mentioned subcategories when she speaks of intermediality in a narrow sense. *Media combinations* stand for the combination of at least two conventionally distinct media or medial forms of articulation; *medial transposition* can be shortly referred to as one media product being transformed into another medium, and *intermedial references* can be exemplified by the references in a literary text to film through the evocation or imitation of certain filmic techniques (51-52). Adaptations can be both medial transposition and intermedial reference, and a great part of my analysis intends to look at those very aspects of Auster's adapted texts.

Ludwig K. Pfeiffer links the manifestations of intermediality to everyday life, claiming that there is a continuity, a blending between everyday and aesthetic experiences (*The Protoliterary* xvii-xviii). When talking about intermedial relations, Pfeiffer stresses the arousal of senses. "In emphasizing intermedia enactments, the notion of 'experience' thus is decoupled from older concerns about its authenticity, artificiality, and the like, and instead it is the dynamics and the range of its 'aesthetic' dimensions that come to the forefront" (*The Protoliterary* xx). Therefore, the experience, the involvement inherent in encountering (the relations between) various media on the part of the readers/spectators of the Austerean texts as well as on the part of the characters in Auster's fictitious worlds constitute another subject of my inquiry.

Ágnes Pethő offers a typology of intermedial occurrences in cinema in general, and identifies several methods for describing intermediality: as a system, or network of interrelations ("Beziehungsnetz"), a perception of reflexive experience, a performative act, a transitory or impossible "place" (heterotopia), and as part of the domain of the "figural" ("Intermediality in Film" 56-65). Such theorizing indicates that film is placed somewhere in an unidentifiable place in-between the arts; and intermedia studies use various metaphors to describe this spatiality: transgression of media borders, media-passages, heterotopia, and so on. I conceive of these notions as not exclusively applied to cinema but to other forms of media as well. The space, where intermedial processes take place and where figurations of medial differences are played out, is defined by various theorists[7] as an impossible, heterotopic place. In such a *placeless place* different media forms can encounter, remediate, and move constantly "in-between" each other. Therefore, the notion of the heterotopia

Vos 325). William J. Thomas Mitchell argues that "all media are mixed media" (5), suggesting an intermedial quality per se.

[7] Pethő, *Képátvitelek* 48-50; "Intermediality in Film: A Historiography of Methodologies" 60; Roloff 3-25.

denoting "in-betweenness," as it is used in intermedia studies, is a remediated form of Michel Foucault's original notion, according to which heterotopias are counter-sites, real places that are "outside of all places," because, in contrast with utopias, heterotopias are places "absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about," and are "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (*Of Other Spaces* 24-25).

Heterotopic intermediality derives from one aspect of the Foucauldian term: the mixed, joint experience in the case of the mirror[8] suggests an alliance of various media forms based on in-between states. This heterotopic interface refers to a mutually reflexive connection, in which the relationship between different media is not dominated by rivalry; rather it manifests itself in supportive border crossings and interactions. The notion of the mirror suggests a relationship in which media forms do not exclude each other, but engage in a dialogue and mirror one another. In various intermedial encounters media construe the other spaces for each other simultaneously. This nonhierarchical structure can be understood both in terms of interart relationships (for example, in the case of adaptations) and in terms of media relations in a single art work (for example, in the case of a media combination).

This intermedial reinterpretation of the heterotopia does not always exclude the original meaning of the term. In the case of several (usually self-reflexive) films the story might be staged in sites that evoke heterotopias in the original, Foucauldian sense of the word (for example, museums, libraries, cinema, theatre, and so on). Quite often such "real" places in the film's diegesis may serve as intermedial sutures (stitching together various media forms) and/or indicate a nonhierarchical intermedial relationship (e.g., Auggie Wren's cigar shop, the skier's parable in *Smoke*).

By making use of the notion of heterotopic intermediality the dissertation uses a nonhierarchical approach in discussing intermedial relations, yet, there are concepts in intermedia studies that might appear to be referring to various types of domination. My understanding of intermedial in-betweenness refers to intermedial relations that continually

[8] "In the mirror, I *see myself there where I am not*, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I *am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow* that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent. […] From the standpoint of the mirror I *discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there*. […] The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there" (24, emphasis added).

redefine and reexplore medial boundaries, so that various media forms can support and renew each other. If there is an in-between, there must be elements that make it possible, since an intermedial encounter requires elements that preexist the encounter. Thus, a tension occurs that continuously mobilizes, transforms, and produces more interactions. Indeed, there is a certain initial dominance and tension inherent in every media encounter, but this dominance is always shifting.

The shifting nature of the various kinds of media-presence may bring forth either a nonhierarchical or an extremely tense, hierarchical relationship. When using the term heterotopic intermediality, I refer to a mutually supportive, dialogic connection between media. In order to demonstrate that various media forms can be conjoint in a dialogical encounter (in which both difference and hybridity can coexist), I will use the terms "source text" and "adaptation" as well as "transmitting medium" and "receiving medium." Werner Wolf uses the terms: "dominant" medium (which is used by the work in question) and "non-dominant" medium (the medium referred to), that is actually present as an idea, as a signified and hence as a reference ("Intermediality Revisited" 23),[9] yet in my understanding such "semiotic dominance" is an absolutely necessary phenomenon for setting up intermedial in-betweenness in the case of heterotopic intermediality, since through intermedial imitation and/or thematization the medial other can make its presence, therefore both media are involved in the text.

There is, however, another type of intermediality that can be described in terms of tension and continuous struggle for medial authority: *palimpsestuous intermediality.* If heterotopic intermediality is characterized by mutually reflexive, supportive, and nonhierarchical media relations, palimpsestuous intermediality foregrounds a multiplication of media layers, continually challenging, ereasing, and overwriting each other, while they conceal as well as reveal their medium specificities. Such an increasingly tense relation can be understood in a narrow sense (that is, inside a medium, such as in the case of word and image relationship) or in a broad sense (that is, outside of a medium, such as in the case of the relationship between the source text and the adaptation). Media rivalry[10] manifests itself in

[9] Media dominance is often a difficult question, because it refers to quantity, that is, to the question that media converge either in parts or in the whole text. In various media combinations one can find complete convergence of both media, that is, there is no dominance at all (e.g., opera, in which music and lyrics have the same importance). It is noteworthy that in using terms such as "media dominance" or "media authority," intermedia theorists do not refer to the fact that one medium is more valuable than the other; the concepts merely refer to issues of quantity within one work of art.

[10] Discussing the representations of doppelgängers in books and films, Kittler talks about a competition between media, linking it exclusively to the uncanny in Freudian sense. He contends that camera tricks can foreground

constructing one medium's authority by deconstructing, displacing, or repressing another medium's authority. This process involves jumps, juxtapositions, and foldings between media representations and brings forth an intermedial trespassing that seems to be uncanny.[11] When the medial Other attempts to take charge, threatening to erase, assimilate, and repurpose the medium in question, a kind of intermedial anxiety occurs, that is, the repressed medium emerges as something that "ought to have remained hidden but has come to light" (Freud 10). In this sense, I tend to link intermedial uncanniness to the palimpsestuous-type of intermediality, because embedded representations might reveal the very representational layers of different media. The appearance of the medial double is the major source of intermedial uncanniness: it suddenly emerges, obstructs the medium in question, and apparently vanishes to return even more intensely. It generates a sense of *déjà vu* in the readers/spectators as well, since it reminds them of the medium referred to. The tensional differences between media forms, the intermedial uncanniness are often staged in Auster's various artworks as an allegoric confrontation/relationship between characters and/or as a building up and/or deconstruction of one character's (narrative) identity.

Regarding the above-mentioned types of intermediality one might argue that such terms can be interchangeable since they seem to denote very similar processes within intermedia relations, yet, I think that the idea of heterotopic intermediality should not be merged with the idea of palimpsestuous intermediality, or the two concepts should not be used as synonyms, but they should be considered as complementary terms. Both categories of intermediality foreground transpositions of representations from one art form to the other, and in any situation of intermedial encounter there is a gap, a rupture caused by mutual intermedial intrusions and/or mirroring. Intermedial sutures conceal such medial breaks in their process of stitching together two or more media forms. Moreover, by intermedial

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the return of the imaginary more powerfully than books did before. "[F]eature films take over all of the fantastic or the imaginary, which for a century has gone by the name of literature" (154).

[11] Discussing the concept of the palimpsest and palimpsestuous intermediality, Ágnes Pethő offers an analysis of Jean-Luc Godard's art, and uses the paradigm of the "white page" (originally Mallarmé's notion, directly cited by Godard) as well as *camera stylo* (a term exclusively linked to the French New Wave, meaning camera as the pen of the writer), as these define the film screen as a surface awaiting the inscriptions and reinscriptions of various signs, that is, a surface that should be filled over and over again. These terms come to be associated with the concept of the *palimpsest*, the idea of a text that is created by repeated processes of erasures and overwritings (*Köztes képek* 184-232). Jefferson T. Kline's psychoanalytic approach also focuses on French New Wave cinema. He claims that filmmakers "may invoke one text to displace and/or repress another" and "the texts screened come to function as screens in the sense that Freud gave to the term, as a 'memory behind which lies a submerged and forgotten' phrase, event, or, in this case, text" (4). Both Pethő and Jefferson use these terms as referring to cinema, yet, I believe such associations may not be exclusively tied to moving images, but to other artforms as well.

suture[12] I mean a device that ties the readers/spectators to the medium of representation. Intermedial sutures are phenomena that accompany both heterotopic and palimpsestuous manifestations of intermedialty. In Auster's works they can appear in many forms: intermedial references, such as thematizations and imitations, as well as various motifs and characters.

The above-mentioned analytical categories look at the questions of intermediality from a literary perspective. My approach is also strongly related to literary theory, and this, I feel, may be justified by the very fact that most of my analysis refers to processes of adaptation (from a literary text to a cinematic/graphic/conceptual artwork).[13]

In the present work the field of intermedial references—in the forms of individual reference (reference of a media product to another individual media product) and system reference (reference to another medial semiotic system)—will form the core. On the one hand, it is the way Auster adapts and subverts numerous intermedial references in his works that I will explore. On the other hand, my thematic focus will be on how—by what means—these intermedial relationships influence, and are thematized in, the building up and/or deconstruction of a coherent narrative identity in Auster's texts, with special emphasis on how media intrusions connect distinct spaces: the represented space inside a specific medium (film, photography, fiction), the space of representation (of the medium itself), and the extra-textual space of the reader/spectator. I will argue that Auster's works can be classified according to the different forms of intermedial references that they express, regarding both content and form. The forms of references I distinguish in his oeuvre are: the cinema motif, the photograph motif, individual intermedial reference, and intermedial system reference; the last of which, in Rajewsky's view (52), indicates that the media product uses its own media-specific means, in order to refer to a different semiotic system of another medium.

The method of my proposed inquiry will primarily be informed by the (close) reading strategies of intermediality theories. The dissertation will also concentrate on the nexus of literature, cinema, and photography; therefore, it will deploy comparative methodologies, will investigate basic similarities and differences between the given media forms, based on the theories of Linda Hutcheon, Brian McFarlane, William J. T. Mitchell, and Ágnes Pethő. Their concepts, with links to structuralist and poststructuralist narratology, will serve as a

[12] I will use the term according to Stephen Heath's definition (84-86) that I will complement with my own understanding. I will elaborate on this concept in more detail in the second chapter.

[13] Intermediality, in my view, is a concept that is continually reshaped, denoting a form of operation in progress. Certainly, the fields of "intermedia" are in need of discussion and extension, especially in terms of generating a coherent system that would provide a unified framework for all intermedial phenomena (such as audiovisual, digital, and so on).

theoretical toolbox also for discussing the different functions of the cinema and photograph motifs in Auster's oeuvre.

Each of the four chapters is a case study of Auster's one or two selected works. Although there are numerous movies/novels (e.g., *Blue in the Face*, *Lulu on the Bridge*) that may also deserve detailed analysis, the present paper will focus on certain representative cinematic, literary, graphic, and collaborative texts in order to be able to offer an investigation in terms of intermediality as well as regarding the formation of narrative/artistic identity. Therefore, I decided on works that I consider being quintessential intermedial manifestations of Auster's oeuvre: *Smoke (1995), The Inner Life of Martin Frost (2007), The Book of Illusions (2002), City of Glass: the Graphic Novel (1994),* and *Double Game (2007).*

Accordingly, in the first chapter I will turn to Auster's film *Smoke* (1995) and will examine the various ways of intermediation between the media forms of film, written literature, and photography, arguing that they are manifestations of heterotopic intermediality, in the sense that these media forms develop a supportive relationship between each other. Intermediality appears as a "gateway" from one medium towards the other, a site for constant remediation, that is, a reprocessing of one medium by the other, and in this action they can leave traces, and be transcribed into one another, while they maintain their own medium specificity.[14] Therefore, I will discuss media relations in *Smoke* as not structured in a hierarchical system, but in a supportive and mutually reflexive way.

The manifestations of heterotopic intermediality in *Smoke* serve the major themes of the film: intersubjective human relationships, questions of moral responsibility, and self-presentation. Media forms support and strengthen each other in the film's world just as the characters help and rely on each other. One of the major questions seems to be the problem of what it means to create and pass on narratives and to be transformed by such narratives. Protagonist Auggie Wren's identity appears to be constructed in and through the act of storytelling in the world of the film (he relates a memorable story towards the end of *Smoke*). Auggie also has a weird, daily ritual: for years, he has been taking pictures in front of his cigar shop, from the same angle, always at exactly 8 a.m. He claims that his photo album is his "project," his "life's work"; and by keeping up the habit, he creates an avantguard art project. Taking photographs and later on telling a story (both in the short story and in the film

[14] Ágnes Pethő describes intermediality in special terms as well: "a *border zone* across which media transgressions take place" ("Intermediality in Film" 60); however, I wish to add to this notion a specific and more detailed interpretation, by claiming that heterotopic intermedial relations become thematized in the medium under discussion through various ways (character mirroring, allegorical sites in the fictitious world); and I will also use the term "heterotopic intermediality" to refer to the "impossible," mirror-like, and illusory nature of the cinematic medium in general.

adaptation) are artistic (or nonartistic) acts, and, in the case of the Christmas tale, the idea of Auggie's self as a storied self (an entity made up of stories told) shapes up—narrative identity, as it were, as theorized by Paul Ricoeur.

Nevertheless, the real intermedial issue here is what follows from the movie's main concerns: artistic expression as well as self-presentation are often tied to morally doubtful acts (such as stealing and lying); although the motivations of the "character-artists" are manifold, their active artistic actions can equally generate various media forms; and their perceptions of ethics and aesthetics are more than unusual. Various intermedial references help these ethical questions unfold and reflect on the main theme: interconnectedness of human beings (family ties, racial tolerance, friendship between lonely and displaced characters), forming bridges between the personal and the shared experiences of the world. The characters engage in specific father-son or doppelgänger relationships, which, in their turn, propel the thematization of different media interconnectedness.

I will argue that the overlapping narratives in *Smoke* bring about the coexistence of the different media modes of engagement:[15] writing ("Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" written by Auster) and telling (e.g., the same story narrated by Auggie in the film; Cyrus's life-story shared with his son; Paul Benjamin's stories; Thomas's lies about his identity; Ruby's secret that Felicity is Auggie's daughter); the black-and-white silent cinema sequence at the end of *Smoke*; Rashid's drawing that he finally gives to his father; Rashid's and other characters' role-playing. In some cases it is the coexistence of the different media that contributes to Auggie's and Paul's self-understanding in essential ways, thereby construing their narrative identities. Furthermore, in analyzing the adaptation of "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story," the chapter will shed light on the cultural/racial underpinnings that lead to the characters' development and thematize both a cultural and an intermedial dialogue.

My second chapter will engage Auster's *The Book of Illusions (2002)*, published after the appearance of the films *Smoke (1995), Blue in the Face (1995),* and *Lulu on the Bridge (1998)*; a novel concerned with visuality as a propelling force of storytelling. Colin MacCabe asserts that "it is impossible to give a serious account of any twentieth-century writer without reference to cinema" (16). This is as much to say as it is impossible to discuss modern and postmodern literature without referring to motion pictures. Paul Auster is one of those cinematically self-conscious writers in whose novels the influence of the medium of film *is* intended. This kind of literary writing also demands readers to adopt new ways of thinking,

[15] I use the term "media modes of engagement" as Linda Hutcheon understands it (22-27), and will elaborate on it in more detail in the first chapter.

and provokes a liberating creativity and imagination. Jesús Ángel González, in his comparative analysis of Auster's "films about words" and novels about films, argues that Auster's interest in the cinematic medium is marked by the need to overcome the two-dimensionality of this artistic form. Auster finds the third dimension in his films (real and fictitious) by actively triggering the audience's emotional response, and through the involvement with intertextual and metafictional references ("In Search of a Third Dimension" 193-218).[16]

In order to have a better understanding of such intermedial intricacy, in the second chapter I will address the questions of intermedial references (both intermedial thematizations and imitations) as theorized by Wolf.[17] I will discuss the novel from the point of view of how, in a verbal medium, the references to the other medium involve a certain iconicity and imitation. I will argue that the translation of effects and meanings occurs through the evocation and imitation of several filmic techniques (zoom shots, fades, dissolves, and montage editing), through the insertion of filmscripts, as well as through references to acts of writing and performace. In *The Book of Illusions*, one of the characters, Hector Mann, belongs to a world of illusions, for his real life is based on a series of imaginary identities and roles he must play to survive. It can be argued that the narrator of the story, David Zimmer, (re)constructs his identity precisely in the process of narrating, through inserting Mann's filmscripts into the story (intermedial imitation) and constantly discussing another medium—cinema—in his narrative (intermedial thematization). Zimmer's attempt to write a book on the life and art of Hector Mann stems from the motivation to make up for a loss, to fill the void left by his wife's and son's deaths. I will claim that Zimmer telling Mann's life story in the aforementioned way is a process of Zimmer's actual identity construction and a way of coping/surviving in the act of narrating itself. The justification of this interpretation also derives from a specific dichotomy present in the novel: life lived as art and the motivations of the artist to communicate art to the public stand in opposition with the impossibility of finishing a work of art and the painful decision to destroy it.

Additionally, analyzing the impact of cinematic storytelling upon the literary narrative in *Illusions*, the chapter will also raise the questions of concerning the ways in which this

[16] "Two-dimensionality" here refers to the limitations of the cinematic medium in general, while "three-dimensionality" denotes the interactive engagement/experience in the spectators' minds Auster aims to bring about with his film.

[17] Intermedial imitation occurs when the signifiers of a work or its structure are affected by the non-dominant medium, because they imitate its quality or structure. Examples of intermedial imitations include: pictorialization in realist novels, "filmicization" of fiction, and novels written as filmscripts ("Intermediality Revisited" 25-26).

literary narrative follows the pattern of cinematic logic: whether the novel's text poses itself as a self-reflexive, "cinematic" text and to what extent cinema "rewrites" and/or enriches the literary narrative. A series of examples in which the characters symbolize different media forms—both in *The Book of Illusions* and the movie adaptation, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, a fictitious film directed by Hector Mann—will also be offered and interpreted from the perspective of the complex relationships and/or conflicts between these works as narrative enactments of intermedial relations.

In the following chapter, making use of Wolf's concept of *plurimediality* and Rajewsky's similar notion of *media combination*, an attempt will be made to inquire the various means in which medial components read, or even imitate another medium. By looking at one of Auster's best known works adapted into a graphic novel: *City of Glass: The Graphic Novel* (1994) by Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli, the chapter will analyze the (re)presentation of Auster's prevalent themes in new ways, through comics conventions and graphic storytelling methods.

While the previous chapters considered intermedial references as a means of identity construction (or deconstruction), motivated by an interest in self-exploration in the narrative present, in this chapter I will also investigate the modus operandi through which the impossibility of creating a coherent narrative/artistic identity is reproduced in the graphic adaptation. Moreover, the chapter will express interest in how the graphic novel at hand manages to capture the varying narrative voices from the source text and in *which* graphic representations function as means for (de)constructing narrative identity. In short: what is it that comics does differently?

Quite uniquely, *The Graphic Novel*[18] vividly depicts the originally nonvisual elements of Quinn's identity confusion and isolation with various visual motifs, like the grid-like panel structure, the graphic illustration of the city as labyrinth, the recurring images of locked windows and brick-walls function as a means for (de)constructing narrative identity. To the reader it becomes obvious that Quinn's shaping of his self occurs in and through the act of walking and writing, and thus, the gradual representation of a fluid and reversible space suggests a paralell between this and the uncertainty of narrative identity. The repetitions of the visual motifs function as specific leitmotifs concealing intermedial breaks (or intermedial gaps, in which various media forms can coexist), bringing about, and also disrupting,

[18] In the third chapter I will refer to the graphic adaptation as *The Graphic Novel* in the in-text citation, while I will use the title *City of Glass* to denote the source-text, that is, Auster's novella, the first part of *The New York Trilogy*.

narrative continuity. The mirroring characters, the triads of selves thematize, again, intermedial references.

The aim of the closing chapter is to investigate the dialogic relationship between different texts as well as the shifting absence and presence of narrative identities in the collaborations between Auster, and French conceptual artist, Sophie Calle. The intermedial correspondences between Auster's *Leviathan* (1993) and Calle's *Double Game* (1999) expose a mediation of real life into art, therefore they can be described as intermedial border crossings, more precisely intermedial metalepsis. Auster "borrows" eight projects from Calle and includes them in his novel as projects created by the artist Maria Turner, a character in his *Leviathan*. Moreover, he also invents new projects for his fictional character. In *Double Game*, Calle plays out Maria Turner's projects, enunciating, performing, and re-inscribing the text of *Leviathan*. I will explore how Calle's and Auster's twisting tales—that make it difficult to determine fact from fiction—disrupt the stability and fixity of identity, particularly narrative and artistic identity. For, in Calle's and Auster's overlapping narratives, there is no unified identity: it is constantly shifting, is under construction (and erasure). By blurring the boundaries between the voyeur and the object of the gaze, Auster and Calle ceaselessly elaborate on the many layers of meanings and narrative voices, hiding and exposing the gaps and fissures caused by their mutual textual intrusions. In this line of thought I attempt to analyze the specific act of *intermedial flânerie*,[19] which I understand to be an artistic attitude that appears in both media (novel and concept art) on the thematic level, as well as life framed and influenced by artifice. Furthermore, because Auster and Calle use intermedial elements in referring to, as well as intruding in, each other's texts self-consciously, so that their intermedial relations become predominantly self-reflexive and self-thematizing, I will thematize the Calle/Auster/Calle interactions as *metaintertextual metaintermediality*.

The illustrations in the appendix, screenshots of the analyzed films, pictures from the graphic novel, and so on, are meant to make the arguments more accessible to the reader and to communicate the intermedial aspects in a more palpable way.

[19] The original meaning of the *flâneur* comes from the French verb *flâner*, which means "to stroll." *Flânerie* refers to the operation of walking, wandering in an urban space, or as Michel De Certeau puts it, "the city" is made up by the "walkers, *Wandersmänne*r, whose bodies follow the cursives and strokes of an urban text they write without reading" (92). In Auster's works, the wanderings of the solitary *flâneur* are often understood as the embodiments of one's own interiority and the aim of these journeys is considered to be a postmodernist quest, leading to the disintegration, or reconstruction of the self (see Markus Rheindorf's and Ilana Shiloh's essays).

1.

## Heterotopic Intermediality: *Smoke* and "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story"

"Anything for art, eh, Paul?"
Auggie (*Smoke* 155)

Auster's preoccupation with films dates back to the years he spent at Columbia University and then in Paris, France, thus, "for a time he hesitated between pursuing a career as a writer or filmmaker" (González, "Words Versus Images" 28). Although he chose to become a writer, he could never put films out of his head. There have been several attempts to create adaptations of his most representative works, and some of these were indeed realized, just as other motion pictures became inspired by one or two aspects/motifs of his writings: *The Music of Chance* (1993), *Smoke* (1995), *The Inner Life of Martin Frost* (2007) (adaptations); *Blue in the Face* (1995), *Lulu on the Bridge* (1998) (the latter two independent films directed by Auster), *The Center of the World* (2001) (screenplay by Auster and Siri Hustvedt), *Fluxus* (2004) (short film based on Auster's screenplay, directed by László Csáki), *Le carnet rouge* (2004), (short film based on Auster's screenplay, directed by Mathieu Simonet).

In 1990 Auster was asked to write a Christmas story for *The New York Times*. The outcome "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story," became the source of his screenplay for *Smoke* (1995). An entirely independent[20] movie came into being as a result of the collaboration between Wayne Wang and Paul Auster. It consists of a series of interconnected brief sketches set in and around Auggie Wren's cigar shop in Brooklyn. The intertwined lives of five major characters structure the main subplots: Paul Benjamin (starring William Hurt) is an isolated writer, suffering from a writer's block in response to the trauma caused by his wife's death; Rashid[21] (Harold Perrineau Junior) is an intelligent but troubled young orphan, on a quest for his father; Ruby (Stockard Channing) is Auggie's former lover, a woman wearing an eye

[20] *Smoke* is, indeed, an American independent film dealing with ordinary life and problems. Regarding such low budget films, Csaba Bollók mentions in an interview that one of the benevolent characteristics of low-budget filmmaking is that the creator can immediately reflect on social phenomena that would be impossible to do during the long years of film production and marketing. An idependent filmmaker is freed from the temptation of budget. The greater the budget is, the more mainstream-type film is likely to be shot (Győri 103). *Smoke*'s budget was seven million dollars.

[21] This character's real name is Thomas Cole, but he introduces himself by many different names, among which Rashid is the first he gives himself and by which others refer to him. Because this is the name he prefers most frequently, and this name appears officially in the cast, for a proper citing I will consistently use "Rashid." In the next subchapter I will engage in a more detailed analysis of the character's name change as related to his identity formation.

patch and asking for Auggie's help to save their daughter from her self-destructive life; and Cyrus (Forest Whitaker), Rashid's long-lost father, who owns a garage and hires his own son, without being aware of who the young man really is. All the characters, all the life stories are connected through the figure of Auggie (Harvey Keitel).

*Smoke* expresses Auster's amazingly complex understanding of human beings, of human drama and comedy. The scenes seem to grow out of the moment you are watching, forming a fluid sequence; such a movement is like smoke—the central motif of the film—suggesting both secrets and unpredictable turns, very similar to life itself, so that it makes the viewers aware of their possibilities as human beings. The film unfolds a series of cohesive vignettes, like a collection of linked short stories. *Smoke* is typically verbose and artfully presents both friendly chats and bittersweet as well as hopeful stories.

One of the major themes of *Smoke* is the question of what it means to tell stories, and to change actual persons into fictional characters who take part in them, or witness them. Transmitting narratives through different media is of great ethical significance in the film, especially the responsibilities that the adaptors imposed upon themselves by changing the source-text at many points and introducing racial issues directly through the choice of characters and indirectly through the implied play with black-and-white motifs.

*Smoke* is a film about deep human connections, friendships that develop between strangers, interactions between people who influence each other's lives. Such human interactions constantly address questions of moral responsibility: should fathers take responsibility for their sons/daughters? Should characters tell the truth, if the truth hurts someone else? Should an artist steal another artist's story and present it as his own? Should Auggie steal the camera if he decides to use it for "artistic" purposes? Those who enjoy a work of art are sometimes unable to see what the artist is capable of for its creation: stealing, lying, and cheating. Therefore, the relationship between the creator's ethics (the moral responsibility of the artist) and sense of aesthetics, as well as the various processes of making art also form the subject of my inquiry; and these motivations of the different character-artists can be traced by looking at intermedial references and elements of adaptation in the various media. According to Rajewsky "intermedial references, then, can be distinguished from intramedial (and thus intertextual) ones by the fact that a given media product cannot *use* or genuinely *reproduce* elements or structures of a different medial system through its own media-specific means; it can only *evoke* or *imitate* them. Consequently, an intermedial reference can only generate an *illusion* of another medium's specific practices" (55). It is precisely this illusion that awakens a sense of photographic/literary presence in the recipient.

In *Smoke* artistic "stealing" and "lying" are uniquely aestheticized, providing a network of actions, which, in their turn, propel the thematization of media interconnectedness. These actions can also refer to the various ways by which media forms "pilfer" each other's elements, as well as imitate one another.

Adam Zachary Newton's ideas are of great relevance at this point. He perceives narrative *as* ethics that is "the ethical consequences of narrating story and fictionalizing person, and the binding teller, listener, witness, and reader in that process" (11). Building on the triadic model of Gérard Genette (story, narrative, narrating), Newton also creates a triadic model of narrative ethics and delineates a *narrational ethics*, a *representational ethics*, and a *hermeneutic ethics*. Within this schema, I argue, certain media forms of presentation (film, literary text, and photography) are at work in the world of the film that constantly reinscribe ethical codes and trigger an emotional response and ethical positioning of the spectator. The second element of the triad, representational ethics, means the "cost incurred in fictionalizing oneself or others by exchanging 'person' for 'character'" (Newton 18); that is, life turned into artifice, into story, and fictitious story into real life, bringing about a dichotomy. The way in which narrative ethics are brought to the fore by the characters' stories provides a framework in which artistic/narrative identity can be constructed. The process of storytelling demands the reader's or spectator's active involvement, hence the text (either literary or cinematic) confers responsibilities upon all participants. There are many layers of representational ethics in *Smoke*, from the idea that Auster fictionalizes himself in the character of Paul Benjamin to the obvious attempts of many characters to assume the identity of somebody else. The latter is clearly visible in the case of Rashid, who experiences the drama of facing his own past and is on a journey of self-exploration. By taking different roles Rashid strives to find his father and to initiate a self-healing process. "As an ethics narrative is a performance or act—purgative" (Newton 7). Rashid's insecurity stems from his problematic childhood: he has to grow up without a father, whom he resents, but unconsciously is ready to forgive. Forgiveness brings about the aforementioned self-healing, and in order to reach it, Rashid must endure the stages of a self-imposed purgatory: he undergoes temporary sufferings when he finds, and begins to work for, his father, and willingly gets to know him more and more closely, in spite of the fact that it is painful to see and accept Cyrus Cole's new family, to be near them. The young man's role-playing and sketch drawing are artistic processes that serve therapeutic purposes determining Rashid's identity and both his and his father's final healing.

Such stories of human connections, as well as the ethical questions inherent in these relationships are realized through the various plot events (stealing, lying, helping, story

telling) and by various media interactions. Therefore, my concerns in this chapter will also be the aspects of border crossing between the above-mentioned media forms in the movie *Smoke*,[22] adapted from the short story: "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story," looking at their interrelation and intermediation in particular, as well as the ethical implications the usage of different media bring about in several key scenes. The film embeds references to painting, photography, and the literary text; and the continuity of the storyline, the subtlety of sub-plots greatly depend on the skilful balancing between the use of mise-en-scene[23] and reduced montage. *Smoke* also radically changes the original text's connotations by introducing cultural and racial issues, which are elevated to a metaphorical level through the variations of the black and white motifs, marking almost all media forms that appear in the film.

The media forms intersecting in *Smoke* can influence (e.g., reinterpret) each other in a state of "in-between" existence. Media forms entail and legitimize each other's presence within the same text, through specific narrative strategies that they borrow from one another, construing sites in which they can reinscribe one another. In this sense, heterotopic intermediality refers to the relationship between film (*Smoke*) and the literary text ("Auggie Wren's Christmas Story") in which one medium becomes the mirror of the other in a heterotopic way, that is, a simultaneous multi-medial presence in *Smoke*, generating a nonplace, an "in-between" zone across which media transgressions occur.

I also propose to discuss the ways in which intermediations between the different media can stimulate the formation of artistic/narrative identity in the film's fictional world. The chapter will demonstrate that characters' mirroring (in a sense of repeating the same actions and becoming alter egos for each other) and their heterotopic connections thematize a nonhierarchical relationship between the various media. Character interactions are to be understood here as inevitably construing media forms. They aid identity formation as well as denote a dynamic of intermedial relations. Media can usually dominate each other, can be liberated from one another, and/or can coexist in a rather creative, balanced relation. Whereas the character construction and specific interrelations (which cause Auggie, Paul, and Rashid to become like fathers and sons to one another) thematize the media forms and their heterotopic mirroring (a state of mutual reflection), these practices render media the *de facto*

[22] For a proper citing I will use the movie script from *Three Films*, and I will refer to it as *Smoke* in the in-text citations.

[23] I refer to the term mise-en-scene as theorized by David Bordwell and Kristin Thomson, denoting general areas, such as setting, costumes and makeup, lighting, and staging (117-61), as well as combining it with the contribution of John Gibbs that widens the original categorization and focuses on the interaction of elements, such as framing, camera movement, and the position of the camera (54).

embodiment of the self in the fictitious world. Therefore, to create one piece of work in any artistic medium means that the specific medium denotes a perception of the self in a social/cultural environment. In *Smoke*, mediums as social entities are closely connected to narrated identities. Reconciliation between the media forms is established on a thematic level by molding together different modes of narration as well as connecting characters.

### *1.1. Intermedial (Con)figurations: Film, Photography, and Literary Text*

The presence of mutually reflexive media is realized in *Smoke* through various sites of interaction between the media of film, photography, and the literary (source) text. The use of one medium's elements in the other takes place with the help of several intermedial devices that anchor certain thematic and symbolic elements of the narrative arcs, and also function as vehicles for the various forms of intermediation in *Smoke's* cinematic text. Such elements or tropes can be seen as intermedial connecting or shifting agents, and operate in such a way that they structure both the story and mediate the juxtaposition and interaction of different media. Thus, intermediality as such appears as a kind of "figuration," or, as Joachim Paech writes: "The trace of the medium would become describable as a figured process or a configuration in the film" (qtd. in Pethő, "Intermediality in Film" 60). Several rethorical tropes or "figures" of filmic intermediality can be identified in *Smoke* as responsible for mediating narrative continuity or as means of connecting as well as shifting between different media. In the world of the film it is in Auggie Wren's cigar shop where the majority of these intermedial shifts happen through various media configurations, especially through the art of storytelling and the art of photography.

Auggie Wren's cigar shop has an atmosphere of daydreaming, optimism, and intimacy, establishing the key themes: characters come to life and can only exist through telling stories and listening to each other. *Smoke* does not follow the traditional storytelling techniques, but feeds on coincidences and simultaneous events; the always talking characters move in and out of Auggie's shop, picking up and abandoning stories. The seemingly light chatting among the characters in the opening scene is about baseball players and various possibilities inherent in the business of the baseball game. By discussing the game they also refer to the choices one has to make in life, foreshadowing in this sense the major plot events determined by characters' decisions in the film. Their acts of storytelling bring into discussion metafictional aspects, since the film is nothing but a story about telling stories through the use of various media.

González argues that in *Smoke* "Auster's approach was to let the characters speak, to give them time to show their emotions, following the example of 'realistic' film directors like Renoir, Ozu, or Bresson" ("Words Versus Images" 29). Therefore, it is a film that instead of relying much on physical action regarding the characters, uses storytelling and dialogues as its defining features. The frequent pauses in dialogues keep breaking the narrative; storytelling becomes composed and organized around a series of still moments. These pauses/silences

signify the pensiveness of the characters, their momentary standstills, and always entail a next shot, a moving, shifting scene. Rhythm in *Smoke*'s narrative forces a certain pace on, and a rate at which spectators can interact with the story, as well as controls what and how they infer.

The smoking element is crucial in maintaining balance, as it is symbolic of coherent storytelling and raises ethical issues. The physical presence of smoke at key moments in the film's narrative always signifies the disappearance of something or someone; that all the previous actions might have been in vain; as well as denotes whenever a shift occurs that leads to another story told by another medium. Therefore, apart from its very material aspect as a physical phenomenon in the film's diegetic world, smoke can also be interpreted as one of those tropes that function as intermedial connecting agents, bringing about a heterotopic in-between existence of different media that appear in the scenes set in Wren's cigar shop. González considers that *Smoke* and other films by Auster are "moral tales, stories of moral responsibility where the characters need to consider the ethical implications of their acts" ("Words Versus Images" 37). The perspective of regarding the very habit of smoking as a harmful, unhealthy practice is turned upside down in the film: the cigar shop represents a place where neighbours, old friends can come together and may reforge human connections. As the idea of smoking is filled with a new meaning, going against a traditional social stereotype (that of a harmful habit), so can actions of stealing and lying be interpreted as acts of compassion and charity. When Paul Benjamin enters the tobacco shop and buys his Schimmelpennicks as usual, he tells the story of Sir Walter Raleigh, who introduced the vice of smoking in Queen Elizabeth's court and could determine the weight of smoke.

> Dennis: You mean, weigh smoke?
> Paul: Exactly. Weigh smoke.
> Tommy: You can't do that. It's like weighing air.
> Paul: I admit it's strange. Almost like weighing someone's soul. But Sir Walter was a clever guy. First, he took an unsmoked cigar and put it on a balance and weighed it. Then he lit up and smoked the cigar, carefully tapping the ashes into the balance pan. When he was finished, he put the butt into the pan along with the ashes and weighed what was there. Then he subtracted that number from the original weight of the unsmoked cigar. The difference was the weight of smoke. (31-32)

The story of weighing smoke is a parable of time and memory, with ethical concerns: the "weight" is the remnant of a body minus the living—the "weight" of disappeared action. In this sense time is seen as transient (just like smoke), however the memory of people and actions remains captured in Auggie's photographs and in Paul's mind. The figurative identification of a human being with an object (cigar, with smoke representing the soul) is a hint at ethical choices preceding the appearance of issues related to race and various forms of disabilities in the movie, as well as characters narrating, reacting to, and finding solutions to those issues. Moreover, the idea of smoke compared to the human soul, as it appears in the Raleigh anecdote, recalls the ancient myth of *psychostasia*, that is, the judgement in the afterlife by weighing human souls/lives (a myth transformed later into the Christian notion of the Last Judgement). In *Smoke* the characters continually judge themselves and each other, and the main themes revolve around possibilities of forgiveness, redemption, and new beginning.

Weighing smoke can symbolize the pondering each character is absorbed in before making a moral decision; it is an allusion to the ethical judgement of actions: whether it is justified to steal and lie for the sake of mending broken human relationships (e.g., Auggie steals the camera from the blind, old woman; Rashid lies about his identity to get closer to Paul and his father), and to live one's life while the beloved person is gone (in the case of Paul), or not. On the one hand, the story of Sir Walter Raleigh and the measuring of smoke is about loss, foreshadowing the losses all characters have to deal with. It is also a metaphor for the illusory nature of storytelling: similarly to smoke, the effect produced by a story is both real and illusory, palpable and transient. Moreover, smoke in this scene functions as an important intermedial connecting agent: it ensures continuity between film and oral storytelling (since Paul telling the story of Sir Walter Raleigh is a shift to the medium of storytelling, thus inscribing the trace of its own medium in the cinematic text).

The story of weighing the human soul compared to the weighing of smoke can also be seen as a symbolic thematization of media interconnectedness: the "weight" or the foregrounded presence of the shape-shifting media becomes visible; in other words, we can see what is left of one medium when the other encounters it, one using up all of the other's techniques (in this scene oral storytelling becomes dominant, moreover, the scene foreshadows many similar scenes from its sequel, *Blue in the Face*, therefore it sutures together the two cinematic artworks).[24]

[24] Another intermedial reference here would be the appearance of the film *21 Grams* in 2003 that remediates many of the motifs and themes from its more light-hearted predecessor, *Smoke.* Alejandro González Iñárritu's

There is another story in the film, told again by Paul that refers to a famous smoking incident. When Paul tells Rashid the story of Bakhtin, who was caught in Leningrad during the 1942 siege and tore up his only manuscript to roll his cigarettes, the young boy hardly believes him:

> Paul: I mean, if you think you're going to die, what is more important, a good book, or a good smoke? And so he huffed and he puffed, and little by little he smoked his book.
> Rashid: Nice try. You had me going for a second, but no… no writer would ever do a thing like that. Would he? (*Smoke* 110)

I read this intermezzo as a reversed metaphoric rendering of one of the film's most important themes: is an artist capable of sacrificing his/her art in order to enjoy a peculiar moment of life? More importantly, smoking here raises another crucial question: if smoke is symbolic of the human spirit (the pneuma or "the breath of life"), would that mean in the film's world that human vitality and human connections are behind each social, cultural, artistic act that link the characters? In Auster's and Wang's *Blue in the Face* (1995)—released shortly after *Smoke*—one can find a more accentuated concern of such issues. This film is based on invented situations for the characters, on improvised scenes and dialogues, meaning that Auster wrote short drafts roughing out the general content of each possible scene that were subjected to change by the actors. One of the scenes features Auggie and Bob (Jim Jarmusch). Bob comes to the store to smoke his last cigarette with Auggie: he decided to quit smoking. Auster's draft of the monologue enumerates possible topics connected to smoking: "Smoking and sex. Smoking and food. Smoking and work" (*Blue* 193). The final part of the monologue talks about smoking as the last act in life, because smoke is just like a passing moment, a passing thought that easily disappears in the air: "the last puff before they blindfold the man about to be executed by the firing squad. Each puff is a human breath. Each puff is a thought. Each puff is another reminder that to live is also to die" (*Blue* 193). In *Smoke* such pondering on the way smoke resembles the human soul foregrounds the fact that the characters have to

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film also interweaves several narrative lines and is concerned about life after death, as well as the moral consequences of various characters' decisions and actions. The title refers to the weight of human soul, the amount of mass that leaves the body at the moment of death.

go through (sometimes painful) processes to realize that they should live every day as if it were the last day of their lives.[25]

Christine Jacobson asserts that smoking represents the obscuring of the facts, the fallibility of memory, the concealing of emotions and truths, and the passing of time (11). For Auster, smoke refers "to the way it can obscure things and make them illegible. Smoke is something that is never fixed, that is constantly changing shape. In the same way that the characters in the film keep changing as their lives intersect. Smoke signals… smoke screens… smoke drifting through the air" (Insdorf 16). The way I see it in my context, smoke is also a twofold narrative device: it provides narrative dynamics, as it controls the dialogue; periods of silence during smoking are followed by periods of intense talk. Smoke also functions as a linking and regulating device that joins and separates, also regulates (starts and stops) conversations. Meditations, discussions, and smoking are intertwined; swirling of smoke is symbolically suggestive of twists and turns of unarticulated thoughts and articulated dialogues as well as the circling paths of the destinies, that frequently meet each other. Evija Trofimova argues that in the film

> smoking is not only seen as part of the *mise-en-scène*, but also appears as "action," something that characters do all the time, while also doing something else, which is mainly talking and/or listening. This visual manifestation signals that *Smoke* is all about smoking and talking. (96)

Furthermore, Trofimova claims, "Smoking, in other words, involves 'acting,' and is itself a little performance. […] Smoking, in this sense, is not so different from writing, painting, acting, *storytelling*" (102). If smoking can be viewed as an instrument of blurring and obscuring facts, its absence brings about moments of clarity, truth, and credibility. When talking stops, periods of silence occur and play another important role in human communication. "Discontinuity assures continuity of understanding… To stop in order to understand, to understand in order to speak" (Blanchot qtd. in Newton 38). Silence is the discontinuity of talking, of storytelling, and provides a possibility for a better understanding. At the same time smoke functions as a means of veiling the in-between spaces of intermediation, hiding the ruptures caused by the mutually intrusive media, that is, it ensures

[25] What occurs in the case of *Blue in the Face* is a self-conscious *intermedial flânerie* as well. Auster chooses to overcross his new film with themes, motifs, and characters from the previous one. The remediations that occur in *Blue in the Face* foreground a heterotopic intermediality that is, engaging in a supportive, dialogic relationship with, and completing the meanings of, several motifs in *Smoke*.

the smooth shift from one media to the other by functioning as an intermedial suture. But how can these media forms coexist in one place?[26]

Space in *Smoke* lends itself to a threefold interpretation: represented space in the medium discussed (film, photography, fiction) including the concrete places characters inhabit (personal and lived places: Auggie's cigar shop, Paul's apartment, the neighborhood, etc.); the space of representation (of the medium) implying that characters are players of the different media, thus becoming performers who act in the in-between spaces of the various media; and the extratextual space of the reader/spectator. These distinct spaces are connected by intermedial co-relations and generate a heterotopic interface in which media do not exclude, but mutually influence each other, by taking up and simulating representational practices of another medium.

In order to construe the above-mentioned heterotopic interface, intermediality works in multiple ways in *Smoke*, that is, the way in which it either creates and uses (or does not use) visual equivalents for literary effects inherent in the source text, uncompromisingly depending on the linguistic medium, or brings together and manipulates the specifically cinematic and photographical codes in presenting its narrative, thus construing a heterotopic relation between them.

One of the most obvious forms of heterotopic intermediation one can see in *Smoke* is the mixed media presence of cinematic composition and the art of photography as well as painting in the context of a motion picture. Auggie's passion—photography—appears right in the first scene, when he is standing behind the counter, and is flipping through a photography magazine. Characters' composition around Auggie, their treatment in mise-en-scene, the use of perspective and color foreground an intermedial reference: they evoke Edward Hopper's

[26] Place is a term to which concretization can be attached, while space is always marked by abstraction. According to Michel de Certeau, the basic distinction between space and place is caused by temporality. A place (lieu) is an order, a configuration of positions, excluding the possibility of two things being in the same place. Thus, it implies stability, and fixed relations. Space is constituted of the intersection of the mobile elements, it occurs as an effect of the practices that orient it, and temporalize it. De Certeau in his *The Practice of Everyday Life* concludes that *space is a practiced place* that is, for example, when the streets become transformed into spaces by the walkers on them. Similarly to De Certeau's ideas, Yi-Fu Tuan argues that place can signify "pause" when compared to the free movement allowed by space. He opposes the "security and stability of place" to "the openness, freedom, and threat of space," thus being lost involves the lack of a sense of security, of a place (Tuan qtd. in Salmela 102). Gaston Bachelard views space as imaginal and poetic, while he claims that a place is absorbed by the subject through a process of dwelling, inhabiting. In another attempt to define the differences between *space* and *place*, Edward Casey understands place as a geographical location of the self, for which space functions as a void-like context. Contrastingly, De Certeau claims that space is produced by action that intrudes the void of place (qtd. in Salmela 139). In my analysis I will use the concepts of space and place (as they appear in *Smoke*'s diegetic reality) according to Bachelard's notions, while regarding the spaces of representation (that is the in-between spaces of media interactions) I will offer a heterotopic interpretation, in the sense that various media are present in a state of in-between existence while continuously interpreting, reinscibing, and mutually reflecting on one another.

famous painting, *Nighthawks* (1942) (see fig. 1). Auggie behind his counter and the customers of the cigar shop remind us of Hopper's lunch counter at night with three figures. In Hopper's painting the contrast between the dark night outside and the bright artificial light inside sets an atmosphere of loneliness and isolation. Unlike Auggie and his customers, the characters in *Nighthawks* do not look at each other and do not seem ready to communicate with each other. The sign above the café says "Phillies" that may refer to a cigar brand, hence another connection between the diner and Auggie's shop. Hopper's scene is located at a sharply-angled street corner (just like Auggie's shop), and the subjects are displayed from a frontal point of view (perhaps from the point of view of a passer-by on the sidewalk). This evokes a certain type of cinematic shot: zooming in, that is, seeing the restaurant from the viewpoint of a passer-by as s/he walks closer to the place. While Hopper's painting imitates techniques of moving pictures, the scene in Auggie's shop functions both as an intermedial imitation and thematization of the painting. Both scenes evoke typical American urban settings where normal American social life develops. A sense of good neighborhood, of a tolerant community is pictured here. Such places are about connecting with others, about experiencing human warmth in everyday actions.

Both the diner in Hopper's painting and Auggie's cigar shop can be considered crisis heterotopias, locations that, according to Foucault, are set aside for people at particular stages in their lives, for example, marking a rite of passage and so on. These are: "privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis" (*Of Other Places* 24). Foucault then refers to the modern versions of such early heterotopias and claims that these are the so-called heterotopias of deviation, sites "in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (*Of Other Places* 24). Emplacements for rites of passage or initiations take place out of sight or "elsewhere." The diner, the inn, where people drink and social relations are forged can be interpreted as sacred places, especially if they serve as locations for young men's initiation into manhood: drinking for the first time, as well as smoking a cigar for the first time can be a rite of passage. I believe that Auggie's shop and Hopper's diner are on the borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation, since they can be interpreted as places that provide home for those who are the outcasts of society, or willingly withdraw from society. Auggie's shop is a place where all conflicts are solved, where all independent microcosms can be brought together. Perhaps it is closer to a crisis heterotopia, because there are characters whose presence in this place is only

transitory: they quickly get through their problems and start their lives over again. So crisis can also generate a personal reconstruction after all.

In Auggie's shop characters go through some kind of transformation: their experiences become unusual in a sense that they feel a relational disruption in time and space, so that they arrive at an absolute break with their traditional, familiar time, and their life continues in heterochronies (slices in time, temporal discontinuities). And, as Foucault asserts, heterochronies are most often linked to heterotopias (*Of Other Places* 24). Flipping through Auggie's photo album, smoking in the cigar shop, and telling stories to the customers are actions through which Paul Benjamin undergoes a process of self-healing and purification. He manages to "slow down," to arrest time and enjoy the moment. Time is also suspended in Hopper's painting: the spectator ponders whether the characters are able to talk to each other, to form relations, or they will remain silent and detached from each other.

Moreover, Hopper's painting—as the source of countless adaptations—has another strange connection with *Smoke*: in 1975 Tom Waits released his first live album entitled *Nighthawks at the Diner*, featuring lyrics that were inspired by Hopper's painting. Waits's music is an essential part of *Smoke*: one of his memorable songs (Innocent When You Dream) during the last sequence of the embedded film sets the jazzy mood and the lyrics refer to the main themes of *Smoke*: ethical questions, difficult choices one has to make in life, blurring the line between reality and fiction, and so on.

Through such references to various media forms *Smoke* substantiates the claim that, as a latecomer among the arts, film alludes to, absorbs, and reflects on the language of other arts in order to create its own language. Borrowing from literature, painting, photography, music, and theatre equally, the cinematic medium is an amalgam of image and narrative that renders film a heterogeneous art form. The *tableau vivant* instances in film, that is, the moments of arrested motion remind us, however, that the *motion picture* is the very medium able to activate visual representations, to make painting "come to life."[27] Therefore, among the intermedial sutures it is the trope of the *tableau vivant* that functions as a perfect site where painting, theatre, and cinema can interact in various ways. In the case of *Smoke*, the

[27] "From the point of view of the human perceptual apparatus, it is motion that confers the impression of three-dimensionality upon the image. *Tableau vivant* moments in film set up a tension between the two- and the three-dimensional, between stasis and movement, between the 'death' of the human body in painting and its 'life' in cinema. Further, since *tableau vivant* exists at the nodal point that joins painting, sculpture, and theatre, its evocation in film is a moment of intensified intermediality" (Peucker 363). "In a *tableau vivant* we only have the memory of a painting present and not the painting itself before the camera. The confrontation between cinema and painting unfolds on a third level: the level of the theatre. Such tableaux vivants are actually theatrical scenes, in which the penetration of the camera into the picture means an entrance into a stage-like setting" (Paech qtd. in Pethő, "Intermediality in Film" 61).

aforementioned first scene with the characters' composition around Auggie is such a tableau vivant moment that brings together the literary source text and the filmic adaptation, while it incorporates the main themes: the joy of neighborhood life, the interconnection of people who take care of each other.

Regarding the art of paintings, as one of the first intermedial references in *Smoke*, perspective, according to David Bordwell, is "the central and most fully elaborated concept within the mimetic[28] tradition of narration" (7). Each media demands interactive participation; Bordwell demonstrates that comprehending a painting is similarly triggering the stimuli: "the beholder needs a knowledge of the medium's constrains and conventions, a sense of the painting's purpose, the ability to fill in what is missing […]" (33). Subsequently, the film spectator perceives the movement, the images, the sounds, and most importantly: he or she thinks. Making sense out of the film involves a cognitive activity, so that the viewer is engaged in a complex and active process of meaning construction. By using the conventions of the medium of painting the first scenes of *Smoke* bring about a pause in the viewers' experience of watching, but the effect is not a distancing, alienating one; rather, it can be seen as a means of absorbing, of inviting the spectator to engage actively in meaning construction. To put it differently, characters' composition reminiscent of the *tableau vivant* technique not only create an imaginary scene in *Smoke*'s diegetic world, but also appeal to the cognitive activity of a "fixed, imaginary witness" (Bordwell 5), that of the viewer. All these borrowed techniques function narrationally, constructing the film's story world for specific effects (especially for directing the perceiver's participation). So, what would the viewer think of the initial representation of Auggie's shop? Framing, afforded by the camera movement and the position of the figures is designed to set a positive situation and bring together the different parts of the tableau. The group composition around Auggie reminds us of a family in its comfortable home. It is a vision of harmonius continuity and integrity.

[28] When discussing the narration in any form of visual media, mimetic theories are used, since the presentation of a spectacle is always understood as a mode of showing. Diegetic theories conceive of narration as a verbal activity that is the mode of telling. We must not forget, though, that this differentiation merely refers—as Bordwell says—to the "mode" of imitation, either theory may be applied to any medium. "You can hold a mimetic theory of the novel if you believe the narrational methods of fiction to resemble those of drama, and you can hold a diegetic theory of painting if you posit visual spectacle to be analogous to linguistic transmission" (3). In my intermedial interpretation I will deliberately use the mimetic tradition while discussing a novel, and the diegetic one while discussing a film, because media interconnectedness is based on mutual imitation and borrowing of narrative devices.

Spectators' response and emotional involvement related to these different artistic forms can be manifold.[29] Auster speaks about the limited narrative efficacy of films although he discusses the relation between film and literature only. He complains about the two-dimensionality of the cinematic medium: "People think of movies as real, but they are not. They're flat pictures projected against a wall, a simulacrum of reality, not the real thing. […] We tend to watch them passively and in the end they wash right through us" (Insdorf 6). If Bordwell goes against all passive notions of spectatorship by claiming that film viewing is a complicated, interactive process, we must not forget that the three-dimensional experience of the viewer is usually limited by time. What Auster means by "flat pictures washing through us" is, I believe, a matter of time. Cinematic medium does not offer the possibility for the viewer (in the film's narrative time) to go back, or skip ahead, in contrast with the art of literature, where readers can turn over the pages of a book. In filmic and theatrical media "we are caught in an unrelenting, forwarding story" (Hutcheon 23). However, in the process of watching *Smoke,* author, character, and the reader/spectator are connected in a "dialogic relation," to use a term coined by M. M. Bakhtin in his *Discourse in the Novel*. Bakhtin's theory views a true intermedial relationship between different artworks, as a dialogic work is in a continual communication with other works. It discusses and is discussed by a previous work, thus it mutually reflects on, changes the other, while being changed by the other. Bakhtin's idea also stresses the reader's importance in the meaning of literary texts: the speaker seeks contact with the listener/understander,[30] and in *Smoke* this contact is realized precisely through the frequent employment of oral storytelling traditions and their incorporation in the cinematic text, instead of using the common technique of flashbacks.

In *Smoke* the characters are usually linked by various stories and various media forms, while they continually try to express themselves, to find out who they are in one way or another. Rashid, for example, is performing within a performance, and by generating various portraits for himself he resembles postmodern conceptual artists. The media through which he expresses himself are his own body and his drawings.[31] The young boy's carefully

[29] Ed Tan writes about the film viewer's role as that of being a witness, and his emotions as responses to the events and characters in the fictional world. The degree of understanding those events in connection with characters' actions leads to the development of emphatic or non-emphatetic emotion (7-32).

[30] For the definition of dialogic relation, see Bakhtin 278-84. David Shepherd draws analogies between Bakhtin's theories and Wolfgang Iser's ideas, and speaks about the concept of "active understanding" as "enabling the dialogic encounter of historically determined utterances, each of which not only takes what has already been said about its object, but is also oriented towards and shaped by an anticipated response" (92).

[31] According to Pfeiffer, "the human body does not possess any inherent significance. But its positions and performances deploy symbolic repercussions; these may be reflected in elementary categories of grammar or expand into cultural relevance" ("The Materiality of Communication" 12).

constructed system of lies provides him a set of identities: he is Rashid, as well as Thomas Cole; but he introduces himself as Paul Benjamin when first talking to his father Cyrus, and assumes the role of a father to Paul in a later scene. When Paul distractedly steps right into the oncoming traffic, Rashid saves him and claims that "it's a law of the universe. If I let you walk away, the moon will spin out of orbit [...] pestilence will reign over the city for a hundred years" (*Smoke* 37). An intense bond soon develops between them, and, as they cannot bear society's restrictions, they become lonely exiles living in Paul's apartment. Rashid declares: "That's because we don't belong anywhere. You don't fit into your world, and I don't fit into mine. We are the outcasts of the universe" (90). Interpreting Michael Taussig's ideas on the mimetic faculty, Linda Hutcheon argues that "human compulsion to behave *like* something or someone else marks the paradoxical capacity to be Other" (173). Rashid desperately tries to be "Other," an attempt visible in his choice to do everything in order to set up his fantasy world about regaining his father, and to find substitute fathers in the process—a hopeful possibility for him to begin a new life.

Removing the layers of identity-masks and getting close to Rashid's wounded self is not an easy task, and in one of the scenes Paul cries out in desperation: "Cut it out, will you? Just cut it out and come back here" (87), meaning to leave all the role-play and tell the truth. I also read this statement as a self reflexive enunciation: it refers to the attempt of one medium (film) to *cut out* the exaggerated use of the other medium's devices (dramatic performance) in its own diegetic reality (already being a medium of performance), and to restore the balance in which they can coexist. Such balanced connection can also be observed in the relationship between Paul and Rashid. When Rashid discovers that his father has a new family, he leaves the garage. We see his pencil drawing of the garage being slid under the door. Rashid worked on the excellent drawing for days, capturing every detail of the old building. The picture expresses the boy's most secret desires: he yearns for a home, for a family. When he realizes that his father established a new family, he feels betrayed and abandons his hopes together with his last piece of art.

Rashid notices that Paul's apartment is without television, metaphorically, it is a space where imagination is always set free. The boy brings him a black-and-white TV set as a sign of his appreciation, so that the medium of TV becomes an important element in building up their friendship. Leaving the drawing of the garage at Cyrus's place means a farewell to the biological father, while bringing the TV in Paul's house might symbolize his search for a new home, for a new (substitute) father. The fact that it is not a colour television set may be suggestive of qualified hope regarding that friendship as new family. They will be able to

watch the ball games now, and simultaneously, Rashid begins to tell Paul the truth about his life. However, the television has a defective tube, the reception is poor, and every now and then one of them has to bang the top of it, to bring the picture back in focus. Similarly, everything Rashid tells is just half-truth. This also alludes to how neither the mode of showing, nor the mode of telling[32] is entirely reliable, and as media forms are intermingled, they shed light on, or obscure things together.

If Rashid connects with Paul through the medium of the TV and through continuous storytelling, Paul connects with Auggie through the art of photography. The incorporation of the black-and-white photographs taken by Auggie also compels the spectator to engage with the story actively and confront its key themes. Auggie's hobby consists of a weird, daily ritual: for years, he has been taking pictures in front of his cigar shop, from the same angle at exactly 8 a.m. He shows his photo album to Paul and explains to him that this is his "project," his "life's work" (*Smoke* 50). Paul is amazed and remarks that all the photographs are the same, until he accidentally sees his wife (now dead) in a picture and becomes overwhelmed by grief. Auggie claims that Paul is going too fast, he does not look at the pictures at all, he needs to slow down to understand the meaning, because each photograph is different: people are dressed according to different seasons, light is changing and coming from different angles, weekdays are followed by weekends. As Auggie says: "sometimes different ones become the same, and the same ones disappear" (*Smoke* 51). Stopping, slowing down, watching the images carefully, and having a personal reading of them help the small details come to the surface. The fact that the exterior space is always viewed from the same angle suggests the steadiness with which Auggie views it, underlining its centrality to the emotional core of his life. The apparently changing images taken from an unchanging position serve a profound narrative purpose: they symbolize the always changing social and emotional relations between the characters, the theme of immortality through art, as well as, on another level, the continuity and the stability of the film's narrative.

Recording his "little spot" becomes of crucial importance for Auggie: "That's why I can never take a vacation. I've got to be in my spot every morning" (*Smoke* 50). One might wonder, whether Auggie's little project is an artistic endeavour or not. According to Paul Frosh, Auggie's pictures are very far from being artistic: "the process is similar to the serial

[32] I am using the terms "telling" and "showing" as they appear in adaptation theory (Hutcheon 22-27). The telling mode refers to the medium of narrative literature, while showing mode is connected to performance (plays and films). The scene discussed above brings together oral storytelling (diegesis) and performance (mimesis), thus demonstrating that neither media is able to offer full credibility to the reader/viewer.

repetitiveness that one finds in industrial production. […] The same results could be gained from a computer-operated camera" (332-33). There is, indeed, a repetitiveness characteristic of the entire photo project, yet the pictures are not identical. Thus, the photo-sequence can be interpreted as a specific artwork. The principle of choosing the exact time and location partake of a documentary, even cataloguing project that can be seen as a new realist-poetic order. Auggie's camera registers the people in the neighbourhood as they are: human beings in social interactions. The binding of photographic documentation with a determinate aesthetic idea foregrounds Auggie's claim to knowledge of the world. The whole photo-project can be seen as Auggie's grasp of a social place as humanized and coherent.

Thereby, Auggie Wren's identity is constructed in and through the act of photographing. Immortalizing other people, that of an entire neighbourhood with his photo album, is a process of Auggie's actual identity construction. Through this photographic sequence Auggie is able to locate himself in the world, and more, he can provide ways for characters to reconnect to their environment and to each other. Moreover, what he does can be seen as a (primitive) cinema of the street; therefore, the cinematic experience of moving images is transposed onto the appearance of the always changing images of the street, introducing in this sense a nostalgia for the origin, the archaic form of filmic images: photomontage (see fig. 2). In my view, the photo-sequence can also be interpreted as a unique, primordial form of filmic storytelling.[33]

Auggie's identity as an artist and storyteller consists of his sequential narrative strategies. Looking at the photographs and creating a mental juxtaposition of these function as means of gaining deeper personal and aesthetic understanding. The term *sequential narrative* is used in comics, but Maxim Douglas argues that

> sequential narrative art is more a description of a method of communication than of the more overt and obvious potential physical traits of the medium such as pulp and ink. It is the visual creation of a narrative event specifically via juxtaposition in space (5).

Auggie's sequence-based images by way of editing (the same time, the same angle) and the exact date indicated in each case create relationships between themselves and ultimately tell

[33] In a fine discussion of the film González argues that Auggie's project both alludes to realistic and fictional, because it shows different sides of Auggie as a creator: he is a photographer and fact recorder, but he is fundamentally a storyteller, a fiction-maker ("Words Versus Images" 31).

"stories" that a single image cannot. The narrative is contained in what is *not* presented by these images, in what happens in the viewer's mind when s/he juxtaposes them. In the original story written by Auster, when Paul Benjamin studies the people in the photographs, he claims that he was "trying to discover their moods from these surface indications, as if I could imagine stories for them, as if I could penetrate the invisible dream locked inside their bodies" ("Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" 160-61). In this sense the trope of photography in *Smoke* functions as an intermedial suture (bringing together the literary source text and the cinematic adaptation), and also acts as a figure of multiple mediation between the cinematic image and the photographic one in the film's world (because the black and white photographs inserted in the filmic text are juxtaposed with Paul's face as he looks at them, and because the photo album scene foreshadows and is linked with Auggie's story at the end of the film, as well as with the black-and-white film sequence). Moreover, photography provides in this case a vantage point that is both an integral part of the medium (because film is made up of individual frames/photograms) and part of the film's diegetic reality (Auggie's photos that appear on the screen). Here, in fact, the main figure is both the almost palpable rendering of Auggie's concrete activity of representing reality by framing it (through his photographs), and transposing it into the photo album, which, in its turn functions as a mini-montage symbol. As Paul flips through the album, the photographic reality of the events and characters captured in the pictures seem to be set in motion, bringing about a sense of cinematic sequence (moving pictures). Photography inscribes the trace of its own medium within cinematic representation and narrative.

Auggie's art mirrors the sequential narrative structure of the film: several different, but interconnected stories run parallel and become linked. When Auggie reveals his hobby to Paul, he actually exposes his artistic identity:

> "Paul: So you're not just some guy who pushes coins across the counter.
> Auggie: That's what people see, but that ain't necessarily what I am." (48)

Auggie claims: "seeing as how I've read your books, I don't see why I shouldn't share my pictures with you" (49). This line highlights one of the major themes in the film: the importance of sharing personal as well as artistic experiences, of creating a friendship between two human beings. Since Auggie is a photographer and Paul is a writer, this line is as much as suggesting that the literary text and photographic medium can coexist on the same level.

In Auggie's photo project a heterotopic intermediality shapes up in *Smoke* through inserting photographs into the story (intermedial imitation) and constantly referring to other media—photography and literary (source) text—in his text (intermedial thematization). The photograph motif functions directly as individual reference (reference of a medial product to another individual medial product), that is, a reference in a cinematic text to photography through the evocation of certain photographic techniques: composition, centre of interest, subject angle, and camera perspective. Analyzing this type of media combination, Rajewsky claims that "rather than combining different medial forms of articulation, the given media-product thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium," and there is always an "illusion-forming quality inherent in them" (53-54). With several factors contributing to its overall effect (zooming in, editing, dissolving images while Paul looks at the pictures, presenting images to the spectator in a slide show), the photographic sequence in *Smoke* inevitably reminds the viewer of motion pictures, more precisely of a parallel editing, thus providing contracted narrative information. Obviously, the photographs in *Smoke* do not become a real cinematic sequence; they remain photographs, yet, through their presence and specific structuring, they *evoke* or *reflect on* motion pictures, moreover, they serve as a supportive springboard for the film's last sequence: Auggie's story adapted to a black-and-white film. This is why the intermedial relationship between photography and cinema in *Smoke* can be seen as a heterotopic one.

Such intermedial connections invite the spectator to react emotionally and apply motivational justifications. At the syuzhet level, when the camera shows Paul flipping through the photo album and discussing the pictures with Auggie, the viewer considers this event as psychologically reasonable and compositionally essential for the forthcoming events. At the stylistic level,[34] when Paul is shown looking closely at the photographs and the next shots are of the photographs themselves arranged in a slide show, we understand that the narrative perspective changed: from an objective point of view to a subjective one.[35] We assume that the photographic shots are compositionally relevant, due to a certain sense of realism (Paul's point of view), and accept them as a typical convention, that of building up suspense, the "strategy of wait-and-see" (Bordwell 38). There is a depth of subjectivity in the scene of Paul flipping through the album, with certain "photographic" shots framed from his optical point of

[34] I use the terms "stylistic level" and "syuzhet level" as they appear in Bordwell's narration theory regarding fiction film, that is "*the process whereby the film's syuzhet and style interact in the course of cueing and channelling the spectator's construction of the fabula*" (53).

[35] Els Andriga and others write about the issues of subjectivity and objectivity in cinematic narration and claim that "subjectivity and focalizing techniques determine the degree of access the viewers have to a character's mind. [...] Subjective techniques enhance processes of identification, empathy, and involvement" (204).

view. In the process of this action he occasionally looks up from the album at Auggie, and then the camera zooms in on the pictures until we come to the photo of Ellen. After the close-up on Paul's face, the camera pulls away. Auggie leans over Paul's shoulder, while we see Paul's finger pointing to Ellen's face. This scene demonstrates how a narration shifts regarding the level of knowledge (from objective to subjective). We are being restricted to Paul's knowledge (internal focalization through point of view shots consisting of the photographs), and soon find out that the principal agent of knowledge is Auggie (he knows that Ellen's picture is there and shows him the album purposely). Throughout the film, at certain moments; our knowledge is greater than that of the characters; at other moments, we know less than the figures, and the narration calls attention to that fact either way. In this sense the viewer's attention is directed towards the characters' motivations, while, at the same time, s/he becomes skeptic about the narration's reliability.

The photo album evokes both Auggie's and Paul's memories and highlights that the social events of yesterday and the personal events of today are equally important in a person's life. Personal memories and general cultural memories come together in the act of flipping through the photo album. The photographic medium has as its main feature the ability to capture a past moment; inserting these into the filmic narrative means the inclusion of eternity into a transitory present. Such inserts provide a series of successive, contemplative moments for the characters in which the subject can undergo a spiritual and ethical introspection. Pain entraps Paul as the very precondition of his mortality.

Bazin observes that photographs satisfy our appetite for illusions, as they are mechanical reproductions in which the human being plays no part (19). Flipping through Auggie's album can be seen as an attempt to stop time, because photographs bring about a heightened sense of presence, along with a concomitant sense of absence; they make immortal out of the mortal, they document the presence of people and the continuity of life at a given moment. At the same time, the slicing and freezing of moments represent the passing of time, as we can see that people change perpetually in the pictures. As Paul says in the original short story: "Auggie was photographing time, I realized, both natural time and human time […]" ("Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" 161). In concordance with the whole spirit of the movie Paul has to *slow down*. The idea of slowing down and observing the differences on the pictures, as well as taking one's time to do so, offer a unique analogy regarding *Smoke*'s narrative time: similarly to reading a novel, viewers have to slow down and pay attention to the details as the film moves from the portrait of one figure to another.

Susan Sontag contends, "all photographs are *memento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability" (*On Photography* 15). In the case of Paul, looking at the photograph means the preservation of the dead person's memory, therefore he becomes able to work through a trauma and get back into life. In contrast with Bazin's theory, the film points out that it is precisely the instruments of creating illusions (in this case photography) which serve as illusion breakers, triggering the audience's reaction, determining them to step out of the imaginary world. Mark Brown asserts that the notion of *illusion* in Auster's filmwork can "provide stable points of reference for identity, as secure coordinates on which [one can] anchor self-formation" (160). While for Auggie's case this might be true—as his photographic project becomes a way to forge supportive friendships and to connect with his environment—for Paul it is precisely the breaking of illusions that reconnects him with the energizing task of writing, thus rebuilding his narrative identity.

In Barthes's analysis the viewer's response to a photograph can be defined in two ways: "studium," or the general knowledge available to every viewer, and the "punctum," which functions as a catalyst for personal memories and experiences a photograph precipitates. Photography is "the impossible science of the unique being" (Barthes 71), that is, it looks like its subject, it resembles the person in the picture, but it is precisely the individuality of its subject which cannot be photographed. At the same time the "punctum" can be a wound, as it evokes something very powerful and unbidden in the viewer.[36] It is the viewer who has a particular understanding of that image and attributes multiple meanings to it. When Paul sees his deceased wife in the photograph, he bursts into tears, and says: "It's Ellen. Look at her. Look at my sweet darling" (52). He sees his wife as she was, rediscovering her in and after death. This is the sublime[37] inherent in photography: for Paul, "punctum" creates the means to connect his memories with his deeper understanding of death, so he becomes able to invoke and apprehend his own mortality and death. If Auggie's photo album can be considered as the *studium*—a sense of closure, order, and a fixed meaning—Ellen's

[36] Mirzoeff in his interpretation of Barthes argues that the "punctum" is the way we deal with that ineffable difference in pose that causes us to select one photograph over another, saying that it does or does not look like its subject (74).

[37] What Barthes finds in the photograph of his mother (Winter Garden) is merely a likeness that never offers consolation to the viewer. Thus, the "sublime" here is to be understood in Kantian terms, that is it denotes the indescribable aspect of absolute singularity; it is beyond resemblance. Kant writes: "We soon perceive that for this it is not permissible to seek an appropriate standard outside itself, but merely in itself. It is a greatness comparable to itself alone" (97). The comparison, however, marks the loss of the original and unique being. What Barthes and Paul Benjamin are looking for when they gaze at the photographs of the beloved persons is precisely a sublime presence that is at one with its absence.

picture serves as *punctum*, a detail that arrests Paul's gaze and brings about a moment of looking that disrupts and disturbs both the *studium* as well as the viewer. It is this element that is invested with creative force and dynamism; it can determine the viewer to re-evaluate the image and his relationship to it. It works to destabilize what would otherwise be seen as a presented image, a seemingly settled configuration. When the disruption takes place in the case of Paul, he becomes able to glimpse the *beyondness* to the image. Consequently, as Martin states "the montage is a celebration of Ellen's existence. It becomes the catalyst for the extrication of Benjamin's internal demons. The associations of the past are diminished" (168-69). Thereby, he can make a connection between his past and present and becomes able to recommence his writings. At the same time, when analyzing the trope of photography, namely the role of Auggie's photo album as a connecting agent between different media, it becomes obvious that in *Smoke* various mutually reflexive media "figurate" the "infigurable" identity and ethical implications of certain characters (especially in the last sequence of *Smoke*: the black-and-white rendering of Auggie's Christmas story brings about a scene that is placed somewhere in an impossible, heterotopic space between art and reality, between one medium and another).

Auggie's photo album, on the other hand, serves as an allegory for the filmic narrative because the pictures can represent cinematic shots functioning as intermedial references per se. André Gaudreault claims that "any shot presents a series (*sequence*) of images in motion (*transformation*)" (33). But what does he mean by transformation?

> 'Transformation' must not be understood in the sense of 'substitution,' or there is nothing to prevent us from viewing any syntagm composed of two photographs (whatever they might be) a narrative énoncé. Now, for two photographs to be 'promoted' to this 'rank,' they must fulfill two conditions. First, they must not be completely *alike*: if they are, there is no narrativity […] since there would be no *change* […]. Second, they cannot be entirely different from each other: the subject of the transformation in question […] must be assured a certain degree of continuity, or else narrativity cannot be demonstrated. (33)

Auggie's photo album can be symbolic of this transformation: it represents a combination of both resemblances and differences, thus establishing a condition for narrativity. González observes that Auggie's project "acts as mise-en-abyme for the whole film" because it

reproduces the entire film's slow tempo, the classical visual approach reminiscent of the studio era, which "gives priority to *mise-en-scène* and long takes over editing" ("Words Versus Images" 30).

Interpreting Auster's treatment of the subject of photography, Brown demonstrates that for Auster old baseball photographs have the same evocative power as Proust's madeleines (172). In *Smoke* both Auggie and Paul realize that taking photographs, and looking at them became a comfort to them at a distressing and confused time, a point of stillness in a changing world. Similarly to Proust's madeleines, Auggie's photo sequence can trigger recollections across time. For Paul it becomes a catalyst for remembering his own life as it was before Ellen's death.

To sum up, intermedial references help characters in forming their narrative identities: on a motivic level photography is the medium that makes Auggie able to comprehend and locate himself in the world, and serves as a moment of disruption for Paul, as the movie's next scene presents him writing a new story on his typewriter. As a consequence, it initiates a process of Paul's actual identity construction and a way of coping/surviving in the act of narrating.

### *1.2. (Intermedial) Nonplace and Shifting Identities*

*Smoke*'s narrative follows each character's viewpoint, splitting into many streams, while offering parallel story events. It is, however, the richness of the plot that makes multi-level viewings possible and enables the spectators to enjoy and anticipate media shifts. There are four main narrative lines, each with its own self-contained plot development: Paul Benjamin's working through his grief, Rashid Cole's quest for his father Cyrus, Ruby and Auggie's project to save their drug-addicted daughter Felicity, and, finally, Auggie Wren's Christmas tale, which, with its hallucinatory mood is both linked to, and stays apart from, the movie. At the same time, there are various substories in these four major narrative arcs: Paul telling Rashid the skier's tale, Auggie telling his friends how Paul's wife died, Auggie showing his strange hobby to Paul, Cyrus Cole's tale about how he lost his arm and was estranged from his own son, and Paul's story about weighing smoke associated to weighing the human soul.

The branching narrative structure in *Smoke* is based on the doublings, iterations, and repetitions of characters and motifs. The same structure applies to the relationship between different media forms embedded in *Smoke*: cinema forms an intermediation with photography and the literary source text. This is best visible in *Smoke* in the narrative mechanisms at work that employ iterations and doubles. The presence of such an intermedial interface or nonplace almost always involves the interaction of characters, who change their roles and take each other's identities in the film's fictitious reality. Similarly to mirrors (the very heterotopic placeless places), character doubles and other joint elements can be interpreted as self-reflexive media configurations within the film's texture, reading, reflecting, and interacting with each other. Moreover, a heterotopic intermediality is realized in *Smoke* through various media interactions that may also be represented by characters' shifting identities, which, in their turn, represent different art forms.

What makes the cinematic text visually heterogeneous is the technique of fade-in and fade-out which precedes the appearance of the written words on the screen: titles, consisting of the main characters' names, introduce each act, each story. The inserted titles intrude, interrupt, and cross the diegetic world introducing a way of communication between the film's world and the spectators, "telling" us what we are going to see in the following scene. In this sense the disruptive titles are reminiscent of the silent cinema and its usage of narrative titles. Technically they are foreshadowing an intermedial switch: the appearance of a black-and-white, silent cinema sequence at the end of the film.

The embedding of the titles in the cinematic text also serves to establish the loose frame structure, a balancing power which holds together the multiple story-levels and diverging viewpoints. Key images like the Brooklyn subway at the beginning and at the end also contribute to the stability of this framework. At the same time, the use of the dissolve technique contributes markedly to the film's easy flow of movement, as it ushers in major narrative events.

The sections of the four narratives alternate, inviting the viewer not only to make connections between them, but to sense the characters' separateness and isolation. The characters, after whom the strands are named, double each other, mirroring and repeating the same inability to deal with their problems. It is precisely the skier's tale which best exemplifies this mirror-structure.

The skier's parable first appeared in *Ghosts*, the second novella of Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*, in which Blue, the private detective, reads the story in a magazine. In *Smoke*, the story is told by Paul to Rashid, during breakfast. The tale introduces a skier, who dies in an avalanche, and his body is never recovered. Years later, his son, who has become a skier, too, runs down the mountain and accidentally finds the body of the father, perfectly intact, "preserved in suspended animation" (99). When he looks at him more closely "he feels that he is looking into a mirror, that he's looking at himself" (99). Looking at oneself in the mirror also foreshadows here that the characters will see themselves in certain roles they are playing: for example, Paul plays the role of the father for Rashid. The skier's tale is symbolic of their relationship: Paul ends the story with remarking how strange it is that "the father is younger than the son now. The boy has become a man and it turns out that he's older than his own father" (99). Later, when celebrating Rashid's birthday, they change their roles, and Rashid claims with a straight face that "actually, I'm his [Paul's] father." Paul replies that "it's true. Most people assume I'm his father. It's a logical assumption—given that I'm older than he is and so on. But the fact is, it's the other way around. He's my father and I'm his son" (104).

Who is whose father, then? In Auster's oeuvre, the motif of the lost father usually stands for the loss as well as reconstruction of identity. The death of the father is the catalyst of the son's quest for identity. The change of roles here reflects the fact that the father becomes the younger one, the more vulnerable, and starts to occupy the place of the child. Rashid being Paul's father means that he saved Paul's life, symbolically giving him birth, giving him new life. In this sense he resembles the image of Pinocchio, evoked by Paul Auster in his *The Invention of Solitude*. The crucial image for Auster in the Collodi story is

"Pinocchio saving Gepetto (swimming away with the old man on his back)" (*Solitude* 133). To be a father means carrying the burdens and providing redemption. Therefore, the son can become the father, as he "saves the father from the grip of death" (*Solitude* 134). In this sense, Auggie, Paul, and Rashid can be seen as fathers and sons to each other; however, in this system of male relations, Auggie is always taking the role of the father, and never that of the son. The image of Pinocchio carrying his father on his back finds its counterpart in the three men's relationship in *Smoke*: they take care and listen to each other, bring each other back to life, and carry each other's burdens.

In the skier's tale the frozen father is symbolic of the absent father, similar to Auggie and Cyrus. In *Smoke* a heterogeneous space occurs, in which the spectators can see the characters both as themselves, and as playing roles (Paul and Rashid changing their father-son functions, Auggie playing a role for the grandmother). On the one hand, in the skier's parable one can see a heterochronia unfold, that is, an accumulation of all time—past and present—in one place, such as in the case of museums and cemeteries; it becomes a place of all times and "is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages" (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* 26). On the other hand, a heterotopic intermediality shapes up due to the mutually reflexive media presence in the aforementioned scene: role playing recalls, again, theatrical as well as cinematic media, since the characters are endlessly performing in a performance. According to Chiel Kattenbelt theatre is a physical hypermedium, because it "provides, as no other art, a stage for intermediality. On this stage, the performer is the player of different media who acts *in the empty spaces between the media*" (23, emphasis added). Although I partially share this notion, I strongly believe the medium of cinema also has the same power: a performer on the screen is also a player of the dramatic medium per se. In *Smoke* it is precisely through one medium's simulating other media elements (such as the aforementioned characters' performance in a performance, and further on, the oral storytelling, of course not unusual in films, but highlighting a specific choice of Auster in the case of *Smoke*) that the characters become individualized and *seem* to regain the "aura" that is usually missing in the case of film actors.[38] In *Smoke*, spectators can see the moving pictures as a "real" space (the characters as

[38] Walter Benjamin notes that "for the first time—and this is the effect of the film—man has to operate with his whole living person, yet forgoing its aura. For aura is tied to his presence; there can be no replica of it. The aura which, on the stage, emanates from Macbeth, cannot be separated for the spectators from that of the actor. However, the singularity of the shot in the studio is that the camera is substituted for the public. Consequently, the aura that envelops the actor vanishes, and with it the aura of the figure he portrays" (9). It is the illusory nature of the cinematic medium, its artificial, mechanical feature of endless repetition and reproduction, and the fact that the film actor plays for the camera and not for a live public determine the loss of the aura, as Benjamin sees the problem. However, as a result of intermedial imitations the *illusion* of such an aura can be established,

Paul, Rashid, Auggie, and so on) and fictitious (the same characters as playing roles in the film's fictitious world). Regarding the notion of the "aura," Walter Benjamin also speaks about the problem of retelling of the same story by different media in the age of mechanical reproduction and contends that it is precisely the individual "aura" of the artwork that is lost in the process of endless reproduction. For Benjamin the "aura" of a piece of art is based on authenticity, authority, and tradition.[39] Going against this idea I argue that adaptations—especially through their usage of intermedial references, more precisely imitations of other media means of representation—cannot be considered as simply reproductions, since they include a great number of variations, that is, changes that can vary from thematic to narrative alterations. Adaptations "carry the aura with them" (Hutcheon 4); moreover, they generate a new "aura" for themselves. In my view, it is the mixed media presence that construes a specific intermedial aura that provides authenticity and individuality to a work of art, in this case, to *Smoke*.[40]

Telling the skier's parable is a crucial plot element that foregrounds human relationships. According to Newton intersubjective relations are accomplished through stories. "That armature is what I […] call ethics: narrative as relationship and human connectivity, as Saying over and above Said, or as Said called to account in Saying, narrative as claim, as risk, as responsibility, as gift, as price" (7). Paul's story strengthens the (substitue) father and son relationship between him and Rashid, offering the young boy a sense of comfort as well as a sense of responsibility: later on, Rashid is ready to take control of his own life, to take care of both Paul and himself.

*Smoke*'s narrative is repeatedly based on the principle of "showing" by "telling." In telling the skier's parable oral storytelling conventions are at work. The camera slowly moves in for a close-up of Paul's face, while he says: "all right. Listen carefully" (99). Such a technique is quite usual in films, yet, in this case it reflects on the conscious choice of Auster: the skier's tale is not adapted through the traditional flashback and voiceover techniques, that is, Paul's story is not intercut with a sequence of images that would illustrate what he was saying. Rather, the spectators settle into listening to Paul, just as Rashid is, whom we see

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bringing about a very similar audiencing activity (that is, the way spectators perceive the event). Spectators can assume that a film actor can also indentify himself with the character of his role.

[39] "One might subsume the eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence" (Benjamin 2).

[40] An intermedial work is always unique. The position, duration, and way of using intermedial references differ from medium to medium, from work to work.

listening intently. The camera cuts to and holds on the young boy's face. Auster contends: "All the early scenes are done in wide shots and masters. Then, very gradually, as the disparate characters become more involved with each other, there are more and more close shots and singles" (Insdorf 15). Viewers do not see the stories adapted to image sequences, but they watch the face of the tale teller in close-up and listen to his words; such a cinematic solution can successfully trigger the emotional involvement and the imagination of the audience. It is as if Auggie's message is directly addressed to the viewer: slow down, otherwise you will not understand it. Since we cannot actually *see* the skier's story, we have to invent the pictures for ourselves. Instead of using the typical convention of dialogue scenes in which the camera provides over-the-shoulder shots, in narrating the skier's tale, and later in Auggie's storytelling, the camera gazes, then zooms in on the actors directly, generating the effect in the spectator of being in the middle of the scene. Going against the classical hollywoodian cinematic narratives (that use techniques such as quick cutting, action-reaction, and so on) *Smoke* uses an incredibely slow narration with close-ups on the characters' faces, thus providing time for the spectator *to read* the intermedial space.

The father-son mirroring, especially the image of carrying each other's burdens (as in the Gepetto-Pinocchio motif) also thematizes a heterotopic intermedial relationship: the skier's tale first appeared in Auster's *Ghosts* (written source text), then it became transposed to the cinematic text in order to support and strengthen it, creating a remarkable scene in which the narrative reinforces the developing relationship between the characters; *Smoke* deliberately makes use of the story from *Ghosts* so that it will not be forgotten, but kept alive through the filmic medium. Christopher Balme writes that "the taking-up or imitation of the methods of representation of one medium by another medium can also function as a specific medium-crossing form of intertextuality, which implies that one medium refers to another medium" (qtd. in Kattenbelt 24).

One medium supporting the other, of "carrying on their backs" the techniques of each other in *Smoke* points to a heterotopic relation of mutual reflection and interdependence. The skier's tale functions as an intermedial suture (just as smoke does), because it brings together various media forms that support each other: written literature (it is the adaptation of the story from *Ghosts*) and cinematic storytelling and performance (later Rashid and Paul enacting the roles of father and son).

The stories can also be divided into those that belong to the diegetic reality of the film (for instance Rashid telling about his past life, Auggie talking about his hobby) or presented as fictitious (skier's tale, Sir Walter Raleigh and the weight of smoke). These minor plot

events are crucial elements in the storytelling, because they function as *catalysers* (in Barthes's term), that is, to complement, support, and enrich the cardinal functions in the narrative, laying out "areas of safety, rests, luxuries" (qtd. in McFarlane 14).[41] These small actions not only help the scenario progress, but also link the characters. Auggie, whose words, appearance, actions, and facial expressions are signifiers of an old, deep wisdom, is repeatedly used as a figure of benevolent catalyst strengthening other characters (Paul, Rashid) in their development. The subplots revolving around him have a continuity of style and tone, which enhances the thematic coherence. Auster claims: "At his best, for example, Auggie is close to being a Zen master. But he's also an operator, a wise guy, and a downright grumpy son-of-a-bitch" (Insdorf 17).

Besides the motif of the smoke, the stolen money in the brown paper bag also functions as a means of linking the characters, and establishing narrative continuity. The money initially belonged to the bank robbers, then Rashid took advantage of it, considering it as the key for his future. When he causes damage to Auggie by accidentally soaking the expensive Cuban cigars, he hands over the stolen money in order to pay for the loss of such exquisite items. The placement of the three characters (Paul, Rashid, Auggie) in the frame in relation to one another makes clear the nature of relationship between them at this moment, retaining the underlying patterns of loss and finding, suspicion and trust. They sit at a table and the brown paper bag with the five thousand dollars is in front of them (see fig. 3). The mise-en-scene composition reminds us of a triangle; the figures are at an equal distance from one another, balance and proportion are perfect. The dialogic relationship between the characters stems from the three men's discussions and overcoming their differences. Moreover, it is also the ethical implication that brings them together: when Auggie complains about the breakdown of his business, he adds that he is more concerned about his reputation in the neighbourhood. "I can't hardly pay for this beer. Not to speak of having my credibility destroyed. Do you understand what I'm saying?" (118).

Auggie does not want to accept the money at first, and pushes the bag toward Rashid, who, without hesitation, pushes it back toward Auggie. This scene clearly demonstrates how power is equally disposed among the characters, not only through their gestures, but also the place their figures occupy in the frame: they are looking and attentively listening to each other. At this point the film uses unmistakable technical references to modern gangster

[41] Seymour Chatman uses the term *satellites* and claims that their function is "that of filling in, elaborating, completing the kernel" (51).

movies, all representative images for the genre appear in one scene: Auggie takes the role of the godfather, Paul is the cosiglieri, and Rashid is the young footpad always challenging the authority of the other two at first, until they finally come to an agreement. In this scene even the language alludes to the stylistic devices of the gangster movies. The three characters never use a dirty language when they are together, only on this occasion:

> Auggie: (Peeking into the bag again. Smiles) Fuck you, kid.
> Rashid: (Beginning to smile) Fuck you, too, you white son-of-a-bitch.
> Paul: (Pause. He laughs. Then, slapping his hands on the table) Good. I'm glad that's settled! (120)

Paradoxically, the scene reminiscent of gangster film scenes—in which one can find a very tense, hierarchical relationship between the characters—becomes an image that ultimately accentuates the nondominant relationship between the characters, as they manage to come to an agreement. The equated dialogue, the strategic positioning of the characters in one symmetrical triangle around the table not only highlight the heterotopic coming together of the different media systems (graphic art represented by Rashid; writing, represented by Paul; and photography symbolized by Auggie) on a thematic level, but also draw attention to the interconnectedness of various cinematic genres, as well as to the inclusion of cultural and ethical elements—that is, the issues of race and tolerance. The art of persuasion through the means of dirty language is closely connected to the moral dilemma of Auggie, whether to accept the money or not. He is worried about his reputation; he immediately knows the money is stolen, so that he behaves in a very indecisive way: he peeks inside the paper bag, sighs, shakes his head, peeks into the bag again, and finally smiles in acceptance. Rashid's money that constantly attracted trouble functions as a deus ex machina: it finally solves everything.

Auggie in his turn gives the money to Ruby to pay for Felicity's rehabilitation. Though indirectly, Rashid gets in touch with another character, Ruby and saves another life: that of Felicity. Therefore, passing on the money endlessly becomes a specific means of ensuring the narrative's continuity. The ethical implications are manifold here: the stolen money functions as a means of moral testing for the characters. During the arguing over the acceptance of the five thousand dollars, trust and friendship develop between men of different culture, race, and generations.

All characters have unspeakable traumas and memories; they repeat and double each other's self-doubts, emotional despairs, each of them carrying a burden or a handicap, a

reminder of their weaknesses: Ruby has a missing eye covered by an eye patch; Cyrus has a false arm which reminds him of his mistakes; Paul walks like a living-dead, not being able to get back to normal life, Felicity—whose name is sadly the opposite of her current situation—repeats the mistakes of her mother, and her speech and gestures also recall the lying-performing behaviour of Rashid: she agrees on the meeting, because she wants to humiliate her parents. Felicity's story details elements and practices in which she, as the teller construes an identity for herself; moreover, through her invented personal story she makes a claim for a certain social position (a tough woman, who has a strong protector) and against others (her parents). She probably makes up the story of her big and strong boyfriend, plays the role of the indifferent, selfish daughter, while desperately longing for love and motherly care.

With such physical as well as psychical deficiencies these characters are linked metaphorically, living their lives in isolation. Yet they are struggling to come to terms with their mistakes, and they can overcome their weaknesses. They stick together, intermingle, and mirror each other (Ruby's half eye is re-evoked by the blindness of Granny Ethel, Cyrus' false arm finds its counterpart in Paul's temporarily crippled arm), thus providing strength to each other to prevail over all difficulties.[42] For example, Paul transforms his mental/spiritual handicap into a more bearable physical one, that is, his crippled arm, which also reminds him of the fact, that he is alive. As Roger Ebert claims, while analyzing *Smoke*: "Of all the handicaps in life, the worst must be the inability to express how you feel" (11). Paul regains the ability to feel again, and he begins to reconnect with other people.

On the other hand, characters' artistic preoccupations link them in a dialectic relationship, which, in turn, reflects the dialogic relationship between the art forms. Developing deep father-son connections between the aforementioned characters coming from various social and cultural backgrounds is realized technically through the clever usage of close-ups, shots-reverse shots, and shifts in points of view. They exchange artistic ideas and overcome moral and cultural differences. Hence the theme of art's availability to the common man, presented as a redeeming force, through the motif of stealing "memories (suggested to us by the stolen camera), identities (Thomas Cole's lie to Cyrus that he is Paul Benjamin) and ideas (Auggie's inspiration for the Christmas story)" (Jacobson 20). The cinematic medium also allows different texts to emerge in various situations. Characters encounter each other's "life-texts" and attempt to reconstruct them via the usage of different media elements:

[42] Trofimova mentions that "the hook-handed Cyrus together with the eye-patched Ruby in the film can be seen as pastiche characters that represent the urban eccentricity of the cultural melting pot that is Brooklyn, and also as very traditional second-role players from Auster's works in general." (98, footnote)

Auggie's photos influence Paul's return to life and writing; Rashid relies on his sketchbook to tell his story and trigger his father's storytelling—the last being an oral record and a confession of an earlier life resulting in his fake arm (a reminder of sin); and the blindness of Ruby and Granny Ethel become recontextualized in Felicity's narrative and in the black-and-white adaptation of Auggie's tale. Understanding these "life-texts" determines the viewers to reconstruct the actions that led to them. Since the viewers of *Smoke* can only gradually or partially reconstruct these formative conditions, it is the cognitive practice, the attempt and the willingness to do so that conveys an ethical audiencing activity.

The density of plot events supports the above-mentioned system of allusions and iterations. Trofimova observes that "*Smoke* thematizes storytelling by substituting a lot of action with stories that the characters literally tell each other" (96). Indeed, the narrative carefully builds and then rigorously brings together variations of the individual events into a matrix of parallel narrative cells (see the table below). The means of cross-mediation, for example, fading in/out with the images of smoke puffing up, long shots and sudden angle shifts, abrupt breaks in dialogues and storytelling support the dynamic of the movie and make it possible for the different media forms to coexist and infiltrate into each other. It compels the spectator to track down and compare the repetitive and mutually reflexive events, as well as the variations in the outcomes of each event. The narrative threads are named after the characters, and, the viewer assumes, the film will be divided into a chain of character portraits: 1. Paul, 2. Rashid, 3. Ruby, 4. Cyrus, and 5. Auggie. This presupposition proves to be only partly true, since many different characters enter these sections, and bring with them their own stories. For example, Auggie's and Ruby's story starts in the Rashid's section, and Rashid's story continues in Ruby's part (the skier's tale). This mixture of character portraits suggests the nonlinearity of narrative and the shift of focus, as well as it alludes to the mixture of intermedial components each story brings with itself.

Spectatorial activity has crucial aspects. Bordwell maintains that "film proffers cues upon which the spectator works by applying those knowledge clusters called schemata. Guided by schemata, the spectator makes assumptions and inferences and casts hypotheses about story events" (100).[43] The fabula gets narrated through various style patterns: characters appear in one place, they interact, and the action will conclude or not. Long takes and long shots are predominant, thus corresponding to syuzhet units (scenes). The syuzhet concentrates

[43] Bordwell adds that "these assumptions, inferences, and hypotheses are checked against material presented to the perceiver. […] This material is organized into a syuzhet which cues the spectator to construct a fabula according to schemata of logic, time, and space. Film style usually supports the construction of the fabula, principally by being compositionally motivated" (100).

action into a few locales: Auggie's cigar shop, Paul's apartment, Cyrus's garage, and so on. In *Smoke* syuzhet is many times restricted to what certain characters know, thus, in terms of the viewers' hermeneutic activity[44] this brings about an intrinsic norm[45] of the film's narration; moreover, this norm becomes violated by unconventional ways of narration (as in the sub-plots enumerated in the table below, when certain stories are told with the help of various techniques: merely a close-up on Auggie's and Paul's face when telling the Christmas story, and the skier's tale, respectively; no use of flashbacks or montage). Therefore, when spectators attempt to comprehend the film they relate it some schemata,[46] and their expectations feed on the information learnt from the sub-plots (for example, they will be able to construct the themes of "father-son relationship" developing between Rashid and Paul from the skier's tale; or they will assume from the scene of "Auggie's photo album" that Paul will be able to work through a trauma). What unifies the information dispersed across the syuzhet are narrative segments bound together by witty dialogue, numerous motifs (smoke, photographs, the money), and character interactions, in this way orienting the spectator towards construing the fabula.

[44] In *S/Z* Roland Barthes defines the hermeneutic code as a feature of narrative whereby enigmas are introduced in a story, raising questions that demand explication. In the process details are held back, and then the truth is revealed (16-30).

[45] Secondary or intrinsic norms are "standards within the text itself. […] The concept of the intrinsic norm lets us study narration as a dynamic phenomenon, capable of developing through the film and shaping or challenging expectations in the process" (Bordwell 151).

[46] Bordwell claims that the viewer brings to the film a few probable schemata, that is, "already-known stories, drawn from history, myth, and contemporary life, [that] furnish a fairly limited range of options for the overall cause-effect chain" (241). Regarding the perception of artworks in general, Bordwell maintains that "the spectator brings to the artworks expectations and hypotheses born of schemata, those in turn being derived from everyday experience, other artworks, and so forth" (32); and when the spectator decides to watch a film s/he is already tuned, that is, prepared, ready "to apply sets of schemata derived from context and prior experience" (34).

| SECTIONS | Main narrative strand | Sub-plots/stories | | Characters |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | The film's diegetic world | Fiction and alternative diegesis | |
| Intro | -establishing the atmosphere: Auggie's cigar shop | Auggie narrates how Paul's wife died | Paul narrates the story of Sir Walter Raleigh about weighting smoke | Auggie, Paul, Rashid |
| 1. Paul | Working through the trauma | Auggie and his photo album | - | Rashid, Auggie, Paul |
| 2. Rashid | Quest for the father | -Ruby tells Auggie about Felicity<br>-Cyrus tells Rashid how he lost his arm<br>-Aunt Em tells Paul about Rashid's past | - | Rashid, Cyrus, Ruby, Auggie, Paul |
| 3. Ruby | Saving the daughter | -Felicity tells her parents about the abortion | -The Skier tale<br>-the Bakhtin manuscript | Ruby, Auggie, Paul, Rashid |
| 4. Cyrus | Regaining the son | -the picnic: Rashid telling Cyrus his real name | -International Same Name Club | Rashid, Cyrus, Auggie, Paul |
| 5. Auggie | The Christmas Story | Auggie telling the story to Paul | Black and white footage | Auggie, Paul |

What ensures a specific spectator immersion as well as evokes cognitive response in the case of *Smoke* is the uniquely twofold adaptation of "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" at the end of the film: first, the story is *told*, then, it is *performed* using silent-cinema techniques. As a result, original spectatorial expectations, propelled by schemata in relation to adaptation in general, are constantly challenged.

With the appearance of cinematic adaptations,[47] motion pictures proved to be the best type of media that could reconstruct the content of a book. The notion of "adaptation" can have two connotations: it defines a process and also a product. As a product, it gains the sense of "outcome," to be more exact, what the adaptation has accomplished. In the case of Wang and Auster's movie, the product is the last sequence of *Smoke*—Auggie Wren's Christmas Story—which, being a story inside a story, repeats the characteristics of the skier's tale regarding its narrative techniques as it is represented on the screen, and in that it is an adaptation of a literary text, yet, the adaptation of "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" is very different in many aspects.

An adaptation means the translation of the literary text into technical text. Each adaptation starts with the interpretation of the source text. It is during the interpretation of the novel that it becomes a different version than how the writer himself imagined it.[48] Therefore, the interpretation of the literary text together with the "translation," will bring about the envisioned product—in this case the black-and-white movie at the end of *Smoke*—that will be subjected to "both gains and losses" (Stam qtd. in Hutcheon 16), compared to the original text. Therefore, "adaptors are first interpreters and then creators" (Hutcheon 18).

However, since cinematic interpretations are filtered through the perspective of the adaptor(s), in many cases these adaptations may not be well received by the audience. Once the reader has created an image in his or her mind about what something looks like in a novel, s/he may not like another viewpoint in the adapted version; that is, the perspective of the director.

The reason why movie adaptations are so popular and favoured by so many people is because of the versatile modes of engagement that they offer. While reading a book, one can imagine or feel, depending on one's personal experiences, as it was intended by the carefully

[47] Film adaptations are as old as the medium of cinema. "Hollywood films of the classical period relied on adaptations from popular novels, what Ellis calls the 'tried and tested' […], while British television has specialized in adapting the culturally accredited eighteenth- and nineteenth- century novel" (Hutcheon 5).

[48] Regarding the question of a truly visual story, Mieke Bal claims that "'translation' of a novel into film is not a one-to-one transposition of story elements into images, but a visual working-through of the novel's most important aspects and their meanings" (167).

selected diction. During reading, one can control the speed of events by reading faster, whereas when reading slower one may devote more time to thinking than reading. However, in a film the pace is given, which in most cases is compressed. The circumstances of time compression require the details to be constructed in such a way as to appeal to the viewer's perceptions and convey enough in a maximum of two or three hours. Therefore, through different modes of engagement, the viewer is invited to interact, mentally or aurally, by various devices that stimulate the visual and aural senses. For example, music and ambience will manipulate the viewer's feelings about the current pictures shown. As a result of condensation and its versatile modes of engagement, the movie will be able to offer more insight into numerous details than a novel can. However, the modes of engagement of one media cannot replace the modes of engagement of another media. As Hutcheon points out, "each mode, like each medium, *has* its own specificity, if not its own essence" (24).

In an interview with Stephen Capen, Auster elaborates on the idea whether there is something that books can do and films cannot:

> I think that finally good books stay with you a lot longer than even good films. And because there is this connection between the mind of the reader and the words, and you have to work hard to read a book, you have to use your imagination, you're filling in all the details yourself. You're actively engaging your own history, all your soul, your memories, into what you're reading on the page. A film goes by so fast you just don't have time to get inside it in that way. It can be fun, I mean I'm not against movies, and they can be highly entertaining and diverting, and thrilling, but it's not real food the way books are, there are very few films that nurture you the way, nourish you the way, books do. (Capen 6)

What this excerpt divulges is precisely Auster's appreciation of the literary text compared to motion pictures.[49] It seems that to him this difference occurs due to the different modes of engagement of the two art forms. However, the last sequence of *Smoke*, the adaptation of "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" to a black-and-white short film, invites the active involvement of the viewer, but with the help of an uninterrupted storytelling at first, so, in this

[49] González interprets Auster as considering traditional films like simulacra—in Baudrillard's sense of the word—and claims that the cinematic medium as simulacrum (a sign with no corresponding referent), conceals reality at the same time as it pretends to be showing it ("Words Versus Images" 29).

sense, it goes against the very common conception that film and television have the power to absorb the spectator merely by images. McLuhan claims that in the case of television, images are projected at you. "You are the screen. The images wrap around you. You are the vanishing point. This creates a sort of inwardness, a sort of reverse perspective which has much in common with Oriental art" (*The Medium* 125). Cinematic medium may certainly produce such an experience, but in this particular case (the adaptation of "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story") the conscious choice of the directors to separate oral storytelling from a sequence of images are responsible for generating a mentally active spectatorship.

The very unusual ending of the movie aims to bring into focus its own self-reflexivity: Auggie Wren's Christmas story narrated in black-and-white footage is bound to, and yet stays separate from, the rest of the narrative, symbolically pointing at the origin, at the source of the movie, as the story written by Auster was published in the *New York Times* in 1990.

In both stories, Auggie tracks down a kid who was stealing a magazine[50] from his cigar shop, and eventually ends up in the apartment of Granny Ethel. The blind old lady first thinks it is her grandson visiting her on Christmas Day, and Auggie starts to play this role for her. He adds that the granny knew he was not Robert, her grandson, but pretended believing his stories. He buys chicken and wine, and they have a great time. When the granny falls asleep, Auggie finds some stolen cameras in the bathroom and decides to take one with him upon leaving. This is the explanation how his strange hobby came into being. Stealing the camera thematizes the intermedial thefts that are present all over the film. By taking the camera Auggie also "steals" a medium, and begins to tell the stories of the neighbourhood with its help. The closing black-and-white footage of *Smoke* points not only at the origin of Auggie's hobby, but also at the origin of the cinematic medium: photographic sequence. Besides the incorporation of the photographic medium, the Christmas story at the end of *Smoke* also doubles the performative activities of several characters from the earlier sections: Auggie is playing a role for granny Ethel, and she pretends believing him—such a game of make-believe appeared in the scenes featuring Paul and Rashid, Auggie and Ruby (when they meet Felicity and listen to her story, as well as Auggie's suspicion regarding his fatherhood), and Rashid and Cyrus (Rashid playing a role for his real father for quite a long time).

One of the major differences between the adaptation (*Smoke*) and the source text is the fact that, while in the short story ("Auggie Wren's Christmas Story") there is no mention of

[50] The appearance of the magazine here is not merely a plot device; it introduces another medium, that of a printed magazine, and functions as an intermedial catalyst: "stealing" one medium leads to the "stealing" of another (as Auggie follows the clues, finds the boy's grandmother, and "steals" photography).

Granny Ethel being a black woman, in the concluding sequence of the movie, and throughout *Smoke* the issue of race appears directly and indirectly via the usage of the black-and-white metaphors. At first, when Rashid finds refuge in Paul's apartment, and later leaves, his aunt Em comes to the writer and begins to ask him questions: "What's a man like you messing around with a black boy like Thomas for? Are you some kind of pervert, or what?" (*Smoke* 64). Cultural and racial prejudices frequently reappear, the next time when Rashid expresses his ideas that it is almost unbelievable that a white man can help out a black boy out of mere charity:

> Paul: What makes you think you'll be any safer here? It's only about a mile away from where you live.
> Rashid: It might not be far, but it's another galaxy. Black is black and white is white, and never the twain shall meet.
> Paul: It looks like they've met in this apartment. (90)

In Rashid's view Paul's apartment seems to be a nonplace against the average outside urban space that cannot accept black culture. Such a nonplace is Auggie's cigar shop, which I have already discussed as a cultural as well as social site for people belonging to a certain neighborhood, in this sense recalling a typical aspect of heterotopias; that is, to have a precise and determined function in that society, to freeze time and provide a sense of history. All the places in the film form the basis of some kind of identification for the characters. Auster claims that he focused on his neighbourhood because it has to be one of the most tolerant and democratic places, and *Smoke* is a way of challenging some of the stereotypes that present New York as a hellhole, because the film shows how people from all races and classes can get along (qtd. in Brown 167).

Similarly to the short story, the film renders the tobacconist's shop and Auggie's character as a firm signifier of the lower-class Brooklyn neighbourhood. In the source text Auggie's character is described as follows:

> He was the strange little man who wore a hooded blue sweatshirt and sold me cigars and magazines, the impish, wisecracking character who always had something funny to say about the weather or the Mets or the politicians in Washington, and that was the extent of it. (159)

In the film Harvey Keitel displays these characteristics, playing the role of a man who knows his place and is rather proud of it, thus creating a stable point of reference in the society which surrounds him. Auggie's character in *Smoke* is a cultural code at work in the film, transferring, preserving, and reinforcing the American values and a sense of democracy inherent in the short story.

The relationship between Auggie and Paul is more balanced in the film. In the short story the narrator-writer has a strongly critical attitude towards the tobacconist's artistic preoccupations, and presumably because of their different levels of artistic achievements, he cannot truly see him as a fellow artist at first. The fact that Auggie discovered his literary works disturbs Paul. "Now that he had cracked the secret of who I was, he embraced me as an ally, a confidant, a brother-in-arms. To tell the truth, I found it rather embarrassing" ("Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" 159). I read this attitude as symbolic of the rivalry between the different media. While in the film they can coexist almost from the very beginning, in the short story balance is restored and mutual respect is only created when the narrator-writer understands the meaning of Auggie's photo series: "I understood then that he knew exactly what he was doing" ( "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" 161).

All the excerpts just mentioned serve as indicators of how characters are propelled by their cultural preconceptions and race relations. The cultural/racial underpinnings lead to character transformations and, besides, thematizing the interconnectedness between the two media forms (the literary source text and the film adaptation) brings about the representation of cultural dialogue too (especially highlighting positive race relations). In this sense, the adaptation recontextualizes the short story in an explicit cultural understanding. The mirroring structures are also present in developing these cultural/racial allusions: the close-ups on aunt Em's face when she tells the truth about Rashid mirrors Granny Ethel's character, who will be in the centre of the silent cinema sequence; just as Rashid's black-and-white TV foreshadows the final switch to the black-and-white footage, that visually renarrates Auggie Wren's Christmas story.

In narrating the closing scenes of *Smoke* (Auggie telling the story and then the black-and-white sequence) we have the interaction of three media modes of engagement: writing ("Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" written by Auster), telling (e.g., the same story narrated by Auggie in the film; Cyrus's life-story that he tells to his own son; Paul Benjamin's stories; Rashid's lies about his identity; Ruby's revealing that Felicity is Auggie's daughter) and showing (the black-and-white silent cinema sequence at the end of *Smoke*; Rashid's drawing that he finally gives to his father; Rashid's and other characters' role-playing in the film's

world). Each form of media has its own medium specificity with a number of devices through which they communicate in so far unique ways. Through the combination of different modes of engagement, the viewer is invited to interact, mentally or aurally, by various devices that stimulate the visual and aural senses. For example, music (Tom Waits' song provides background music to the black-and-white images) and ambience will manipulate the viewer's feelings about the current pictures shown, creating a hallucinatory, dreamlike atmosphere.

As most of the adaptations are word to image translations, adaptations can be considered as "re-mediations, that is, translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system to another" (Hutcheon 16). The task of the screenwriter, as Abbott argues, is a "surgical art" (Abbot qtd. in Hutcheon 19). Transcoding and still remaining faithful to the original text can be a real headache for the screenwriter. Nevertheless, one who has not read the literary text of which adaptation was recently seen, the movie's visuals would later interfere with the reader's imagination, making the intimacy of the novel—reader relationship disappear.

In *Smoke*, the remarkable aspect of adapting this story is that it tends to bring together the three types of "immersibility," which focus on different aspects by "telling, showing and interacting" (Hutcheon 27). In the film, Paul, the writer, needs a good story, so Auggie tells him the Christmas tale during a dinner. Paul Auster notes that originally "the story was supposed to be intercut with black-and-white footage that would illustrate what Auggie was saying" (Insdorf 15). However, the use of a voice-over, and going back and forth between the restaurant and Granny Ethel's apartment proved to be a choice which simply did not work. Auster explains:

> The words and the images had clashed. You'd settle into listening to Auggie, and then, when the black and white pictures started to roll, you'd get so caught up in the visual information that you'd stop listening to the words. By the time you went back to Auggie's face, you'd have missed a couple of sentences and lost the thread of the story. (Insdorf 15)

In this sense, *Smoke* can signify the difficulty a screenwriter faces when adapting a literary text. Why is it then that the traditional forms of adaptations do not work in Auster and Wang's directorial imagination?

The shift of camera views and interchange of parallel settings would have meant the loss of the story's thread. Therefore, Auggie is set using very little technological apparatus: no

montage, no voice-over, no intercuts, only gradually zooming in on Auggie's face. In this way, viewers can become more and more intimate with the character, and at the end of his story the extreme close-up on Auggie's mouth serves as a means of creating a sense of veracity: we must believe everything he says, even if we suspect he lies. The borders in the relationship between character and spectator disappear, the camera moves in on Auggie as close as possible (see fig. 4). The same technique is used in the case of the skier's tale, when Paul is telling the story of the frozen father to Rashid; nothing disturbs and interrupts the viewer's immersion. We cannot help listening to these stories, holding our breath, and when we think the barrier between actor and viewer has been established, suddenly the camera zooms in even closer. As Auster puts it, "the viewer is not at all prepared for it. It's as if the camera is bulldozing through a brick wall, breaking down the last barrier against genuine human intimacy" (Insdorf 16). Subsequently, this single shot provokes full emotional immersion on the part of the viewer. Moreover, while eliminating all montage tricks, as Trofimova notices, the "story has been transformed back into its original ancient form—oral storytelling" (101).

Similarly, the story of the frozen father functions as a snapshot, freezing moment, an intermedial reference to photography: Paul ends the story abruptly, asking Rashid: "so what are you going to do today?" (99). The interruption of the story brings about a shift in the dialogue, so the birthday party's details can be discussed, preparing the forthcoming father-son mirroring motif. In the Christmas tale, the slow-paced storytelling with long shots involved, serves to change, expand, and prolong the pace of the cinematic narrative, thus letting the viewer set his/her imagination going, in this way imitating the function of literary narratives.

Rather than expressing his doubt, Paul admires Auggie's narrative skills. Martin argues that "Wren's conviction and powers of persuasion ensure that his audience—the unsuspecting Paul—accepts every word at face value" (29). This level of intimacy suggests that Auggie earns his audience's confidence. As the audience is transfixed, there is no reason to suspect duplicity. Paul believes him at first, however when he notices Auggie's smile he suddenly becomes suspicious. Auster's stage directions also clearly indicate that Auggie is a master of narration: "A wicked grin is spreading across Auggie's face. The look in his eyes is so mysterious, so fraught with the glow of some inner delight that Paul begins to suspect that Auggie has made the whole thing up" (*Smoke* 156). A professional writer, Paul nonetheless falls for Auggie's narrative and oratory skills, and does not pass any ethical judgement on this situation. The moral impulse of telling the Christmas story involves taking the risk that the

listener may not believe and consider it authentic, therefore will not respond to it. The fact that Paul appreciates Auggie's story and makes use of it—even if he suspects it was just made up by Auggie—brings about a heterotopic scheme in which representatives of different art forms, thus, implicitly various media can recognize, interpret, and usefully remediate each other's stories.

Drawing on McLuhan's famous aphorism: "the medium is the message" one can consider that the form of any narrative affects the way readers or viewers perceive and interpret the narrative's contents. Based on this assumption Booth coins the term "ethics of technique," a consideration of how the medium in which a life is represented influences an audience's experience of this life (qtd. in Adams 182). Tony Adams refers to narratives as media and mediated narratives (since all stories are brought to us via different media). "Whereas narratives are always mediated via orality, performance, writing, and so on, narratives are also media (i.e., ways to [re]present life experience)" (Adams 182). In the case of Auggie's telling of the Christmas tale the use of oral storytelling conventions are in a close relationship with the story's morals.

There is always a didactic message in Auggie's stories regarding content and form (both his philosophy regarding the photo album and his moral stance visible in the Christmas story), in this way providing multiple occasions when characters respond to the implied questions of what they shall do and how they shall live. On the other hand, storytellers (regardless of the medium) may or may not be aware how their narratives carry cultural and ethical assumptions. In the closing sequence of *Smoke*, when Auggie tells Paul the Christmas tale, the camera relentlessly moves in on his face until his mouth fills the screen, but after that, the camera shows Paul's face in a reverse shot, zooming in on his eyes that—similarly to Auggie's mouth in the previous moments—fill the entire screen, suggesting Paul's role as an observer and listener. Eyes and looking (as in the case of Paul looking at the photo album) have a specific meaning here: the notions of sight and insight can be connected to different media. In this sense, those who are blind (or became blinded), cannot see the veracity of media forms (granny Ethel, Ruby); and those, who walk with their eyes wide open can have an eye for the possibilities inherent in storytelling via various media forms (Auggie, Paul, Rashid). Newton contends that there are two types of intersubjective access to a narrative: "confronting a text in its particularity both resembles and differs from the acts of human encounter which the story itself narrates, […] the relation between subject and what they objectify" (30). Auggie's story proposes to open up both the eyes of Paul and of the spectators/readers to a certain social and cultural awareness; his story is a gift to the

professional storyteller: Auggie's remediation of earlier events and stories in the Christmas tale drags Paul out of his writer's block.

After this mode of telling (Auggie telling the Christmas story with extreme close-ups on his face), the black-and-white sequence starts, retelling and duplicating the same story, through a very unusual method: the narrator is not present and words are also missing (see fig. 5). The new cinematic narrative mode continues the chain of visual reading/decoding: we see Auggie's tale now performed on the screen, proving that all ways of telling the same story can equally construe the visual for us. We know the story already, but the scene becomes heartbreaking when Tom Wait's melancholic song starts playing, and we can *see* Auggie and Granny Ethel talking to each other, their mouths moving without emitting a sound. This black-and-white film sequence can be interpreted as a *silenced film*, preceded by its verbalized version. *Smoke* takes its time to repeat, to visualize the verbal narration, determining the spectator to watch the same story again, but to be absorbed into it differently. The viewer will observe a different relationship between sound/text and image. Moreover, in this specific *heterochronic* intermedial experience the viewer has to take his/her time to slow down and observe himself/herself as being an interactive inhabitor of this intermedial space. Even if we cannot listen to the characters' voices, we can imagine what they are talking about. As Pfeiffer contends, "'real' life experience and the experience of the 'arts' may […] fuse, more or less, because feeling and (self-)observation, immediacy and arrangement, cannot be neatly separated" (*The Protoliterary* 36).

What emerges here is also the reflection on the art of storytelling, subsequently bringing about another mutually reflexive relationship between the literary and the cinematic texts. In this mise-en-abyme framework, what is originally a literary text becomes another fictitious text presented by Auggie in the film's diegetic reality, which, in its turn is transformed/reproduced into a metacinematic film sequence, in which the fictitious characters (Auggie and Granny Ethel) play their own roles. The same occurs in the case of the skier's tale: Paul and Rashid later act out the story, by changing the roles of father and son. This reduplication of mirroring narratives brings about the mirroring coexistence of the different media forms: writing (literary text), (oral story)telling, and showing (cinema). Discussing this process Jesús Ángel González notes that it is

> a metafictional paradox: images become words (because the pictures taken by Auggie create stories and emotions in Paul's mind and are then transformed

> into words) and words become images (because Paul Benjamin's story for the newspaper is shown in images). ("Words Versus Images" 32)

These media forms encapsulate and reflect upon each other, partaking of the pleasures in the usage of mechanisms with which they reveal themselves. As they construe the other spaces for each other, and become the mirror reflections of each other, they generate an in–between space, in which their textures and characters become closely connected. In building a coherent narrative within this intermedial relationship, media forms use a set of elements specific for each medium.

The different media forms interact in simultaneity, following a frame-within-a-frame structure, but the peculiar process of border-crossing is also worth mentioning. The mediation/shift from Auggie's powerful storytelling into the silent cinema sequence does not occur abruptly. Black-and-white images are introduced by the scene between Paul and Auggie in the restaurant, the camera eye following the smoke swirling up to the ceiling. Continuity is smoothly established through the introduction of an extradiegetic element: Tom Wait's song starts playing, while Paul's hands appear on the typewriter, writing: "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story." This image literally functions as a means of connection between two media, while, at the same time, it reflects upon its medium specificity. Contrasting the fluidity, that is the continuity of the handwriting, the typewriter exposes the printed letters as they are: different from each other, occupying different spaces[51] on the blank page, thus pointing to their independence and isolation, hence the specificity of the written medium. Mitchell argues that pure texts literally incorporate visuality the moment they are written or printed in a visible form. Nevertheless, writing, in its physical, graphic form, is an inseparable suturing of the visual and verbal (95)[52]; therefore viewers/readers can have access to the forthcoming visual text. Trofimova argues that

> because Auster's texts so often expose the process of writing in dealing with a writer's struggle to produce a text, the typewriter and typewriting, which are

[51] By different spaces I mean the different spatial characteristics the letters occupy while put on the blank page, as well as the otherness of the medium of writing, as it is—according to Mitchell—caught between two othernesses, voice and vision, the speaking and the seeing subject (114).

[52] Mitchell, talking about the relevance of the sisterhood of the arts (*ut pictura poesis*), states that writing is a medium in which image and text, pictorial and verbal interact, thus it makes language (in the literal sense) visible (113).

> used by these characters, become marks of the progress of their embedded narratives. To put it simply, the typewriter makes possible the solution to the protagonist's creative crisis by materializing his *mise en abyme* story which until then existed only in his mind as unverified, unreliable, and intangible. (111)

Correspondingly, it does not only announce the appearance of another medium connected to the film's fictitious world (the black-and-white adaptation of Auggie's Christmas story), but also signals the successful restoration of the writer's artistic self: Paul finally heals and is engaged in a creative process. In a very thorough analysis of the typewriter motif, Trofimova finds that the hands striking the keys in this scene of *Smoke* belong to the real writer, Paul Auster. "Auster emphasizes his partial authorship over *Smoke* by inserting a shot in the film that shows how this hallmark signature (a typing writer) [is] placed under the film's main *mise en abyme* story about a writer's productivity, i.e., 'Auggie Wren's Christmas Story.'" (113) Similar "signatures," concealed cameo appearances appear throughout Auster's filmic oeuvre. Episodic roles are played by Auster, or by one of his family members (for example his daughter, Sophie Auster, plays a role in *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, a film I will analyze in more detail in the subsequent chapter). These little intrusions into the films' realities can be interpreted again as intermedial dialogic references through which reality and the cinema's fictitious world are brought together and can coexist. Moreover, the intermedial references that occur in such a way are responsible for the construction of artistic as well as narrative identities regarding the characters, in this case, in *Smoke*. The typewriter motif involving Auster as the "implied author" functions as a means of bringing together different media (literary text and black-and-white silent cinema) in a mutually reflexive way.

In terms of adaptations *Smoke* doesn't merely expand "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story," but uses it as a pretext, so, in this sense, a creative process occurs in which one medium becomes incorporated in and reflected at by another. The black-and-white film sequence with its richness of ethical and cultural underpinnings, and with its "excessive elements,"[53] points beyond the concept of adaptations: it gives birth to, and essentializes a

[53] "Any image or sound can contribute to narration, but we can also attend to an element for its sheer perceptual salience. Roland Barthes has spoken of a film's 'third meaning,' one lying beyond denotation and connotation: the realm in which casual lines, colors, expressions, and textures become 'fellow travelers' of the story. Kristin Thompson has identified these elements as 'excess,' materials, which may stand out perceptually but which do not fit either narrative or stylistic pattersn" (Bordwell 53). From this standpoint we can conclude that the black-and-white closing sequence is the representation of this "third meaning" per se, because it points to the filmic

new (literary) text, therefore, it can be viewed as another potential pretext for another adaptation (whether in terms of verbal- or cinematic mediums).

Auggie Wren's Christmas story is connected to, but paradoxically stands outside, the authority of *Smoke*: the first and last word enunciated by this metafilm is an image, its own title written by the typewriter, and then the narrative is based on the visual representation of talking: mouths moving without emitting sounds, in this sense mocking at, and subverting the authority of, the voice-over technique. The extradiegetic element Tom Wait's song, "Innocent when you dream," provides a thematic rendering of one of the most important motifs: stealing seen as a form of art, or as an activity for the sake of art, since it is memories that are stolen and become the seeds for imagination, symbolically referred to by the innocent dreams. These (stolen) memories and life experiences become the vantage points around which the different artist-characters can construct their works. According to Jacobson:

> [a]ll the arts are part of a mutual exchange of ideas which interrelate. Each takes from the other and gives in return. The continuing stealing motifs in the film *Smoke* can also be seen to reinforce this concept and articulate the dialectic process which inspires all artists at every level of society. (27)

By way of summing up, the exchange of ideas, the constant contesting, understanding, and reinterpreting of one another's art on the level of characters also function as a means through which the linking dynamic of media is thematized in the cinematic text. On an ethical level the film is full of unconventional solutions which are especially visible when the characters have to make moral decisions. González writes:

> stealing becomes a way of giving, because Auggie's stolen camera serves an artistic (and, arguably, moral) purpose, and the stolen money helps Auggie and Ruby's daughter; lies become truths, because Auggie's story becomes true for the listener, just as his lies had become true for Ethel; facts become fictions, because Auggie's story is based on a real robbery […]; and fictions become facts, because Paul's (the character's) story and Paul's (Auster's) story are both published in a newspaper. ("Words Versus Images" 29)

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properties of the image (originating from photographic stills). Roughly speaking, the black-and-white silent film functions as the *punctum*—in Barthesian terms—for the entire film of *Smoke*.

What emerges here is not just the interconnectedness of characters, but also the intermingling of various media forms that trigger ethical resonances in the case of the aforementioned figures. Auggie's story is a gift to Paul (one medium—oral storytelling—provides a benefaction to another—writing) and he redeems his theft from Granny Ethel by art (making the photo project); Rashid gives his pencil sketch to his father (he gives and receives redemption through the art of drawing); Rashid brings the television to Paul out of gratitude for his taking him in the apartment (moving pictures here establish an atmosphere of friendship); and the kid's stealing the magazine from Auggie's shop leads to another present giving: Auggie provides a feast to Granny Ethel (shift to the technical specificities of the medium of black-and-white silent cinema). Paradoxically, in this case of intermedial references, each medium pilfers the elements of another, and this stealing develops into a way of giving, a benefic process of exchanging the specific elements of another medium.

In *Smoke* the relationship between fantasy (illusions) and reality (that is also introduced through the swirling smoke motif) as conveyed via intermedial references appear in Rashid's masterfully developed lies, or in the Christmas story made up by Auggie from two events: at the beginning of the movie he almost catches a petty thief in his shop, and secondly, while he is waiting for his order in a restaurant, he sees an article in the newspaper and the photographs of Charles Clemm (the Creeper), and Robert Goodwin, and the headline is: "Robbers Killed in Jewel Heist." Besides the obvious interaction of various media forms (printed newspaper, cinema, oral storytelling), the question is hovering all over the story: which one is better, which one offers integrity to the characters, the world of illusions or reality? Or a peculiar idealistic mixture of the two, which Rashid strives for, when he begins to work for his father?[54] "You are innocent when you dream" is the final message, and, in my view, with *Smoke* Auster and Wang appeal to the "innocence" of the viewer, that is, to be open-minded and receptive to the various media interactions that are going to take place in the film. Different objects function as intermedial links, as well as Hitchcockian MacGuffins, advancing the plot, motivating the characters, and overcoming differences (both on the level of characters and on the level of intermedial encounters), but, on the other hand, they seem to be as volatile as the all-encompassing smoke. The Cuban cigars, the camera, the photo album,

[54] A particularly interesting real-life event has striking resemblance to Rashid's destiny. In 1998, just two years after the film's debut, Daniel Auster, Paul Auster's son stole $3000 from the body of a murdered drug dealer, and was sentenced to five years probation. In *Smoke*, Daniel Auster had a minor role: he played the book thief in Auggie's shop. Thus, a double layering of fiction and reality occurs: Daniel Auster committing the same act of theft years later, and Auggie transforming the real experience of catching a thief in his shop into a fantasy story, when he tells Paul the Christmas tale at the end of the film.

the bag of money all play an important part in the film's fictional world, and diegetic reality is mediated through them in various moments (for example, when Paul is flipping through Auggie's photographs), but we never get to know where they come from, and later on, they frequently disappear from the narrative, just like smoke. Subsequently, certain characters, especially women also have the function of plot elements, and after fulfilling their roles simply vanish: Paul's wife, Granny Ethel at the end (both of them belonging to another fictitious reality, the viewers see them only in black-and-white), and Felicity, Auggie's daughter. All these allude to the fact that life is elusive and imperceptible, and the main characters express different reactions to this idea: Auggie accepts it with a wink and a jovial smile, and Paul with an emotional working-through. A typically independent film, *Smoke* goes against mainstream American cinema, not only in terms of narrative choices, but also in terms of thematic approaches. It does not tell us anything about what is going to happen to the characters, it leaves us in uncertainty, yet it tells everything with its style: whatever may come, these characters will survive because they form a good community in wich people listen to and help each other.

In *Smoke* the interrelation between different media forms (film, literary text, photography etc.) bring about a heterotopic intermediality, in the sense that these media forms encounter, reinterpret, and influence each other in a state of in-between existence. Intermediation between the different forms of storytelling (writing, telling, and visual representation) becomes the explicit theme of the movie, reflected upon and embodied in the always changing father-son relationship of the three main characters: Auggie, Paul, and Rashid. In this mutually self-reflexive structure, media build up a narrative in which they thematize their intermediary relation through the representational practices and devices of the medium to which they belong. In *Smoke* media forms encounter their rival, alien modes of representation, and can intermingle and coexist by overcoming the barriers of their otherness.

## 2.

## Intermedial Sutures: *The Book of Illusions* and *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*

> *Make films, yes. […] Make them as though your life depended on it, and then, once your life is over, see to it that they are destroyed. You are forbidden to leave any traces behind you.*
>
> Hector Mann (*The Book of Illusions* 278)

Similarly to Auster's other works that dramatize the uncertainty regarding the characters' identity and the relationship between artist and his work, *The Book of Illusions (2002)* reflects on artistic, more precisely on cinematic creation as a medium of representations and/or illusions, while it presents the main character's narrative-identity formation as determined by the various media forms that interact with each other in the novel (both explicitly and implicitly).

The narrator of the story is David Zimmer, a university professor, who loses his wife and children in a tragic plane crash. His response to the trauma emerges in heavy drinking, depression, and self-isolation, until he accidentally watches and begins to laugh at one of the silent comedies of Hector Mann. The latter is surrounded by mystery; he disappeared from showbiz in the 1920s. Zimmer dedicates his life to watching all of Mann's movies and publishes a book about them, an activity that seems to draw him out of his melancholia. Later he receives a letter from the artist's wife, who reveals to him that Hector is alive, and invites him to their New Mexico home to attend the last days of the dying actor as well as to pay tribute to his last films, never previously seen by anybody. The novel presents the life-story of Hector Mann and his silent movies transcribed by Zimmer into the written word. This initiates a healing process in the professor because Hector's films become the source of happiness and motivation for Zimmer to stay alive.

Jim Peacock observes that the novel addresses a question related to art and aesthetics; that is, "whether art enhances life, precludes life or is in fact the only life we have. The very title boldly refers to itself as an aesthetic artefact. Uniquely, this book of illusions chooses to foreground a particular medium of representation—cinema" (54). Cinema appears in Auster's novel as its main theme, as well as a cultural code integrated in the narrative because it recalls the atmosphere of the silent movies of the 1920s. This becomes even more emphatic by the

unique cinematic narrative style that employs shifting camera angles, fading, cutting, cross-cutting, framing, and montage.

The construction of the special storytelling technique roots in Auster's abilities as a filmmaker and scriptwriter. In one of his interviews about the novel he claims: "Sometimes an idea takes the form of nonfiction; in a couple of instances it took the form of screenplays" (Peters 42). In *The Book of Illusions* descriptions similar to scripts function as sites of intermedial interactions, linking cinema and literature. The scripts introduced to the literary text have the potential of exposing and concealing a rupture in the "texture" of the classical literary narrative, thereby creating a heterotopic nonplace in which the fictitious films of Hector Mann are connected to a specific identity development (narrative and/or artistic identity, in many cases both). This way, the characters take a number of selves, each determined by a certain medium.

On a thematic level Hector Mann's films also provide subplots that mirror Zimmer's and Mann's artistic struggles. My intention is to demonstrate that intermedial (re)construction of the text subject[55] occurs precisely in the process of narration, through Zimmer inserting Mann's filmscripts into the story (intermedial imitation) and constantly discussing another medium—cinema—in his text (intermedial thematization).[56] Therefore, this chapter intends to offer a summary of the most obvious examples of the intermedial references just mentioned. In the novel's text references to the cinematic medium set up a certain iconicity and imitation. The translation of cinematesque effects into the medium of writing occurs through the evocation and imitation of various filmic techniques, and specifically through the insertion of the filmscripts themselves. Similarly to Paul Benjamin's struggles in *Smoke*, Zimmer's attempt to write a book on the life and art of Hector Mann stems from the motivation to make up for a loss, to fill the void left after his wife and son's deaths, and to ensure a certain survival through art both for Mann and for himself.

The idea of survival through art appears in the film *The Inner Life of Martin Frost* as well. The movie, directed by Auster in 2007 and "adapted" from one of Hector's fictitious films, functions as a bizarre and complex intermedial variation of, and reflection on *The Book of Illusions*. It suggests that—through the characters of Martin Frost and Claire—one medium (literary text) is ready to symbolically "sacrifice" itself—(either through intermedial thematization or imitation) in order that the medial other (film) could live again (that is, the fictitious film of Hector Mann becomes represented *again*, now in the cinematic medium).

[55] The notion of *text subject* is used here as defined by Árpád Kovács ("A költői beszédmód" 11-66).
[56] These terms will be used as defined by Werner Wolf.

The survival of Claire in the film foregrounds a specific intermedial survival: Hector's fictitious film is preserved in Zimmer's narrative, and then in Auster's 2007 film adaptation; this threefold intermedial transposition can be interpreted as a unique survival through art: one medium continues to live in the other, even if it ceases to be the medium it used to be, and is merely referred to/imitated by another medium's specific elements.

On the other hand, in analyzing predominantly the novel, I will look more closely at the ways different media merge into one another (as in the case of the filmscripts that occur in the novel's text), and at the gaps and fissures left in one medium by the intrusion of the medial other. The sometimes alienating or defamiliarizing power of intermedial occurences lies in their capacity to transpose and change one medium's components into another. This power to disturb and defamiliarize is intimately bound up with the uncanny. In my discussion of intermedial relationships I use the term "transmitting" medium for one medium that lends its elements to another, and "receiving" medium for the one that accepts and incorporates those elements.[57] The "transmitting" medium appears to have a signifying apparatus which the "receiving" medium, suddenly aware of its representational limitations, understands itself to be lacking. This sense of lack determines the "receiving" medium to wish for "something different," that is, the desire to borrow the characteristics of the "transmitting" medium. The result of the process will be a certain intermedial suture, which conceals the ruptures caused by intermedial intrusions. The intermedial suture imitates in the receiving medium what is missing, in the guise of a stand-in: it takes the place of the transmitting medium, and ensures coherence. Mitchell, speaking about media mixing and the iconology of the text, introduces the notion of the suture and claims that the "suturing of the imagetext, then, is not a symmetrical or invariant relationship, but depends on the institutional context of the medium in which it appears" (210).

I understand intermedial imitations and thematizations, as well as several characters and tropes—both in the novel and the film adaptation—as sutures that set up a dialogic relationship between media forms and aid a character's narrative identity formation. Moreover, by analyzing the mechanism of the suture, I will also look at the ways in which both the narratee and the actual readers/spectators are "stitched" into the literary/filmic text.

[57] Wolf in his analysis of intermedial references uses the terms: "dominant" medium (which is used by the work in question) and "non-dominant" medium (the medium referred to), that is actually present as an idea, as a signified and hence as a reference ("Intermediality Revisited" 23). The terms of "transmitting" and "receiving" mediums come from communication theory, since I find these notions more viable and more resourceful in describing the nature of intermedial relations and interactions; especially in cases when the process of "transmitting-receiving" is flexible; that is, it works vice versa: "transmitting-receiving-(re)transmitting."

Theoreticians often posit the notion of suture in cinematic context, and attempt to describe its mechanism in cinematic terms. Kaja Silverman claims that suture "is the name given to the procedures by means of which cinematic texts confer subjectivity upon their viewers" (195), while others conceptualize the operations of suture as being synonymous with the shot/reverse shot formation in a film (Oudart and Dayan, qtd. in Silverman 201). In his "Notes on Suture" Stephen Heath warns against such one-sided identification of suture with the shot/reverse shot (saying that it is merely one element in a much larger system), and, by quoting Miller, provides a general definition of the suturing function:

> Suture names the relation of the subject to the chain of its discourse: we shall see that it figures there as an element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in. For, while there is lacking, it is not purely and simply absent. Suture, by extension—the general relation of lack to the structure of which it is an element, inasmuch as it implies position of a taking-the-place-of. (84)

Heath goes on in his analysis of cinematic narratives and points out that fragmentation is, in fact, the basis of diegetic unity; the narrative relies on the inscription of lack, just to be able to fill it in and create coherence. Suture, then, is not just a structure of lack "but also an availability of the subject, a certain closure; […] the stand-in is the lack in the structure but nevertheless, simultaneously, the possibility of coherence, of the *filling in*" (Heath 85-86).

In using the term "suture," my interpretation will follow Heath's line of thought and will consider the critical notion in rather more detail. I conceive of suture as a twofold intermedial device: first of all, I see it—regardless of the medium of presentation—as a stitching or tying of two or more media; and secondly, as a means of generating an interactive relationship between the medium and its readers/spectators. In my reading of Auster's novel, and in my brief discussion of the film adaptation, I will place a much greater emphasis on identifying the forms of suture (as intermedial thematizations, imitations, as well as certain tropes or characters) and their mechanism.

### *2.1. Intermedial References: Thematization and Imitation*

Auster incorporates in his literary texts a continuous presence of mainly visual media, especially the art of photography and cinema. References to various media forms occur either through a thematic framework or through a certain imitation of the medial other's techniques. Most notably, a great part of *The Book of Illusions* is dedicated to the descriptions of entire films starred in or directed by the fictitious Hector Mann, so that the sensation of watching these fictional films is construed for the reader. Film criticism, the lives of actors, and the history of cinema are the main topics of Auster's many other novels, such as *The Brooklyn Follies* (2005), in which the conversations between Nathan Glass and his friend, Joyce, are often about movies they both adore; in the *Travels in the Scriptorium* (2007) the writer Mr. Blank is captured in a series of photographs taken by his characters, which is the strange reversal of the cinematic montage motif previously analyzed in *Smoke;* moreover, it recalls the Chowder Inn from *The Brooklyn Follies*, which, similarly to Auggie's tobacco shop, is decorated with black-and-white photographs of Hollywood comedy stars; and in *Man in the Dark* (2008) films serve as strong means of healing for the main characters, who, after experiencing traumatic events, can pull themselves together in the process of watching and discussing movies. Intermedial references that can be found in Auster's prose also serve as intermedial sutures and help the intermedial reconstruction of the characters' identities (as in the case of Zimmer and Mann in *The Book of Illusions*).

So far I have been dealing with what Werner Wolf distinguishes as two subforms of intermedial references: explicit reference, or intermedial thematization; and implicit reference, or intermedial imitation. Intermedial thematization is present whenever another medium is mentioned or discussed in a text explicitly, when the representatives of other media also appear, for example, painters and musicians as characters in a novel, and, of course, fictional viewers and listeners to music ("Intermediality Revisited" 24). Intermedial imitation occurs when the signifiers of a work or its structure are affected by the nondominant medium, because they imitate its quality or structure. Examples of intermedial imitations include: pictorialization in realist novels, "filmicization" of fiction, and novels written as filmscripts ("Intermediality Revisited" 25-26). In addition, mentioning visual media in a literary text brings about such an intermedial reference which, according to Rajewsky, is closely connected to metatextual and metafictional strategies, reflecting the construction, mediality, and materiality of a given text, thereby foregrounding the medial condition of every possible

perception of the real[58] (qtd. in Meurer 179). Pethő also develops a similar concept, when she talks about intermediality as it appears in cinema, and states that what happens when two or more media get together is "not just an 'inscription' of one medium into another, but a more complex 'trans-figuration' taking place, in the process of which one medium is transposed as a figure into the other, also acting as a figure of 'in-betweenness' that reflects on both the media involved in this process" (*Cinema and Intermediality*, "Introduction" 4).

Going against Julia Kristeva and Gerard Genette's definitions of "intertextuality," Zoltán Dragon insists on the use of the notion *dialogue* (as theorized by Bakhtin and Stam), and highlights "the interactive nature of any given text as an utterance necessarily and inevitably entering into dialogue with other texts or utterances" ("Adaptation as Intermedial" 188). Accordingly, "while the intertext or dialogue displays a web of references that texts ostensibly share, it also operates as a hiding mechanism at the very same time" ("Adaptation as Intermedial" 188). Concealing the appearance of the intermedial space and/or rupture in the text has certain techniques in Auster's works, especially through the previously mentioned descriptions of film scenes in the literary text, or discussions of the cinematic medium. For example, in *Man in the Dark* (2008) the main character, August Brill, has numerous conversations with his granddaughter, Katya, regarding different movies they watch together. Katya's obsessive movie-watching habit is presented as a means of self-medication, a drug to anesthetize her against the pain caused by the death of her boyfriend. Brill—who also retreats into his imaginary world, not being able to cope with recent traumas—contends that "[e]scaping into a film is not like escaping into a book. Books force you to give something back to them, to exercise your intelligence and imagination, whereas you can watch a film—and even enjoy it—in a state of mindless passivity" (15). What this fragment divulges is specifically the age-old tension generated by media differences, yet such a sharp separation between media forms seems to be problematic. Mitchell understands media as always being in competition with one another, a relationship in which one is always suppressed by the other. Then he arrives at the conclusion that visual and verbal media are incommensurable and since all media are mixed, "all representations are heterogeneous; there are no 'purely' visual or verbal arts" (5).[59] In my view, however, media (especially the various media in Auster's texts) even if temporarily suppress or dominate one another, will ultimately enrich and complete each other, precisely through going beyond their intermedial boundaries. In the novel's world,

[58] The term here refers to our actual reality.

[59] In a broader sense, Pfeiffer also arrives at a similar conclusion: a work of art should be seen "as an implicitly mixed medium, and this mixture—this intermediality is the normal and not the exceptional case" (*The Protoliterary* 16).

Katya, after watching three movies, goes against her grandfather's previously mentioned thoughts, develops a personal theory of filmmaking, and defines inanimate objects "as a means of expressing human emotions. That's the language of film" (16). This resonates with McLuhan's ideas regarding the relationship between human beings and media, that is, since we have already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media, media, in a sense, can be considered as the extensions of humans—a technological simulation of consciousness (*Understandig Media* 3-5). One of the movies ends with a dinner scene, after which the male characters depart to the war, the woman has to go back in the house, where she sees the empty table and the dirty dishes. "The men are gone now, and because they're gone, those dishes have been transformed into a sign of their absence" (18). In another movie, an Indian production, a young couple's marriage is presented, and the boy, named "Apu," takes the bride to the city, where he leaves her alone in their home for a brief scene.

> The camera stays on the girl, alone in this strange room, this strange city, married to a man she hardly knows. Eventually, she walks to the window, which has a cruddy piece of burlap hanging over it instead of a real curtain. There's a hole in the burlap, and she looks through the hole into the backyard, where a baby in diapers is toddling along through the dust and debris. The camera angle reverses, and we see her eye through the hole. Tears are falling from that eye, and who can blame her for feeling overwrought, scared, lost? (20)

The inanimate object here is the curtain, which, according to Katya, is a "transition from one life into another, the turning point of the story" (18-19). Similarly to the dishes, human emotions are communicated without any word. This episode thematizes the relationship between two media forms (literary text and cinematic represeantation), and the curtain symbolically refers to, and veils, their moment of interaction; together with the hole, it functions as an intermedial suture, because both intermedial imitation and thematization occur in the scene. The hole in the curtain also prefigures a textual lacuna in the novel. Right after the conversation with his granddaughter about the movies, August Brill continues his imaginary story in a parallel world, and thereby generates a narrative-within-a-narrative framework. Generally speaking, in Auster's novels such narratives are usually marked by a character's decision to go through a plan that is a life-changing adventure. Such a point of no return occurs in *The Book of Illusions* in the case of David Zimmer. Similarly to Katya in the

*Man in the Dark*, Zimmer finds solace in the movies, more precisely, in Hector Mann's silent comedies. When he sees one of Hector's old films on television, he begins to laugh, and suddenly he gets rid of his numbness.

> When I felt that unexpected spasm rise up through my chest and begin to rattle around in my lungs, I understood that I hadn't hit the bottom yet, that there was still some piece of me that wanted to go on living. […] I didn't feel ashamed of myself for having forgotten my unhappiness during those few moments, when Hector Mann was on screen, I was forced to conclude that there was something inside me I had not previously imagined, something other than just pure death. (9)

What this fragment speaks about is specifically the overlapping relationship between art and death. As in many of Auster's works the sense of loss soon becomes a jumping-off point for the characters' artistic endeavor. Working through the trauma of death allows the discovery and maturation of artistic imagination for David Zimmer and Hector Mann. Similarly to the typical disconnected characters in Auster's novels (Quinn, Marco Fogg and so on), Zimmer tries to quit his half-human life—that is to live in a state of numbness after Helen's death—and to create a new self for himself. Despite being an academic used to literary studies and translations, he dedicates himself to a completely new research area, and becomes interested in the cultural implications of the cinematic medium. He transforms himself into a silent film expert. This brings about a lacuna in the narrative: his self-narration transforms into the narration of Hector Man's life and films.

The first description of one of Hector's movies symbolically thematizes the coming together of the different media forms and the ways of suturing the intermedial gaps that occur in the narrative. The shift from Zimmer's narration to narrating a videoclip in which Mann plays a role happens smoothly, and introduces an aforementioned symbol, that of the hole. The movie's title is *The Teller's Tale*, and Zimmer watches a two-minute sequence from it; the story is set in a bank, and features Hector in the role of a hard working assistant clerk. Upstairs repairmen are installing new planks in the floor of the bank manager's office. Hector is making immense efforts to continue his work—counting money—as if undisturbed, to protect his white suit from the falling dust, and to make eye contact with a pretty secretary girl.

> Each time Hector lost track of the count, he would have to start over again, and that only inspired him to work twice as fast as before. Each time he turned his head up to the ceiling to see where the dust was coming from, he would do it a split second after the workers had filled in the hole with a new plank. (11)

The always concealed hole does not only stand as symbolic of concealing the intermedial breaks (cinematic elements transposed in the literary text, that is, in Zimmer's narrative), but also functions as a textual lacuna, and prefigures the changes that are about to take place in the story. *The Teller's Tale* also thematizes and foreshadows Hector's destiny, that of the secluded artist, and the impossibility of finishing an artwork. Moreover, the description of this film scene in the novel's text functions as the first intermedial suture, and foregrounds what Mitchell calls "the pictorial turn,"[60] which, in its turn, implies the "realization that *spectatorship* (the look, the gaze, the glance, the practices of observation, surveillance, and visual pleasure) may be as deep a problem as various forms of *reading* (decipherment, decoding, interpretation, etc.)" (Mitchell 16). Regarding spectatorship or readership, what determines spectator/reader positioning (the shaping of point of view or perspective) is the experience s/he feels while encountering a certain medium.

The cinematic space is "two-dimensional"; it is a constructed illusion that lures the spectator into the world of illusions. Dragon argues that spectators are attracted to film because they are provided the illusion of participating in the reality of life ("A lehetetlen valósága" 1).[61] In opposition with this idea, David Zimmer in the novel's world is concerned with the spatiality of movies, meditating upon the problematic relationship between imagination and reality:

> [...] the closer movies came to simulating reality, the worse they failed at representing the world—which is in us as much as it is around us. That was why I had always instinctively preferred black-and-white pictures to color pictures, silent films to talkies. Cinema was a visual language, a way of telling stories by projecting images onto a two-dimensional screen. The addition of

[60] According to Mitchell, the pictorial turn is "not a return to naive mimesis, copy or correspondence theories of representation, or a renewed metaphysics of pictorial 'presence': it is rather a postlinguistic, postsemiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visuality, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies, and figurality" (16).

[61] Dragon develops this idea further, and argues that the film conceals the lacanian Real through constructing a simulated reality for the subject, as it fills up the space of the absence and creates an imaginary integrity ("A lehetetlen valósága" 1).

> sound and colour had created the illusion of the third dimension, but at the same time it had robbed the images of their purity. [...] The flat screen was the world, and it existed in two dimensions. The third dimension was in our head. (15)

Thus, for Zimmer color and sound make all the difference, these late elements may generate what Dragon called "the illusion of reality," yet Zimmer condemns these as mere simulations that destroy the "purity of images." Watching the silent films of Hector Mann, he realizes he is witnessing a dead art, yet vivid and fresh, because its cinematic language is based on images and gestures of the human body, employing a "syntax of the eye, a grammar of pure kinesis" (15), rather than on a spoken language. Mitchell also refers to the technological changes film medium passed through; that is, the shift from the visual to the verbal, from the silent movies to the "talkies," so the definition regarding the nature of "film language" becomes problematic (90). Auster's text brings us close to the atmosphere of the silent movies: Hollywood, the dream factory of the 1920s, its stars and directors are presented through Hector's life and films. The figures of the past and their lives are revealed through Zimmer's imagination, but it seems to Zimmer that they are entrapped by the flatness and "two-dimensionality" of the screen. Zimmer's positioning of visual and verbal representations in sharp contrast to each other seems to be only justifiable in terms of comparing silent films to talkies, but even in this case one cannot deny that it is problematic, even if sometimes unavoidable, to define silent film as a purely visual medium (because of the embedded witten texts and sometimes live musical background).

The relationship between the spectator and the medium of representation, exemplified by Zimmer's concerns regarding the nature of cinema, can be best described with McLuhan's terms of "hot" and "cold" media. A hot medium (like a movie) allows of less participation than a cool one (like a telephone), that is, a hot medium does not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience. "Hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience" (*Understanding Media* 25). However, in my opinion, the statement that the hot form excludes, and the cool one includes cannot be taken for granted. Several artworks foreground an intermedial relationship in which the participating media bring with them hot and cold features equally. The points of contact or bridges between different media bring about the presence of intermedial sutures (that may belong to both hot and cold forms), and determine the level of immersion on the part of the audience. Such intermedial sutures in *The Book of Illusions* are the character of Hector Mann

and the descriptions of his films by Zimmer, thus bringing about the presence of intermedial references (both thematization and imitation) in the process of transposition from the "transmitting" medium to the "receiving" one and vice versa (from film to literary text).

Hector Mann's character is typical of the silent movies: his moustache and white suit serve as trademarks, his identity is reduced to the roles he plays, and the gestures and movements of his body establish a unique cinematic language. The choreography of the moustache functions as a means of transcoding his thoughts; its description brings about the "iconology"[62] of Auster's text:

> Before the body, there is the face, and before the face there is the thin black line between Hector's nose and upper lip. A twitching filament of anxieties, a metaphysical jump rope, a dancing thread of discombobulation, the moustache is a seismograph of Hector's inner states, and not only does it make you laugh, it tells you what Hector is thinking, actually allows you into the machinery of his thoughts. Other elements are involved—the eyes, the mouth, the finely calibrated lurches and stumbles—but the moustache is the instrument of communication, and even though it speaks a language without words, its wriggles and flutters are as clear and comprehensible as a message tapped out in Morse code. (29)

Discussing the forms of physical expressions and the medium of slapstick in Hector's case, Brown contends that "the appeal of slapstick lies in the unexpected resolution of its effects to provide comic effect, and Hector is an accomplished practitioner of this art form" (121). When Zimmer analyzes the semiotic powers of Hector's face, he finds that "the moustache is the link to his inner self, a metonym of urges, cogitations, and mental storms" (31). A certain intermedial dialogue appears in the above-mentioned fragment: intermedial imitation and thematization of the cinematic medium are realized through the figure of Hector, especially foregrounding one detail that marks his belonging to the art of performance. The moustache is also a means of juxtaposing the cinematic image with the verbal expression represented through a "mute" character in the novel's world (Hector is a silent comedian). Hector Mann, as a text subject in the novel, is constituted of his "own language," which becomes manifest

[62] Mitchell introduces the concept of the "iconology of the text" as a response to the "linguistics of the image," arguing that it deals with the representation of objects, the description of scenes, the construction of figures, likenesses and allegorical images […] (112).

via the narrated act, and is included in the story; but it also proves to be a distinct way of the storytelling language use. As Brown observes Zimmer "is introduced to a new form of non-verbal communication that opens the possibility of reading previously unencountered cultural forms" (121). However, the viewer only gets an illusion of knowing Hector's inner self, since the actor merely plays roles, as he is a "talented gag-man with exceptional body control" (*The Book of Illusions* 12).

Besides the fact that the moustache introduces a way of communication[63] between the actor, Hector Mann, and the spectators, it also serves as a means of (narrative) framing. Readers cannot get first-hand information about Hector either; he remains an abstract, imaginary figure. However, he acquires "three-dimensionality" when Zimmer meets him for the first time, and is completely amazed by his physical reality:

> [T]he simple fact that he had a body. Until I saw him lying there in the bed, I'm not sure that I ever fully believed in him. […] It stunned me to acknowledge that Hector […] was tangible, that he wasn't an imaginary being. (222)

If the language of gestures and meta-communication (the play with the moustache, and so on) were mentioned as examples for intermedial imitation, it must be also noted that Hector Mann's character, in general, functions as a strong means of intermedial thematization and another possible method of intermedial suturing. He brings in the text two media forms: theatre, through his strong acts of performativity, and film, through his unusual movie directing methods. Alma, the daughter of Hector's friend, while talking to Zimmer provides a description of Hector's strange ways of perceiving the art of filmmaking:

> He broke a lot of rules. He did things film directors aren't supposed to do. [...] Voice-overs, for one thing. Narration is considered a weakness in movies, a

[63] A real-life source of inspiration for this scene, regarding Hector's masterful play with his moustache and his body language in general, might have been the art of Philippe Petit, whose act of high-wire walk Auster saw in Paris. In one of his essays Auster writes about this experience, emphasizing a similar dichotomy between life and art, or life lived as art, and the artist's intuitive, natural attempt to communicate art to the public. "Everything was revealed metaphorically, as if at one remove, through the medium of the performance. His juggling was precise and self-involved, like some conversation he was holding with himself. He elaborated the most complex combinations, intricate mathematical patterns, arabesques of nonsensical beauty, while at the same time keeping his gestures as simple as possible. Through it all, he managed to radiate a hypnotic charm, oscillating somewhere between demon and clown. No one said a word. It was as though his silence were a command for others to be silent as well" ("On the High Wire" 436).

> sign that the images aren't working, but Hector relied on it heavily in a number of his films. One of them, The History of Light, doesn't have a word of dialogue. It's wall-to-wall narration from start to finish. [...] Hector used his freedom to explore things other filmmakers weren't allowed to touch, especially in the forties and fifties. Naked bodies. Down-to-earth sex. Childbirth. Urination, defecation. [...] Once you come to understand what's possible in his work, these so-called taboos and moments of explicitness blend into the overall texture of the stories. In a way, those scenes were a form of protection for him. (208-09)

What this fragment discloses is precisely the depicting of the intermedial dialogue conceptualized by Dragon, a simultaneous interaction between two media forms, that of literary and cinematic texts (receiving and transmitting in this case), and the unexplored potential that lies in combining their narrative techniques (shocking pictures and voice-overs). In short, Hector brings into play the distinctive features of the media elements involved in the cinematic process of signification. In this intermedial relationship each medium participates with its own system specificities. Hector's unorthodox directorial methods evoke independent filmmakers, and introduce the theme of artistic originality. According to Brown, Hector's films are similar to Auster's in terms of breaking narrative conventions, of working without constraints, and most importantly, the films are out of "the commercial loop" of Hollywood (125). As González maintains, "Auster does not just describe images, he also summarizes, describes, and provides shot description using the specialized language of the most common way of translation between film discourse and literary discourse: the language of scripts" ("Words Versus Images" 42). In *The Book of Illusions* the script-like descriptions link cinematic and literary texts: these ekphrastic fragments bring about and support the visual nature of the literary text, mirroring (through imitation and thematization) cinematic techniques. The ekphrastic descriptions[64] function as major intermedial sutures in the novel; they are the manifestation of the "imagetext" par excellence. Ekphrasis is intermedial imitation per se. According to Mitchell the main purpose of ekphrasis is "the overcoming of otherness," making it possible that texts can "encounter their own semiotic 'others,' those rival, alien modes of representation called the visual, graphic, plastic, or 'spatial' arts"

[64] According to Mitchell, ekphrasis is the conversion of a visual representation into a verbal representation, either by description or ventriloquism, which construes the visual reception for the reader (164). It also has the function to shape the language into formal patterns that "still" the movement of linguistic temporality into a spatial, formal array (154).

(156).[65] In *The Book of Illusions* ekphrasis, or imagetext, draws our attention to the very space in which the two media—filmic and literary texts—can interact with one another, and the very description of the filmic scene in the literary text sutures their moment of contact. "The textual other must remain completely alien; it can never be present, but must be conjured up as a potent absence or a fictive, figural presence" (Mitchell 158). An ekphrastic description merely *evokes* the cinematic medium. Such situations seem to offer a stage for intermedial tensions based on media rivalry, but they can also facilitate the supportive dialogue between the different media. Intermedial references do not only highlight the medial difference between visual and verbal representations, but also identify in these medial Others something that is essential in building up the verbal text. Going back and forth from one medium to the other, shifting between presence and absence, implies a movement of oscillation that ultimately tends towards a balanced in-betweenness. This recalls the idea that the heterotopic intermedial references, in and between Auster's works, are not connected as subordinated to one another, but are rather mutually reflecting on each other and coexisting in a harmonius relationship.

The shifting narrative levels quite obviously function as means of framing. Auster's novel not only subverts the conventional expectations of fiction, but also deconstructs logocentrism, allying with postmodern logic (intertextuality, critique of origins, *mise-en-abyme* structures). Reading Auster's multilayered text is like entering an unfathomable labyrinth, where meaning is deferred, and the distinction between author, narrator, and character is constantly blurred. Todorov (71) and Genette (234-37) speak about a multiple narrative embedding (a narrative of narrative), which evokes mystery and signals the deconstruction of narrativity. Derrida also defines framing as an act which inevitably foregrounds representation and thus deferral (297).[66] While reading *The Book of Illusions* one might become confused, as D. T. Max notes, at one point Auster narrates Zimmer narrating Mann, who narrates Martin Frost (one of his film characters), who is narrating his own story (6). Jim Peacock interpreting Auster's writing as a contemporary parable, claims that the text

[65] Mitchell adds in a footnote that "all ekphrasis is notional, and seeks to create a specific image that is to be found only in the text as its 'resident alien,' and is to be found nowhere else. Even those forms of ekphrasis that occur in the presence of the described image disclose a tendency to alienate or displace the object, to make it disappear in favour of the textual image being produced by the ekphrasis" (157). This evokes Wolf's and Rajewsky's already mentioned ideas that each medium can imitate or refer to the other medium with its own medium specific tools.

[66] "In the *frame* of the text, one side of the square, one surface of the cube will represent this nonempirical error, this transcendental illusion. More simply put, it will *represent*: it will be the opening to the classical representative scene. In representing representation, it will reflect and explain it in a very singular mirror. It will speak representation, proffering its discourse through a kind of 'square mouth,' 'oblivion closed by the frame'" (Derrida 297).

employs polyphony and denies a nucleus of meaning by consistently framing and reframing characters and events until a sense of objective reality is obscured (61).

The understanding of the frame is different in the various media forms. In films it means a picture, the smallest visual unit, while in literature it often denotes embedded narratives (frame stories, like the *Arabian Nights*, *Decameron*, and so on). Regarding the filmic experience, awareness of the frame may break spectators' full immersion in the film's world.[67]

Drawing on the concept of the cognitive "frame" Wolf analyzes the different approaches to frames, and comes to the understanding of the concept as meta-phenomena (obviously culturally formed), arguing that the function of the frame is to "enable us to interpret both reality and artefacts and hence other concepts that can be applied in perception, experience and communication" ("Introduction: Frames, Framings" 5). He adds that framings and frames are "transmedial phenomena, phenomena that exist in more than one medium (actually in all media)" ("Introduction: Frames, Framings" 10). In providing a typology of framings, Wolf speaks about contextual and textual framings. The former occurs

> in a cultural space "outside" the work in question. They may, for instance, take the form of an author's comments on his writings in an interview, of an art gallery signalling that the frame "artwork" for the exhibited objects is applicable, or of trailers advertising a forthcoming film. [...] If framings as "givens" appear "inside," that is, as parts of a work or "text," they are "textual framings"[68]. ("Introduction: Frames, Framings" 16)

Subsequently, one aspect of contextual as well as textual framings views the number of media that appear within the framings themselves, or in the combination of framings and framed works. Wolf highlights that "framing and framed can be **homomedial**, or both can belong to different media: they are then **heteromedial** and form a plurimedial whole (as in the

[67] As Heath states, "the image [is] now seen in its limits; the space which, just before, was the pure extent of the spectator's pleasure becomes a problem of representation, of being-there-*for*–there for an absent field, outside of the image ('the fourth wall'), for the phantom character that the spectator's imagination poses in response to the problem: 'the absent one'" (87).

[68] When speaking about paratextual and intratextual framings, Wolf—in contrast to Genette, for whom paratexts comprise both textual and contextual framings—restricts paratextual framings to a variant of textual framings. Thus, paratexts belong to the "work": in printed literature paratextual framings include "titles, epigraphs, footnotes, postscripts etc., in film the opening or closing credits, and in performed drama prologues and epilogues" (Wolf, "Introduction: Frames, Framings" 20).

banal case of a verbal caption accompanying a painting)" ("Introduction: Frames, Framings" 18). In this sense, in *The Book of Illusions* one can see heteromedial framings. As is usually the case with intermedial imitations, the receiving medium (here a verbal novel) remains the same (since the film script is also verbal), and borrows elements from the transmitting medium (or the medium referred to), since the film script is meant to evoke another medium (that of cinema). Cinema appears not only on the thematic level, but also through the literary text's attempts to imitate filmic techniques with its (the literary text's) own medium-specific tools. Zimmer's transcriptions of Hector Mann's films are not framings (in the sense of functioning as codings of cognitive frames), but mises en abyme (representations within representations). I also tend to use the term "filmic ekphrasis" here, since they are verbal representations of a nonverbal representation. On the other hand, the quest for Zimmer's biography on the diegetic level can be classified as heteromedial framing of these inset intermedial mises en abyme.

Therefore, regarding the functions of the frame-story framings, they have a great illusionist potential, in that

> they can combine the secondary "narratorial illusion" with the primary "experiential illusion." For they usually combine the act of storytelling with the actions and happenings of a story (fragment), which provides a context for the embedded story and gives it perspective. [...] Through their narrator-characters as well as "reception figures" [fictitious listeners or readers] framings can in particular set the embedded story in perspective by evaluating its characters and actions, by providing a motivation for its telling, by indicating its function and by drawing our attention to relevant frames of reference. (Wolf, "Framing Borders" 190)

Intermedial frames (both homo- and heteromedial ones) in Auster's novel give birth to embedded narratives that, in their turn, generate an emotional response on the part of the readers. The structures of the frame narratives are used to reveal characters' motivations and to blur the lines between what they conceive of being fantastic and realistic. Furthermore, they generate dramatic suspense that leads to an unpredictable ending, and continuously prolongs the reader's active engagement in the aesthetic illusion. Intermedial thematizations and imitations appear to postpone the flesh and blood appearance of Hector Mann, as well as the information that Zimmer is dead and speaks from "beyond the grave." Zimmer notes that

the story is going to be an essential piece of horror and "everything was a part of it, every link in the chain of cause and effect" (6). This mysterious statement, together with the characters' motivations, are explained in the embedded narratives through various intermedial references and suturings, and become great triggers of the readers' emotional response.

The most difficult task both for Zimmer and for the readers is to grasp Hector's motivations. Hector Mann belongs to the world of illusions, as his real life is also based on a series of imaginary identities and roles he must play to survive. He is not given a personal narrative voice; his life story is revealed through different narrators. As Peacock contends, he is always framed by others (64), that is, his life events are narrated by others. Peacock also states that the transcriptions of a fictional filmmaker's work (Mann) by a fictional character (Zimmer) partake of the parabolic aesthetic,[69] therefore both forms of language—cinematic and literary—constitute frames through which the protagonists are viewed by other characters, the author, and the reader (65), that is, they function as heteromedial frames. McFarlane makes a distinction between the impressions created by the novel's linearity and film's spatiality, arguing that the most significant difference lies in the use of the frame, which instantly, and at any given moment, provides a visual complexity because of its *spatial* impact (27). It is this device that brings about the influence of cinematic storytelling on the literary narrative: postmodern narratives are able to construct and deconstruct their plot-lines at the same time; the cause-and-effect logic of classical narratives is turned upside down, hence fragmentation and dissemination are foregrounded. To understand a postmodern narrative that employs many of the above-mentioned traits one could visualize it, an ability that comes from the audio-visual medium.

When analyzing the narrative mechanics of *The Book of Illusions*, Mark Poole arrives at the conclusion that it complies with the Film Noir tradition of a convoluted plot, and that its serpentine logic is "just as enjoyable and far less far-fetched than many film noir plots" (79). Poole also identifies many elements that allude to the aspects of the Film Noir in his reading of the novel as a hard-boiled detective fiction: for example, David Zimmer can be interpreted as a typical male film noir protagonist drawn into detecting the destiny of Hector Mann and his films, and his "emotional isolation can also take on attributes in terms of physical

[69] Drawing on Aliki Varvogli's ideas published in her *The World That is the Book*, Peacock observes that many of Auster's novels and their extended anecdotes can be read as versions of the contemporary parable (61). He states that the modern-day parabolist only borrows the formal peculiarities of the biblical parable, but utilizes parables to reveal not a scriptural meta-text, but the crisis of the unavailability of any all-encompassing system of meaning (62). Because of the parabolic construction of *The Book of Illusions* (different narratives embedded in each other), the reader cannot receive Mann's voice directly without the filters of multiple narrator figures (64).

dislocation, leading the protagonist to wander, seeking either adventure, [...] or, in Zimmer and Mann's case, escape" (Poole 84).

The illusion of the film noir is also given in the novel's text by the imitation of certain filmic narrative techniques, particularly characteristic of the classical film noir. One of these, as Poole observes, is the motif of the dead narrator speaking from beyond the grave. Within the novel's narrative structure, the reader has the assumption until almost the end that Zimmer survives the events of the book, but we learn in one final chapter that he himself is dead, and his *Book of Illusions* has been published posthumously: "when this book is published, dear reader, you can be certain that the man who wrote it is long dead" (318). Thus, Auster shares with Noir the introduction of the dead narrator and Poole argues that—in opposition with classical noir, where death is announced at the beginning of the film—in the book

> by withholding the knowledge of the narrator's death [...] Auster seeks to create greater dramatic impact, thus making Zimmer's death, however undramatic it might be, the culmination of the narrative arc, the final link in the manacles of cause and effect that the events of the book have been chained to. (81)

Another borrowing from the Film Noir is the character of Alma Grund, seen by Poole as a femme fatale in the Noir sense of the term (85). Alma, the daughter of Hector's friend, shows up at the apartment of Zimmer and tries to convince him to accompany her to Hector's ranch, and is determined enough to threaten him with a gun.

> We were ten or twelve feet apart, and just as she stood up from the sofa, a fresh onslaught of rain came crashing down on the roof, rattling against the shingles like a bombardment of stones. She jumped at the sound, glancing round the room with a skittish perplexed look in her eyes, and at the moment I knew what was going to happen next. [...] I knew that she was carrying a gun in her purse, and I knew that within the next three or four seconds she was going to stick her right hand into the purse and pull out the gun. (107-08)

This scene, according to Poole, "not only reads like hard-boiled detective fiction, while establishing Alma as a gun-toting seductress, but also introduces another trope of film noir: the thunderstorm, always a portent of histrionic acts in noir" (85). Alma immediately becomes

the object of Zimmer's gaze, and—willingly, unwillingly—an artefact, a means of representation:

> I saw that there was a birthmark on the left side of her face. It was a purple stain about the size of a man's fist, long enough and broad enough to resemble a map of some imaginary country: a solid mass of discoloration that covered more than half her cheek. (100)

The introduction of Alma in the narrative does not only function as intermedial thematization (bringing about tropes specific of the noir), but is also a good example of intermedial imitation: the quick change of shots, as Alma's face is immediately presented from a different angle, this time without the birthmark, launches a series of emotional responses in David: "When she turned around and faced me again, I could see only her right side. She looked different from that angle, and I saw that she had a delicate roundish face, with very smooth skin […] that reminded me a little of Helen" (101). Interpreting this scene, Peacock notes that Alma becomes a palimpsest upon which David can lay images of his dead wife, Helen (58). Alma's birthmark brings about the anxiety in Zimmer, as he perceives her as a "woman with the strange double face" (108), who pulls out a gun and points it at his chest. He feels uneasy while looking at the birthmark, but paradoxically becomes fascinated by it. The birthmark, and Zimmer's obsession with it, becomes a means of conveying three-dimensionality (in a metaphoric sense), bringing about the scene's visuality in his narrative. All characters (Alma, Hector, Zimmer) are framed or set up framings in both literary and cinematic terms, which, in their turn foreground intermedial sutures.

The descriptions of Alma's birthmark or Hector's moustache are, in fact, imagetexts that render the characters either visible or invisible. "Invisibility" is also an intermedial phenomenon: one medium "disappears" into the other, and their meeting points are sutured through imagetexts.[70] An example of this kind of intermedial "invisibility" and "visibility" in the receiving medium occurs, when Zimmer transcribes one of Hector's films: *Mr. Nobody.* The opening scene is described as a snapshot, a glimpse into Hecor's private life:

[70] "In literature proper, of course, literary 'portraits' and techniques of descriptive 'painting' have always struck a precarious balance between a sense for appearances and incursions into the invisible" (Pfeiffer, *The Protoliterary* 116).

> Hector is eating breakfast with his family. There are some bright slapstick bits that revolve around the buttering of toast and a wasp that lands in a pot of jam, but the narrative purpose of the scene is to present us with a picture of happiness. We are being set up for the losses that are about to occur. (40)

This fragment, in my reading, is a self-reflexive metacommentary; moreover, it does not only "tell" us what we can see in this scene, but also provides the effect: its purpose is to create a joyful atmosphere, to prepare viewers for the tension and horror that are going to happen.

At this point, the interplay between the characters' actual reality and the representation of illusions in the novel's fictitious world is emphasized—in terms of intermedial imitation—by another element borrowed from the cinematic medium: the various forms of editing, through which a number of images are put together in quick sequences to convey a mosaic-like unity. Editing involves a series of quick, non-overlapping images arranged sequentially and a series of fluent and short sentences that function as means of shot, reverse shot, and/or framing. In the film entitled *Mr. Nobody,* Hector drinks a cocktail that turns him invisible:

> Cut to Hector's office. Chase enters… Hector allows Chase to pour him a hefty sample of the new concoction. As Hector takes hold of the glass, Chase looks on with a glint in his overwatchful eye, waiting for the poisonous brew to do its work. In a medium-close up, Hector lifts the glass to his mouth and takes a small, tentative sip. His nose wrinkles in disapproval; his eyes open wide; his moustache shimmies… Chase looks down at his watch…and begins counting off the seconds from one to five. Hector is baffled. [He] pitches forward in his chair and bangs his head against the top of his desk (*The Book of Illusions* 42).

Through intermedial imitation this ekphrastic passage acts as an intermedial suture and reveals the very idea that cinematic sequentiality has its counterpart in literary narratives. Each sentence uses different action verbs in the representation of the same event. The intensive, suggestive images bring about the effects of certain cinematic techniques, such as the 180° rule, as well as establishing shot and shot-reverse shot. The fluidity of Auster's narrative is enhanced by the fact that there are no quotation marks in dialogues. McFarlaine asserts that the frame-following-frame experience is not analogous to the word-following-word experience of the novel (McFarlaine 27). Although I find his theory regarding the novel's linearity and the film's spatiality generally acceptable, he merely provides a one-sided

interpretation of the frame, as an exclusively cinematic element, which has nothing to do with literary narratives. His argument that the frame instantly and at any given moment provides information of visual complexity as a result of its spatiality, is correct, but literary narratives can also do that through the quick and intense series of images, and techniques of montage, though construing the visual is somewhat more demanding on the reader. Another type of suturing shapes up: the stitching of readers or spectators to the medium they encounter, determining them to become contributors to meaning. In an interview Auster answers a question regarding the silent written films in *The Book of Illusions* and maintains:

> The thing about a film is that it never stops, you can't go back the way you can in a book, you can't read the same passage five times in a row; it's just coming at you. I had to create that kind of speed, but at the same time I needed to put in enough detail, so the reader can see the images in his head. I had to walk a tight rope of not too much, not too little, just right. (González, "Smoke and Illusions" 63)

In the novel, as Auster maintains, it is the mixture of "hot" and "cold" media usage within one text that brings about a certain immersion on the part of the readers. It is apparent that in terms of intermedial occurances there is both symmetry and asymmetry in the novel. When the transmitting medium interacts with the receiving medium, there is often a displacement into another code of signification where the elements of the receiving medium take up and compensate for the lost symmetry. In this sense one medium experiences both the lack and the desire towards unity, and uses sutures to constitute the visual experience for the readers and tie them to the story. Mitchell asserts that the imagetext is "a site of dialectical tension, slippage, and transformation" (106).[71] Hence, from the lack instituted by the disruption of an initial symmetry, and through the temporary tension that occurs in the process, the narrative moves towards the wholeness of a concluding intermedial balance. To ensure the successful reconstruction of symmetry, intermedial sutures (in the forms of intermedial imitations and thematizations) are ceaselessly at work.

The initial intermedial tension in *The Book of Illusions* stems from the fact that the cinematic techniques penetrate the literary text generating palimpsestuous intermediality at

[71] Mitchell describes the imagetext not as a concept, but as a theoretical figure, rather like Derrida's *différance*. Versions of this figure reflect on their own heterogenity and connect their formal dialectics to ideological and institutional struggles within their own media and the cultural conditions they mediate (106).

first, that is, the reinscriptions, overwritings of one medium by the other. The novel draws simultaneously upon film and literature, creating a textual overlay, a palimpsest that is at once visual and verbal. The multiplication of layers of representation and media foregrounds the self as always appearing to be another, never directly accessible, and always trapped in the various media manifestations (Hector as seen through the media of film, theatre, and through Zimmer's verbal narration). Cinematic images are shown through the filter of the literary text and this brings forth intermedial instances that can be associated with Freud's concept of the uncanny. The uncanny medial doppelgänger here is the reference to the medium of cinema that keeps inscribing itself into the verbal medium, attempting to de/re-contextualize it. A sense of anxiety is brought on by the instances of intermedial uncanniness: an already-there is returning in the form of a medium that represents loss, that is, the medium of silent film, the essence of which resides in the fact that it is missing, it is merely being referred to. The repeated references to the silent film sequences, the verbal "substitutions," expose the lost medium not as found again, but as a recurring presence through its very condition of absence.

The question here is whether the intermedial doubling points to an attempt to reach a certain intermedial "immortality,"[72] that is, a tendency towards intermedial balance (in-betweenness), an assurance of peaceful intermedial survival. The unity of the verbal narrative is preserved precisely through intermedial sutures that conceal the gaps, the splits caused by the above-mentioned tensional differences/rivalries and determine a smoother interaction between media forms (such a suturing function can be found in Zimmer's quest for, and narrative of, Hector's life and films). Eventually, palimpsestuous intermediality becomes heterotopic intermediality at work in this case. Intermedial tension gives ground to intermedial dialogue, so that various media forms are able to overcome their differences and become united not only as if in an embedded, palimpsestuous framework, but also mutually reflexive as if in a mirror-like structure. What happens in the case of *The Book of Illusions* is that there is a movement from the initial "inscription" of one medium into another to a more complex "trans-figuration," a process in which the media involved reflect on each other and exist in an "in-between" state.

When talking about structural similarities between literary and cinematic texts there are indeed many ways to bring about the presence of the cinematic medium. A literary text can evoke or imitate actual movies only through linguistic means and literary techniques. It

[72] Freud interpreting Otto Rank maintains that the appearance of the double is an insurance against the destruction of the ego, hence doubling is an attempt to preserve the self against extinction, rooted in the primary narcissism of the child. However, when this stage has been surmounted, the double acquires a new role: it becomes the "uncanny harbinger of death" (7).

may, by analogy, suggest cinematic structures through using motifs, juxtapositions, repetition of images, altering long and short sentences, and by doing so, will create the illusion in the reader's mind of experiencing a film. As Pfeiffer contends, we are dealing with one of those "symptomatic instances in which literature is describing and exploring, somewhat nostalgically, the power of media in which it cannot itself participate" (*The Protoliterary* 111).

Intermedial suturing that stitches the readers to the novel's world becomes manifest mainly via intermedial imitations. Intermedial imitations construe the visual for the reader, again, with the help of imagetexts. Intermedial references that establish the presence of the cinematic medium (with all its illusions) in Auster's literary text make use of many techniques: fade in/fade out, montage, rhythm, manipulation with present and past tenses.

Subsequently, cutting—another example of intermedial imitation—is one of the most frequent devices employed in Auster's narrative. If there is a shift between sequences that help the viewer/reader understand the new scene, the means of fade-in/fade-out are introduced to establish a bridge between two distinct images, as one can see in Hector's *Mr. Nobody*:

> Hector's eyelids begin to grow heavy… A moment later he succumbs. The screen fades to black. When the picture returns, it is morning and daylight is flooding through the curtains. Cut to a shot of Hector's wife, still asleep in bed. Then cut to Hector, still asleep in bed. (*The Book of Illusions* 51)

The transition from the means of fading-in/fading-out to a series of clear cuts that put together two distinct images, without any explanation is reminiscent of another cinematic technique, that of the parallel montage. The parallel montage involves a series of rapid shots to represent events that occur at the same time but in different spaces. In *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, one of the movies directed by the retired Hector Mann, one can notice the various uses of parallel montage. The movie is about a writer, Martin Frost, who is looking for artistic inspiration; therefore he retreats to one of his friends' country estate. There he meets a young woman, Claire, with whom he falls in love. Her role is to be a muse, encouraging Martin to write his masterpiece. Soon it turns out that the better he writes, the more Claire is vanishing. The dramatic effect of the final scene is enhanced by the parallel montage,[73] making it

[73] The parallel montage is also known in Metz's terminology as an alternate syntagm that is responsible for the intercutting of two alternate events in the same diegetic time (qtd. in Fűzi 4).

possible for the two narrative lines to be interwoven through intercutting, thereby establishing simultaneity. The parallel montage is realized through Zimmer's faithful transcription of the intercut scenes, as he numbers the shots and retells events in a very condensed narrative, using a great number of active verbs:

> 2. Martin … begins typing again.
> 3. We see the fireplace. The fire has nearly gone out.
> 4. A close-up of Martin's fingers, typing.
> 5. A close-up of Claire's face. She is weaker than before, no longer struggling. (266)

This description does not only employ the technique of the parallel montage, but also draws our attention to the cinematic process that is used in achieving the dramatic effect. The crosscutting, the shifting shot angles also set up a unique treatment of time that is also considered to be distinctively cinematic: that film presents actions in the present tense, while novels traditionally use past tense in their narratives (McFarlane 29). However, in *The Book of Illusions*, when Zimmer retells Hector's movies, he continuously uses present tense or present continuous and employs a series of active verbs, thus generating a sense of immediacy and the reader's perception of time as present. Sarah Cardwell proves McFarlane's conceptualization about the eternal presentness of film to be problematic. She argues that film is in fact tenseless, as we cannot distinguish whether a filmic picture(shot) is in the narrative past or future, thereby we cannot determine it as being in present tense (7-8). This theory refers to a dislocated image, that of a single shot, but later she adds that filmic medium is able to represent a range of tenses through the manipulation of images, sounds and so on within the narrative, therefore neither image, nor medium is restricted to an eternal present tense (Cardwell 9). Apart from retelling Hector's movies exclusively in the present tense, Zimmer uses a traditional first person past tense narrative voice, and the first person singular subject pronoun, which, according to Poole in his comparison of the novel with Film Noir, is "similar to the cinematic convention of the flashback voiceover, where a normally reliable narrator relates relevant events from the earlier time" (81). This "borrowing" of the flashback voiceover technique acts as an intermedial suturing device: it communicates the sensation of looking at and listening to a cinematic narrative, hence provoking a highly interactive emotional immersion on the part of the reader.

In Auster's novel the basic rhythm of the text is given by the shifting of long and short sentences. The frequent pauses/silences can also function as means of emotional manipulation of the readers as they are allowed to take in the different scenes, in this way absorbing their meaning. By retelling Hector's films and recording his life, Zimmer is freezing time, attempting to achieve control over it. Paradoxically, by immersing himself in this world of illusions, he manages to restore his relationship with the outside world.

Drawing upon the illusory nature of cinema, Zimmer also asserts that it is easy to become lured into "this booby-trapped universe of missing manhole covers and exploding cigars" (30). In *The Book of Illusions* discussions regarding "reality" and mere illusions are frequent. For example, when Zimmer retreats into his little chalet to recover from his trauma, he contends that "the world is an illusion that had to be reinvented every day" (57). Hector Mann is the living embodiment of this statement; he—in a Baudrillardian sense—is at least as real (or as simulated) in his movies as he is in his real life (Peacock 65). Zimmer hardly believes Alma that Hector is alive and considers the stories she tells him about Hector as mere inventions:

> You're making this up.
>
> I don't make things up… It all happened just as Hector said it did. Every time I think he's lied to me, it turns out that he's been telling the truth. That's what makes his story impossible (219).

Similarly, he also doubts Frieda Spelling, who claims in her letters that she is Hector's wife. However, he says that "we all want to believe in impossible things, I suppose, to persuade ourselves that miracles can happen" (5). The title itself, *The Book of Illusions*, also refers to the blurring boundaries between reality and illusions. After losing everything for the second time (both Alma and Hector die and the movies are destroyed), Zimmer returns to Vermont and claims that "this is a book of fragments, a compilation of sorrows and half remembered dreams, and in order to tell the story, I have to confine myself to the events of the story itself" (316). I read this sentence as a self-reflexive statement—also a meta-narrative commentary on the narrative about to unfold—as it symbolically refers to the literary text's artificiality in this case. In *The Book of Illusions* fragmentation, dissemination, and manipulation of the story-line, the text's reflection upon its process of creation and artificiality, and the disorganization of the narrative are produced by means borrowed from the similarly self-reflexive medium of the cinema, especially through intermedial imitiations and thematizations.

Furthermore, experimental and self-reflexive films are not enjoyed by all viewers, and postmodern, fragmented texts also require a certain level of understanding from their readers. Spectators watch movies because they can satisfy their desires in this way, they imagine things they cannot do in reality. Hutcheon also speaks about a dream-like state while watching films that enhances a sense of unreality (59). Yet, contemporary film viewers or readers of postmodern fiction are no longer excited by the well constructed illusions, for many of them it is more exciting to engage in a play with the text, to try to understand and reconstruct a self-reflexive, disseminated narrative full of intertextual allusions than to follow a linear story line and coherent construction of events. Nevertheless, tracing the web of references in such narratives demands an abandonment of the traditional, verbal logic, and involves a visual interpretation; an ability that undoubtedly comes from the cinematic medium.

All in all, intermedial suture is a twofold device in *The Book of Illusions*: it ties the transmitting and receiving media and conceals their contact points; and it construes an intermedial space for the readers, thus suturing them to the novel's filmic text. In both cases the suturing process is ongoing; sutures stop and restart the narrative, they construct and deconstruct the (cinematic) illusory world for the readers/spectators. Intermedial sutures in this case also mark the transition from palimpsestuous intermediality (bound with intermedial uncanniness) to heterotopic intermediality. Intermedial figurations (such as ekphrasis) entail a series of displacements and substitutions which both produce and withhold the illusion of reference. These figures make and unmake intermedial elements, give them meaning, and/or take it away. It might, on the strength of the above, be supposed that intermedial framings, elements of editing, cuts, and montage ceaselessly pose an absence, a lack—that of the cinematic medium—which is immediately hidden by an intermedial suture. This intermedial suture (trans)figures in the literary text what is missing in the guise of a stand in: it takes the place of the "real" cinematic medium and yet generates the visuality for the readers.

*2.2. Mirroring Selves and Mutually Reflexive Narratives*

In the novel's world Hector Mann begins to inhabit many selves; moreover, David Zimmer, by following the stages of Mann's lives, becomes his doppelgänger, and also has to live a number of lives. The identity shifts in the case of Hector Mann also propel shifts between the different media forms and thematize an intertwining between two modes of narration: verbal storytelling and monstration. Poole claims that Zimmer and Mann are aspects of Auster's own personality: one is interested in literature, the other is absorbed by cinema (80).[74] Intermedial mirroring and crossings are juxtaposed with Zimmer's and Mann's identity shifts and mirroring. Intermedial mirroring points to a certain narcissism; thus a specific narcissistic intermediality occurs in Auster's text (the receiving medium becomes fascinated by the transmitting medium). The heterotopic relations between media forms and their methods of imitating each other's technical apparatus are thematized in Hector's performative acts (parallel with this Hector continuously loses and finds his self, for example, in the mirror scene in *Mr. Nobody*, during the sex acts with Sylvia Meers) and in Zimmer's intermedial transpositions (transposing Mann's films into a written medium).

In a framed narrative structure (Zimmer narrates Alma, who tells the story of Hector's life) Hector's life-changing events are gradually revealed, and they also signify intermedial turns. The first narrated identity change occurs when Hector's former lover, Brigid O'Fallon, is shot to death by Hector's bride, Dolores Saint John. Hector, in order to save himself and his bride, decides to hush up the tragic event. He flees to Seattle, where he acquires a new identity by shaving off his famous moustache; an act symbolic of leaving the cinematic medium. Playing the role of the ordinary working man day by day, he does not only abandon the previous medium (cinema) and enters the medium of performance, but also develops an art of self-torturing by denying his identity on various occasions, for example, when Nora, Brigid's sister asks him if he knows anything about Hector Mann. The next step towards emptying his self occurs when he runs away from Nora, and goes to Chicago, where he meets Sylvia Meers, a prostitute, with whom he performs sex acts in the form of live performances for rich voyeurs. "She was the one who taught him how to drink his own blood, who instructed him into the pleasures of devouring his own heart" (177). The literal eradication of the self is underlined by the fact that he always wears a mask during these sexual

[74] Poole provides a detailed analysis of how the two characters mirror each other in terms of life events, naming, and interesting numbers within the novel's world. Both men lose their children when they are 37-38 years old, Mann's son is named Tad, Zimmer's son is Todd (80).

performances. The performative body is, however, prefigured in one of Hector's previously discussed movies *Mr. Nobody*. In this movie Hector's being tricked into invisibility—symbolically to a loss of self—functions as socio-cultural morality in which identity can easily be erased by the consumerist society.[75]

In *Mr. Nobody* the invisible Hector rediscovers himself in different roles he enacts in order to take revenge. These acts do not only foreshadow his life events in the future, but also serve as steps towards a series of rebirths regarding his many selves. One of the most crucial scenes in the fictitious film is the mirror scene. When Hector finally goes home, and the effects of the liqueur disappear, he is able to see himself in the mirror. He stares at his own reflection for long minutes.

> [T]he expression on his face remains the same, and as he peers into the eyes of the man staring back at him from the wall, it's as if he's looking at a stranger, encountering the face of a man he has never seen before. […] He is no longer looking at the old Hector. He is someone else now, and however much he might resemble the person he used to be, he has been reinvented, turned inside out, and spat forth as a new man. (52)

According to Peacock, "his apparent revitalization signals the inevitable fragmentation of the self and a kind of dissolution of the "real" him. Mr. Nobody becomes, as Hector's life shows, Mr. Anybody"[76] (66). This peculiar connection between death and artistic representation suggested in the mirror scene draws attention to the fact that Hector seeing himself in the mirror thematizes the heterotopic relationship between the various media forms and their methods of imitating each other's technical apparatus. Theatrical performance and cinema do not dominate one another, but exist in a balanced connection in their presence in the literary text. Through the many roles Hector chooses to play in *Mr. Nobody* and later in his "real" life, the theatrical medium is transposed as a figure into the other, also serving as a representation of "in-betweenness" that stresses the importance of both media participating in this process. In addition, a third medium enters the in-between space: Zimmer's narration, in other words,

[75] Another cultural aspect is added by González, who, analysing Hector's other film, *The Prop Man*, notes that it is a parable "of Hector Mann's problems with his producers, who were actually making it impossible for audiences to see his films and turning them, in effect, invisible" ("Words Versus Images" 40).

[76] Analyzing the mirror scene Peacock states that the recognition of being born again is predicated on annihilation, and the emergent self comes from a distinctly Lacanian act of misrecognition and misinterpretation (66).

the literary text, which reevokes both cinematic and theatrical media in its own ways of representation. Moreover, this mirror scene also thematizes a particular intermedial relationship of a narcissistic nature. McLuhan speaks about the myth of Narcissus as linked to narcosis, and uses it to describe how men are related to media (*Understanding Media* 45-52).[77] Developing this theory further, I argue that a certain narcissitic intermediality occurs in Auster's novel, namely that the receiving medium (the literary text) becomes fascinated by the transmitting medium (the cinematic text), which, in this sense, functions as an intermedial extension of the literary text. Hence the novel urges to repeat the elements of cinematic conventions via intermedial imitations and thematizations. This involves an initially tense, hierarchical relationship (implying palimpsestuous intermediality) that tends towards a more balanced, heterotopic intermediality. On the other hand, the above analyzed mirror scene introduces a crucial theme in the narrative: invisibility. After much trouble Hector experiences a state of invisibility, and the very first time when he realizes he is visible again he stands in front of the mirror. Invisibility serves as a twofold device: it links the two characters—Mann and Zimmer—because Zimmer also (symbolically) doubles this "invisibility" when he retreats into his cabin to finish his translation; and acts as an intermedial suture ensuring that the transposition from one medium into the other happens smoothly and transparently.

In attempting to identify the precise narrative frontiers of textual, staged, and film narratives André Gaudreault speaks about the combination of the narrative possibilities of the above-mentioned media forms, and claims that "it is the product of a *linking* of the two basic modes of narrative communication: *narration* and what I call *monstration*. Moving from the textual and the staged to the filmic, that is, 'from the literary to the filmic,' *narrative* becomes a *system*" (7). The monstrator always *shows*. In Gaudreault's view it denotes a storytelling agent behind the visual representation of a story, the parallel filmic agent to the textual narrator. Thus, monstration and narration are unquestionably connected.[78] A peculiar type of monstration occurs in the case of Hector Mann, who performs many roles in his films, however these performances are embedded in Zimmer's narrative, therefore Mann's qualities as a monstrator remain irrevocably tied to verbalization and can only be described as *showing*

[77] "Now the point of this myth is the fact that men at once become fascinated by an extension of themselves in any material other than themselves" (*Understanding Media* 45).

[78] Gaudreault observes that since Genette, an opposition has been created between mimesis (imitation) and diegesis (narrative), and discussing the reasons he argues that "this opposition is the hole in the net of narratological theory that even recourse to the Ancients cannot fix. Because for Plato mimesis was not, contrary to what is too often claimed, in opposition to diegesis. Rather, it is simply one of the forms that diegesis can take. […] Mimesis and diegesis are not opposite categories in Aristotele either. Aristotele, with inverse reasoning to Plato's, saw diegesis as one of the forms of mimesis" (8).

by analogy. In Auster's *The Book of Illusions* the two modes of narrative communication coexist under the same hat, yet they can operate only by imitating each other's technical apparatus. Diegesis and mimesis are not contrasted with each other, but the latter can be one of the possible forms of the former. As Gaudreault claims "the two systems of thought bequeathed to us by Plato and Aristotle actually complement each other quite well, so well that we might imagine them superimposed" (41). Therefore, filmic, that is, visual enunciations in the novel's world are verbal, because the events of the story are presented by means of a narrator (Zimmer) in a literary text, and also monstrative through the performative acts of Hector Mann. Intermedial transpositions are foregrounded in the very fact that Mann's character and films are mimetic inserts represented in a diegetic way. Mann, in the role of the monstrator, experiences nihilism echoed in Zimmer's nihilism; and, paradoxically, it is this state of mind that gives birth to art, hence determining intermedial occurrences. Regarding the activity of the monstrator, Gaudreault adds that it is difficult to categorize, to name the agent responsible for it "because of its absolute lack of stable identity" (74). He believes that

> the textual narrator's "monstration" is only an illusion. As a corollary, we must also acknowledge that the "narration" to which the theatrical narrator might aspire is also an illusion. The signs used by the narrator are fundamentally different from those used by the monstrator. And it is the very nature of these signs that stands as an absolutely insurmountable barrier between the two. (76)

This delineation of the two semiotic systems is justifiable, especially in the case of *The Book of Illusions.* In the novel's world the textual narrator is undoubtedly Zimmer, and it is his filter through which the readers can get access to any information regarding the silent comedian. Hector Mann in the role of the monstrator is consigned to invisibility, to transparency. He constantly hides his identity in order to imitate someone else, whom he represents in his films, or in the sexual performances as an enunciating subject distinct from himself. Thereby, he also conceals his role as an agent in the narrative communication. Nevertheless, he has recourse to certain techniques for bringing its active presence to light, for example "by a character or a voice off" (Gaudreault 75). In the novel's world it is Alma Grund and professor Zimmer who behold the true focal consciousness and render Hector visible to the reader. Wherever Hector goes, whichever selves he assumes, he clings only to the persona of the actor.

According to Alma's accounts, Hector runs away from Sylvia Meers, and ends up in Sandusky, Ohio, that is the final point of emptiness, of the disintegration of the self into absolute nothingness:

> [Hector] was gripped by a feeling of nullity, an exhaustion so great, so relentless, that he had to lean against the wall of a building to prevent himself from falling down. A frigid wind was blowing in off Lake Erie, and even as he felt it rush against his face, he couldn't tell if the wind was real or something he had imagined. He didn't know what month it was, what year. He couldn't remember his name. […] Long after he had pulled himself together and moved on, a part of him was still there, standing on that empty street in Sandusky, Ohio, gasping for breath as his existence dribbled out of him. (192)

Hector's prolonged act of wandering and his repeatedly taking various selves stem from a painful process of mourning and/or restoring oneself, an endeavour to deal with past traumatic experiences and repressed memories. The physical act of wandering is also symbolic of his "wandering" from one medium to the other, while also thematizing intermedial incursions. Similarly to professor Zimmer, Hector's being nobody and nowhere brings about a beneficial state of mind, in which creative energies are released, determining him to turn to the world of movies once more. For Hector film making "was like a delirium [...] and the more difficult it became for him, the more exhilarating he found it" (*The Book of Illusions* 145). In his restless wanderings he experiences a constant, merciless ache in his soul, but he claims, as Alma quotes from his journals, "*never more lost, than now*, [...] *never more alone and afraid—yet never more alive*" (147). Thereby, a twofold mirroring structure appears here: on a thematic level Zimmer reenacts Hector's wanderings, on the intermedial level Zimmer's medium (the verbal narration) records and reflects on Hector's cinematic and performative art.

Hector keeps his promise of never making any films. It is the death of his three year old child that leaves him with a void to fill and causes him to break his vow. He assumes the identity of the creator, and directs many films, but finds a way to justify why he breaks his word: "He would make movies that would never be shown to audiences, make movies for the pure pleasure of making movies. It was an act of breathtaking nihilism, and yet he's stuck to the bargain ever since" (207). Hence the focus of attention turns from mere role playing to a productive activity, metaphorically from performance to creation.

Brown contends that the

> journeys Hector and Zimmer embark upon are, ultimately search for some form of inner peace from which to build a stable sense of identity. The family, as a form of community […] provides just such a point of equilibrium. […] Once those conditions are disrupted and the points of reference start slipping away, the capacity of the family to provide a site of self-formation is eroded. (126)

In the novel's world family provides only a fragile, transitory stability. What comes after the catastrophe of losing one's beloved person is self-isolation. Paradoxically, it is this nihilism that constitutes valuable resources for the characters, connects them to a certain medium, and renders them artists. Their confinement from society, their intentional fall into selflessness brings about boundless possibilities for mental manoeuvres. Strangely, it is Hector's attachment to the medium of the cinema that determines Zimmer to re-emerge into the world through the practice of writing and narrating Hector's life. Characters represent media forms that re-emerge in one another: Hector's "transmitting" medium, cinema, survives in Zimmer's "receiving" medium, literary narration. David Zimmer and Hector Mann attempt to deal with their personal traumas through making films (Hector), and through watching and writing about these films (Zimmer). These media help them fight against a painful reality, against nihilism, and turn towards a creative state of mind. Such creative existence does not only refer to their cognitive space, the site of mind, where they launch a chain of creative thoughts; but also to certain physical settings, where they end up.

Brown attributes utopian characteristics to these places, because they "have a quality of an illusion that separates an event into its corporeal experience and its impression on the imagination, and emphasizes an imaginary element" (154). These places, let me add, function in fact as crisis heterotopias—in the foucauldian sense—where the characters try to pass through a severe test. To this I also add the heterotopia of films (since references to it undeniably appear in the novel's world), a site of illusions that is able to juxtapose several other sites (here several media forms connected to Hector Mann) which are in themselves incompatible. As a result, Hector and David Zimmer enter, use, and become determined by different types of heterotopias. As Brown observes, the names that appear in the novel are highly symbolic: Alma's name means soul in Spanish, and the name of the ranch where Hector lives in seclusion is called Tierra del Sueno, meaning the land of dreams (122). In my interpretation Tierra del Sueno does not only function as a real or unreal place in which the characters find refuge from their traumas, but also as a purgatory, a heterotopia, where "the

individual has to submit to rites and purifications" (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" 26). The ranch is Hector's private world, where he repeatedly practices penitence (through creating movies the world will never see), and where he lets Zimmer in and provides him the last step towards his own healing. What brings together the two characters—Mann and Zimmer—is this heterotopia, as well as Mann's last film, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*. This piece of art functions as a site of mirroring both in terms of the novel's characters reflecting on one another; and regarding the different media forms coming together in a balanced relationship. Martin and Claire's story brings into focus a dialogic relationship not only in the case of the various characters' selves, but also between the different media modes of representation. When in 2007 Auster made a film adaptation of the story, in an interview he talked about the creation of the setting, revealing details that allude, again, to the heterotopic nature of the story's location, the isolated countryside house:

> I wanted to create an other-worldly ambience, a place that could be anywhere, a place that felt as if it existed outside time. The action unfolds in Martin's head, after all, and by choosing the house I did, a little domain cut off from the rest of the world, I felt I would be enhancing the interiority of the story. (Curiol 10)

*The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, directed by Hector Mann in the world of the novel, also draws on the cognitive space of the artist's mind, where illusions are born. The story of Martin Frost, the writer, who, similarly to Zimmer, retreats into the country house, where he meets and falls in love with his own muse, can be taken as another example for the peculiar relationship between art and life, more precisely about the impossibility to grasp the essence of art, or, if it becomes possible, its meaning is lost forever. In order to save Claire's life, Martin decides to burn the manuscript, which Claire herself has inspired. This noble sacrifice, however, has unexpected consequences because Claire produces an enigmatic reaction to it:

> She is ecstatic; she is horrified. She has always been the strong one, the one with all the courage and confidence, but now that Martin has solved the riddle of his enchantment, she seems lost. What are we going to do? she says. Tell me, Martin, what on earth are we going to do? (*The Book of Illusions* 268)

As Peacock argues, Claire's words above are the best example of the fact that "the very life Martin believes he is rescuing is valid only when imbued with representations, […] that Claire herself, as an imaginative creation, exists not as objective reality but as subjective artwork" (66). At this point, Hector Mann's film ends abruptly before Martin Frost can answer Claire's questions. The camera moves upward, provides a panoramic view of the solitary house in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by an uncanny stillness, thus suggesting the ontological uncertainty of the characters. Peacock claims that Martin truly has become a Mr. Nobody (67), in this way mirroring the character from Hector's other movie, who became invisible, hence another intermedial thematization takes place. Furthermore, the critic arrives at the assumption that what these two movies are about is precisely the fact, that "rebirth cannot be total or unequivocal—it is dialectical, an unstable truce between the new selves and the residual selves of the past, and […] the mere destruction of the artwork cannot guarantee liberation from the tyranny of representational codes it participates in" (67). This kind of dialogic relationship not only appears in the case of the various selves of the characters, but also in the different media modes of representation and the codes they use to imitate each other.

As *Mr. Nobody* problematizes the fragmentation of the self (and the way it is rendered invisible), and while Mann condemns his films to eternal nonexistence by denying an audience who would watch them, it is paradoxically this choice that makes them visible and memorable for at least one character, David Zimmer. The more Hector wishes to erase himself in *Mr. Nobody* and later in his life-adventures, the more artistic energies he is able to generate. And despite his aiming at complete annihilation, he most definitely will inhabit Zimmer's narration (especially in the posthumous publication of Zimmer's book), and will be rendered immortal in many media forms both in the world of the novel, and in different adaptations.[79] Therefore, the desire of the artist to leave no trace is impossible to realize.[80]

[79] In 2008, as a result of a long collaboration between Glenn Thomas and Paul Auster, a peculiar project came into being: an illustrated edition of *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, a 32 pages graphic book, in which the form also enhances the content. The fold-out pages feature Glenn Thomas' innovative screen prints that are combined with Auster's text, and packaged in a box. The graphic artist's choice of typography and drawings echo Zimmer's feelings and fascination, while he watches Hector Mann's last film. Similarly, the character of Hector Mann inspired Irish songwriter and performer, Duke Special, who, in 2010, created an album entitled: *The Silent World of Hector Mann*, in which each song was inspired by one of the silent movies the fictitious actor appeared in. As for *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, Trofimova identifies at least six copies within Auster's oeuvre ranging from the written film in *The Book of Illusions* to the screenplay and film published in 2007 (129-30).

[80] Peacock brings into discussion Baudrillard's ideas from *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, namely that death might be the only means of escape from the code, from the incessantly repeatable play of signification and equivalence, but the critic apparently proves the opposite of this theory in the case of Hector Mann: death is not

The story of Martin and Claire is a love story about the bittersweet experience of surviving a crisis in a relationship: Claire survives, but only at the cost of no longer being the muse (i.e. artwork) she used to be. We are left, in this case, with the enigma of an identity that has been changed or lost, but that nevertheless survives in the medium of film or in literary writing, that is to say, in the very images of Hector and then in the very words of Zimmer's book. The story of Martin Frost, as it is presented to the readers in its strange form—a filmscript integrated in the novel's text—leaves us with a strange experience of reading similar to watching/visualizing, so, in this sense, the text of *The Book of Illusions* is not merely a descriptive, but truly a performative text.[81]

The idea of survival (that of Claire) also alludes to a specific intermedial survival. On the one hand, Hector Mann's oeuvre may (or may not) be "unfinished," we still have an account of his films in Zimmer's book, hence the way one medium survives in the other. On the other hand, it is certain that art will outlive the artist: because Hector's films are preserved in Zimmer's book, they will last forever, and so will the memory of the artist. Regarding the nature of the intermedial survival, Claire's character is of utmost importance, as she symbolizes intermedial transfigurations per se: one medium survives in the other but only at the cost of no longer being the medium it used to be. Claire's character makes use of transiency as a figure (both metaphorical and literal) for the transient nature of artistic inspiration and art itself. If she represents a particular medium, by the way of surviving through merging in another medium (staying alive and living with Martin), she figures the very transiency of the transmitting medium's system of signification. All in all, a threefold intermedial transposition occurs: the film, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, exists at first as a fictitious film directed by a fictional director, Hector Mann; then it is transcribed into written form by another fictional character, David Zimmer; and finally, it is adapted to a full-length feature film by Auster. Such a threefold intermedial transposition manages to cross an intermedial gap: "the written film" that could only be read in Zimmer's scene-by-scene breakdown, could actually be seen in the film adaptation directed by Auster.

The previously mentioned dialogic relationship between the media forms as connected to the characters attempt to deal with art as life, while acquiring/erasing identities in the meantime can be best observed in the 2007 film adaptation entitled *The Inner Life of Martin*

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an escape, but the beginning of an artistic process, both the stimulus and the result, as, for example, Hector's erasure in *Mr. Nobody* actually increases his impish creativity (Peacock 67-68).

[81] "[L]iterary texts not only describe but perform. Literary texts not only say but do things: they do things with words and do things to us. More precisely they do things *by* saying" (Bennett and Royle 237).

*Frost*. Structural and thematic resonances between the narratives of *Book of Illusions* and *The Inner Life of Martin Frost* (an adaptation by Auster) manifest themselves in/through intermedial references: intermedial imitation, intermedial thematization, as well as intertextual references, the introduction of new characters in the film version all function as major intermedial sutures. The intermedial thematizations of literature and photography also suture the spectator's world (our actual world) to the world of the film.

The movie, starring David Thewlis and Irène Jacob, was directed by Paul Auster using a very low budget. The movie adaptation, however, is quite different from the short script in the novel: the story goes on after Martin saves Claire from death. In an interview about the making of the film, Auster considers it

> a fantastical story, really, more or less in the spirit of Nathaniel Hawthorne. But Claire isn't a traditional muse. She's an embodiment of the story Martin is writing, and the more he writes, the weaker she becomes—until, when he comes to the last word of the text, she dies. He […] burns the manuscript, in order to bring her back to life. That's where the short version ended. (Curiol 7)

Besides the obvious intertextual allusions to Hawthorne's work, the film's text points at the source text (Auster's novel) imitating and incorporating the techniques of different media forms. One of the most noticeable changes occurs with the shift of the genre: the film starts as a philosophical mystery, and when it seemingly verges on tragedy (Claire's death), it takes an unpredictable turn into comedy, using different elements from silent comedies. Hence the intermedial imitation and thematization functioning as intermedial sutures: what happens in certain scenes is not only the reintroduction and operation with silent filmic elements, but also a clear reference to the character of Hector Mann. As Auster puts it in the above mentioned interview:

> The tire scene, for example. The viewer knows that Claire has just left the car and run off into the woods, and here comes Martin pushing a tire down the road, unaware that the woman he loves has just disappeared—and suddenly the tire gets away from him. It's classic silent comedy: man versus object. He runs after the tire—only to have it bounce off a stone and knock him to the ground. Funny, but also pathetic. (Curiol 20)

However, it is not only Martin who seems to acquire Hector Mann-like qualities in the film adaptation. Moving away from a possible tragic ending, two more characters are introduced, who mirror Martin and Claire's relationship: James Fortunato (played by Michael Imperioli), an obnoxious amateur writer, and Anna James (played by Auster's own daughter, Sophie Auster), his muse, who gradually regresses because of Fortunato's lack of talent. Fortunato's character is a new element in the adaptation, and serves as an intermedial suture, "taking the place of the absent one posed by the spectator" (Heath 88). He proves to be a perfect foil to Martin: he always appears when Martin is suffering over the loss of Claire, and his hilarious figure balances the painful loneliness that surrounds Martin, starting to generate a melancholic mood for the entire story from time to time. Fortunato's jokes and ridiculous short stories, his attempt to teach Martin the Screwdriver Darts serve as ways through which Martin can try to restore his life, similarly to David Zimmer, who found solace in Hector Mann's performance.

Characters mirror one another in the film's world as well; for example, Fortunato and Martin can be seen as doppelgängers, or two sides of the same personality (here Fortunato symbolizing Martin's writing block), and the play with names alludes to the possible crossings of the imaginary into the "real" world: Claire's last name is Martin, and Anna's last name is James. This suggests that the muses are inevitably bound to the artists they support, and so are the various media forms they symbolize. However, the artistic development of the writers strongly affects the lives of the muses: Claire falls deathly ill as Martin recovers his inspiration, and the longer Anna stays with Fortunato, the more handicapped and skinnier she becomes, because Fortunato has no artistic affinity at all. Paradoxically, in Anna's case, it is not the revelation of her real being what generates trouble and destroys her enchantment, but the very fact, that nobody is looking for, and is trying to solve, the magic inherent in her. A pivotal question arises here: do the mysterious muses have an independent existence from their writers' stories?

When discussing the action of Martin burning the manuscript, stemming from his realization that once the text is finished, Claire will merely become a fictitious character, and no longer alive in his imagination, Brown takes this as another example of mise-en-abyme, and looks for structural resonances between the recursive structures of *The Book of Illusion*'s embedded narrative worlds. Therefore, he asserts that "Claire is a character created by Martin Frost, Alma becomes the imaginative creation of author-character, David Zimmer, and Zimmer is the creation of the Paul Auster whose name appears on the cover of the book" (127). What emerges from this logic is, in my reading, that the story of Martin Frost is an allegory of the process of storytelling itself, from the initial spark of inspiration until the

moment of finishing a work of art that leaves the artist with both of a sense of pleasure and loss. Just like in *The Book of Illusions* narrative voices frame one another, and there is always a possibility for another meta-narrator.

The same embedded structure of narrative layers can be observed in the film adaptation, in which spectators' reality and the fictitious world become intertwined by the constant overcrossings of each other's elements. Apart from the very obvious intermedial thematization of literature that appears in the movie (Martin Frost is a writer; and when he enters the house he inspects several books on the shelves, all great pieces of literature) we have many occasions of narrative mirroring and embedding at the same time. The film starts with an extra-diegetic element: we hear the voice-over narration of Paul Auster parallel with Martin Frost's wandering around the various parts of the house. A long tracking shot skims along the furniture in the living room, eventually slowing down to show some family photographs in which we can see scenes from the life of Paul Auster: we can see him together with his wife, Siri Hustvedt, with his son, Daniel, and his daughter, Sophie (see fig. 6). When Martin goes to the bedroom, and sits on the bed, testing the bounce of the mattress, the photographs on the wall show Paul Auster exactly in the same position, as if providing a smaller copy of Martin's body position in that moment (see fig. 7). Thus, to make use of, and further develop Brown's above mentioned statement: Claire becomes the imaginative creation of Martin, and Martin is narrated by a meta-narrator, to whom Paul Auster gives his voice, who is also the director and producer of the film (and, as shown by the photographs exists outside the confines of the narrative, that is, in the real world), but in his turn, becomes a static character in the film, supposedly representing the friend of Martin, who lends the country estate to the tired writer, and is visible only in the photographs.

Martin's mirroring the pictures of Auster on the wall can be interpreted as an allegorical pun of the cinematic text, and recalls the multilayered text of *The Book of Illusions* that is a fiction that contains another fiction, while pretending to be a reliable account of someone's life (Hector Mann). In the pictures Martin not only sees his creator—Paul Auster—transformed into a work of art (as becoming part of, and represented by, a photograph), but also symbolically can find his former self as a talented writer, and can have new perspectives in terms of building a new future (artistic identity) for himself (new book, new inspiration). Another example of the blending of reality and the film's fictitious world is when Martin later sits at the desk with a typewriter in front of him. We hear Paul Auster's voice-over: "It might not have been the newest equipment in the world. But it worked" (*The*

*Inner Life of Martin Frost*[82] 29), while we see a close-up on the sheet in the typewriter, and we can read simultaneously as Martin types: *It might not have been the newest equipment in the world. But it worked*. This action, having the function of an intermedial suture, recalls Paul Benjamin's writing from *Smoke*, however, the difference is that Paul's typewriting links two different media within one diegetic reality, while Martin's typewriting blurs the boundaries between diegetic and extradiegetic, between homomedial and heteromedial.

Then, in the film's opening sequence, the camera returns to the family photographs, and fixes on the picture of a young girl (in our actual world she is Auster's daughter, Sophie), as we listen to the last words of the opening monologue, saying that Martin's plan is to do nothing in the country, to live the life of a stone. This insertion of the photographic element is not only interesting because it foreshadows the actual role of Sophie Auster at the end of the film, playing the character of Anna James, but also because Anna's figure exposes the interaction of a hypermediated experience of intermediality and the illusion of reality in the film's fictitious world. By a hypermediated experience, I mean the bringing together of many media forms that interact with one another, so as the characters interact with one another, thus being able to construct their selves and discover their inner (artistic) values.

The relationship between the artist and his muse has a symbolic connotation in this sense, and is particularly crucial in understanding the media interconnectedness: one cannot operate without the other, and they constantly fuel each other with energy (I understand here the role of the muse as symbolizing any possible form of art). If Fortunato is unable to produce a work of art, his muse slowly regresses, and is no longer capable of defining herself as a muse. When Anna is robbed of her self, she is only able to say who she is metaphorically, with the help of two media: music and theatre.

Anna's origin is a mystery. Fortunato thinks she is his niece, and refuses to accept Martin's statement that she might be a spirit, a phantom being, a product of his imagination. By doing so, he dooms himself as an artist, and would never be able to grasp the essence of a work of art. He calls his young muse idiot, bird-brain, and shows her off like a trained pet dog. When he asks her to sing one of her songs to Martin, she does so, but it is clear that the message she tries to communicate with the words refers to her identity. Unfortunately, Fortunato does not understand it, and cannot see how lucky he is to have her. Anna sings:

[82] The quotation comes from the screenplay. Auster, Paul. *The Inner Life of Martin Frost.* Screenplay. London: Faber, 2007.

I'm the girl you can't see
I'm the girl who isn't me
I sail the seven seas of my heart
And where love ends is where I start. (*The Inner Life of Martin Frost* 96)

When she is asked to perform, all previous clumsiness disappears and she delivers an outstanding performance, as Portia from Act III, Scene 2 of *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare:

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am. Though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish
To wish myself better, yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself,
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account… (*The Inner Life of Martin Frost* 97)

Similarly to the Shakespearean character, Portia, Anna, at first sight, seems to be a prisoner, feeling herself absolutely bound to fulfill all the wishes of Fortunato, but she shows great potentials and is eventually able to become free. Hence the presence of the two media (music and theatre) through which Anna tries to indicate her position in the artist's life, and thus acquiring an identity of her own.

To sum up, several examples in which characters embody different media forms—both in *The Book of Illusions* and the movie adaptation of *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*—and the complex relationships and/or conflicts between them (doppelgänger mirroring in the case of Mann/Zimmer; artist and muse connection in the case of Martin/Claire, Fortunato/Anna) can be interpreted as narrative enactments of intermedial relations and/or media rivalries that eventually lead to a rather balanced interconnection. In this sense, for example, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, a romantic comedy, is relevant as it presents the relationship between artist and muse, reality and illusions that can be understood as a parable constructed around the issue of coming together of intermedial influences and the painful, yet pleasurable act of creating a work of art. What sutures the two media—the film, *The Inner*

*Life of Martin Frost*, and the source text, the filmscript in *The Book of Illusions*—is the end of the film adaptation. In the novel's text the story of Martin and Claire ends with Martin's realization regarding Claire's identity, and saving her. The film adaptation interweaves the two texts (the literary source and the cinematic product) through introducing other characters and narrative threads, as well as adding new elements, such as the happy ending.

Through the film adaptation, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, and *The Book of Illusions*, Auster's texts (both filmic and literary) are actually trying to come to terms with their own powers of remediation by narrativizing the techniques of cinema as inseparably linked to literature, and vice versa. They are allegories of narrative varying from intratextual framings such as embedded stories, to hereromedial framings, such as the inclusion of different media in one text.

Similarly to the main characters in *Smoke* (Paul and Auggie), whose motivations and acts set up the presence of various media forms, in *The Book of Illusions* Zimmer and Mann's narrative acts also propel media interconnectedness. If *Smoke* "borrowed" elements from the literary source text and from the medium of photography in order to create a specific immersion on the part of the spectators, *The Book of Illusions* appears to do the same, only conversely, with the help if cinematic elements. The literary text reproduces cinematic techniques (intermedial imitation) and foregrounds the filmic medium (intermedial thematization), thus generating intermedial sutures on various levels. Such intermedial references appear in *Smoke* and in *The Inner Life of Martin Frost* as well, through employing literary or "writerly" subject matters, and embedding verbal narrative devices.

If in *Smoke* one of the main questions was, what is an artist capable of doing in order to create art, and, indeed, Paul, Auggie, and Rashid were ready to do everything for it; in *The Book of Illusions* we witness a strangely reversed metaphoric rendering of the same question: Hector Mann prefers to keep his art hidden, and finally destroys every film he ever directed. In *Smoke* art is connected to life; intermedial elements also serve as means to celebrate life on a thematic level. In *The Book of Illusions* art is frequently connected to nihilism and death, yet, a certain survival through art occurs, especially in terms of intermediality: Mann's transmitting medium survives in Zimmer's receiving medium. This is as much as suggesting that one medium "dies," but becomes resurrected in the medial other. Zimmer's self-healing also occurs because he learns through Hector's life story that art provides a way of interaction with other human beings (and in this sense one can find a similarity with the central message of *Smoke*), and this helps him understand that traumas are parts of life that should be lived with.

All in all, both in *Smoke* and in *The Book of Illusions* the characters' actions and interactions thematize the mutually reflexive intermedial relationhips, while they also set up an intermedial reconstruction of the self. Various intermedial references, like the photographic montage sequence in *Smoke* or the script-like descriptions (imagetexts) in *The Book of Illusions*, function as interemedial suturing devices and ensure an intermedial dialogue in which each medium participates and implements its own specific elements.

## 3.

## Palimpsestuous Intermediality: *City of Glass* and *City of Glass: The Graphic Novel*

*You see, I am inventing a new language.*
Peter Stillman Sr (*The Graphic Novel* 69)

Auster's apparent interest in interconnecting various media forms and, therefore, his awareness of intermediality in his creations breed a complex artistic practice which often transcends the realms of his own works and extends into the projects of other artists. So far I have analyzed intermedial relations in Auster's own novels or films, yet, a great variety of artworks which are based on Auster's novels involve the contribution of different artists. Such collaborations, or, in other words, intermedial ventures, give birth to new works of art, especially adaptations, which, in spite of the fact that they are not entirely Auster's own works, can be still considered as undeniably significant parts of both his and the adaptor's oeuvre.

Auters's *City of Glass*, the first book of *The New York Trilogy*, appeared in 1985, and was adapted as a graphic novel by David Mazzucchelli and Paul Karasik in 1994. Using a highly conventional literary genre, detective fiction, in an unconventional way, Auster investigates the nature and meaning of language, a sense of disorientation in a seemingly postmodern city, and, most importantly, the question of identity. The main character, Daniel Quinn, a writer of detective novels under the pseudonym of William Wilson, creates, and is doubled with, his own fictional character, Max Work. One day, by accident, he receives a phone call meant for the private detective Paul Auster and decides to impersonate him, and focus on the case of Peter Stillman, a young man who feels threatened by his father recently released from prison. Quinn's preoccupation with the Stillman case ends with the disappearance of the two Stillmans (the old Stillman committing suicide, the young Peter Stillman leaving town). After this, Quinn isolates himself in an alley, reduces his food intake, then his need for sleep and shelter; he regresses into a homeless "no-body," who reaches the climax of his madness, and finally slowly disappears. Quinn, the writer of detective novels who becomes a detective, records every event of his investigation in a red notebook, which provides the basic source of information for the narrator of *City of Glass*. Therefore, what the reader of the book receives at first is the story of investigating an investigation. Such stories are categorized as being anti-detective stories, in which, according to Tamás Bényei, "solution does not exist; rather, it becomes uncertain, it multiplies in a disturbing way, while losing

significance, or moves to a level which is not visible and is not relevant for the classical detective story" (*Rejtélyes rend* 19, my translation).

By looking at Auster's text adapted as a graphic novel, the chapter will analyze predominantly the techniques with which the graphic novel (re)presents Auster's prevalent themes uniquely, through utilizing comics elements and graphic storytelling methods in an unconventional way. In my analysis of the graphic novel drawing on Hutcheon's interpretation of adaptations as palimpsests (6), I will attempt to identify manifestations of palimpsestuous intermediality at work, in the sense that a certain creative/destructive tension between text and image emerges in the comics narrative, and, correspondingly, the graphic novel completes the meaning of the source text, while becoming an independent work of art on its own.

In comics one can find a "dialectic" relationship between word and image such that the two equally become parts of one integral system of signification, in which words can take on some of the characteristics of images, and, conversely, images can take on some of the features of words. Scott McCloud in his groundbreaking work *Understanding Comics* interprets the graphic medium as one in which words and pictures intersect and treats comics as both a partnership of separate elements and a unique language. He claims that comics operates as "a language all its own" (17), and later adds that "words and pictures are like partners in a dance and each one takes turns leading" (156). This metaphor suggests an intermedial in-betweenness; although the "dance" partners move together, each preserves its individual character. Thereby, comics can be defined as both an integral medium (a single system of signification), and a hybrid, made up of the separate elements of verbal and visual media (just as films are).

While my previous chapters considered intermedial references as means of identity construction, motivated by the characters' interest in self-exploration in the fictitious worlds, in this chapter I will look at the ways in which the impossibility of creating a coherent narrative identity is represented in the graphic adaptation. The difficulties of adapting Auster's text to graphic form, as Art Spiegelman puts it, lie in the *City of Glass* being "a surprisingly nonvisual work at its core, a complex web of words and abstract ideas in playfully shifting narrative styles" (*Introduction* ii). Regarding the process of adaptation, Auster had only one criterion: "[t]he only thing I said to them was, 'You can take out as much as you want from the book, but don't add any other words,' so all the words in the adaptation come from the novel" (González, "Smoke and Illusions" 66).

In order to be able to discuss the ways in which one intermedial component interprets and/or imitates the elements of another medium I will avail myself to Wolf's concept of *plurimediality* and Rajewsky's similar notion of *media combination.* I argue that visual/literal intertextuality and/or intermediality are thematized in the graphic novel's text through character doublings and (narrative) identity shifts. I propose to identify the high/low interactions and mutual influences of the different media forms in the graphic novel (literature, art of painting, and cinema) while attending to the (de)construction of narrative identity represented by various visual motifs at the same time. Such visual motifs set up pictorial subnarratives that are inclusive of, and supplement major plot elements from Auster's original text, while also foregrounding the specific (usually cinematic) techniques with which Quinn's identity-(de)construction is represented. Furthermore, I will identify a certain *intermedial uncanniness* at work in *City of Glass: The Graphic Novel*, looking at the presence of the uncanny on two levels: first, at the ways in which it works between different media forms and furnishes the reader with a disturbing intermedial experience; and secondly, as it is thematized through various visual motifs in the graphic novel's text.

### *3.1. Media combinations and multiple intertexts*

*City of Glass: The Graphic Novel*[83] came into being as a result of the collaboration between Paul Auster and Art Spiegelman, the producer of the Neon Lit series. Neon Lit was a project that aimed to realize comic book versions of urban crime fictions. Initially Spiegelman's plan was to approach contemporary novelists to write scenarios for skilled artists in the field of comics. After nearly all of the writers turned down his proposal, Paul Auster came up with the idea to simply adapt his already published novella, *City of Glass*, in spite of the fact that several attempts to turn it into a cinematic version had failed. In one of his essays Auster talks about Spiegelman as a man of constant worries, but appreciates his talent at the same time:

> Spiegelman has continued to confound our expectations, consciously using his inventiveness as a destabilizing force, a weapon of surprise. He wants to keep us off balance, to catch us with our guard down, and to that end he approaches his subjects from numerous angles and with countless shadings of tone: mockery and whimsy, outrage and rebuke, even tenderness and laudatory affection. ("The Art of Worry" 460)

Spiegelman in his introduction to *The Graphic Novel* speaks about his doubts regarding the justification for creating the adaptation:

> I couldn't figure out why on Earth anyone should bother to adapt a book into... another book! To make the task more difficult, the goal here was not to create some dumbed-down "Classics Illustrated" versions, but visual "translations" actually worthy of adult attention. (ii)

He actually touches on the most controversial aspect of any adapted text here: how does the adapted text relate to its source material?

Obviously, every adaptation is a "repetition without replication" as Hutcheon claims (7); that is, a text that works in a very close connection and also separate from its prior material. Therefore, *The Graphic Novel* is not just a retelling of Auster's story and a mere

[83] I will use a short title for the in-text citations: *The Graphic Novel*, when referring to Karasik and Mazuchelli's adaptation; and *City of Glass*, when referring to Auster's original text, the first novella of *The New York Trilogy.*

illustration of it, but it is a new, independent text that re-uses the *original's* themes in unique ways.

*The Graphic Novel* as an adaptation also has to overcome the common objection regarding adaptations. They are always labeled as secondary works and judged by their fidelity to the source text—a critical approach that has been challenged today (Hutcheon 7)[84]—it also has to abandon the mainstream comics conventions to bring into focus something unusual, more precisely, to become a breakthrough in the graphic field too.

Even the term, "comics," seems to be problematic if one wants to capture a medium so peculiar in its combination of text and visual art. According to Spiegelman, "comics may no longer be the 'real name' for a narrative medium that intimately intertwines words and pictures but isn't necessarily comic in tone" (i). He does not like the term graphic novel either; he ironically notes "since 'graphics' were respectable and 'novels' were respectable (though that hadn't always been the case), surely 'graphic novels' must be doubly respectable!" (i). This is perhaps the reason why comics are still regarded as "low" art, part of popular culture, and cannot raise academic interest. Cara Williams also argues that "comics and graphic novels have been stigmatized because pictorial storytelling, a concept often linked to cave paintings, is seen as regressive and subliterate" (10).[85]

After its publication, Karasik and Mazuchelli's masterpiece was not worthy of critical attention either. The dominance of the traditional medium, printed literature, was still carved in stone.[86] Although *The Graphic Novel* was doubly marginalized (as an adaptation and as a comics), it managed to introduce "new directions in comics criticism" (Kuhlman 4).

Scott McCloud claims that comics included so many aspects from different media (e.g., written word, visual art, cinema and so on) that it became a new genre that requires critical examination (6). Thus, *The Graphic Novel* is a media combination per se, and utilizes tools both from literature and cinema among its methods of adaptation. These elements, belonging to the different media, are in a mutually reflexive relationship, bringing into focus a

[84] Discussing the fidelity principle Brian McFarlaine also claims that in terms of more modern approaches to adaptation, the original novel is always seen as a "resource" (10). Moreover, Mieke Bal—while analyzing the film adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—asserts: "the point of comparing novel and film, then, is not to make aesthetic assessments of 'faithfulness' to the source text. Rather, taking novel and film as equally embedded in the culture in which they function, the comparison can help to articulate what they each, through their own narratological make-up, have to say to their audiences. Their relationship is an intertextual as well as an interdiscursive one" (170).

[85] "Throughout Europe and Latin America, and in Canada and Japan, comic books and comic strips are regarded as serious artistic and cultural productions. In the United States, however, comics has traditionally been considered a lowbrow medium" (Varnum and Gibbons x).

[86] Robert Stam argues that literature will always have axiomatic superiority over any adaptation of it because of its seniority as an art form (qtd. in Hutcheon 4). Such a theory was considered used-up and was successfully challenged by Linda Hutcheon and Brian McFarlaine.

mirroring structure of motifs and characters, setting up the presence of multimodality. Such a close reading of multimedial elements in *The Graphic Novel* requires a short review of the critical apparatus with the help of which I intend to draw up an intermedial scheme of the interactions between the novel and the graphic novel. The most obvious manifestations of such intermedial interactions are plurimedial elements (cinematic techniques and iconic representations) that will be analyzed later in more detail.

In defining multimediality, Wolf maintains that multi- or plurimediality is a variant of intermediality that

> applies if two or more media with their typical or conventional signifiers are overtly present in a given work at least in one instance. In this form intermediality itself and the original components of the intermedial mixture are directly discernible on the surface of the work, that is on the level of signifiers, since they appear to belong to heterogeneous semiotic systems, although these components need not always be "quotable" separately. ("Intermediality Revisited" 22)

What emerges from this definition is that comic books, graphic novels, or illustrated novels can be interpreted as media combinations, using one medium's components that interpret and/or imitate the elements of the other. Unlike intermedial references, plurimedial components imply the inclusion of other media signifiers, and provide the illusion of media hybridity.[87] Different media components are present in their own specific way, and together they contribute to the signification of the entire work of art. As Rajewsky contends, "intermediality is a communicative-semiotic concept, based on the combination of at least two medial forms of articulation" (52). In the integration of these different forms of articulation media elements do not become dominant to one another. It is precisely this aspect that leads to the formation of new media genres, like comic strips, wherein "the genre's plurimedial foundation becomes its specificity" (Rajewsky 52). Both Wolf and Rajewsky include adaptations into the category of medial transpositions, that is "the transformation of a given media product (a text, a film etc.) or of its substratum into another medium" (Rajewsky 51). A new piece of art is born from the source text, and its formation "is based on a media-specific and obligatory intermedial transformation process" (Rajewsky 51). Although both Rajewsky

[87] Wolf asserts that such hybrids may result in the creation of a new syncretistic medium, such as the sound film or the opera ("Intermediality Revisited" 23).

and Wolf discuss medial transpositions and media combinations as two distinct manifestations of intermediality, relating points can exist between these subcategories in a sense that both forms can be combined. Subsequently, the intermedial quality may not only be located in the space between the two works, as Wolf states ("Intermediality Revisited" 20), but may also be found in the final product, which is a media combination so far. In this way, *The Graphic Novel* is a media combination, since it is a visual narrative that combines words and images, but it is also an adaptation, a transposition of the original literary text into a different medium. In the case of the graphic novel, all plurimedial components included in the comic genre also serve as major transpositional elements in the adaptation process. *The Graphic Novel* realizes the adaptation of Auster's original text through a combination of plurimedial components, among which the most notable are the intermedial references to cinema and iconic representations. A specific intermedial scheme shapes up, in which the above-mentioned components are both elements of a single medium and manifestations of intermedial interactions. The main difference between the adaptation techniques of *The Graphic Novel* and the previously analyzed works (*Smoke, The Book of Illusions*) lies precisely in the use of various plurimedial components: references to other media systems (cinema, written literature) do not only occur as suggestions or descriptions, but both artforms (visual and verbal) are physically present in the graphic novel's text.

One of the most obvious plurimedial components that work here as transpositional elements is the appearance of cinematic techniques. The medium of comics is perhaps closest to film. They both progress through static, frozen frames. Panels, these sequential units in comics, represent moments in time, following each other in a linear fashion. As McCloud maintains "comics panels fracture both time and space, offering a jagged staccato rhythm of unconnected moments" (67). It is closure that allows the readers to connect these moments, and "mentally construct a continuous, unified reality" (McCloud 67). In *The Graphic Novel* the most noticeable example of construing a comprehensive whole out of the linear sequence of different panels occurs in the case of young Peter Stillman's monologue. During Quinn's visit, the monologue performed by the young man is visually represented with the help of speech balloons that come out from the mouth of various figures and objects. This alludes to the voice that does not belong to any subject(ivity), but is completely material in a physical sense of the word. Different objects are zoomed in or out, and juxtaposed, while the reader has the task to find relations between them. A specific visual (nonnarrative) sequence is constructed that brings forth the chain of events in a chronological order.

Similarly to a cinematic frame, a panel always represents the present. McCloud argues that there is no future or past tense inherent in the images, but a sense of those states in the surrounding panels (104). As panels are structured in a linear sequence, time is also perceived to flow linearly. Will Eisner, however, clarifies that the panels in comic books "do not correspond exactly to cinematic frames. They are part of the creative process, rather than a result of the technology" (38). David Mazuchelli points out in the interview *Three Questions for David Mazuchelli* that he prefers to use "cinematic tendencies" in the graphic medium, meaning that "by 'cinematic' I'm referring to the way each panel creates a kind of *mise en scene*; and the way the sequence of panels—often without narration—evokes a linear progression of time" (Kartalopoulos, *Three Questions* 12). Indeed, one can notice a linear progression of time in the graphic novel's sequence of panels, yet, the "creative process," as Eisner calls it, lies here in the various techniques of creating a "sense of past tense," as McCloud had noted. One of these techniques is "blurring" or "shadowing." It appears all over the graphic novel, but most evidently in the opening panels. The "camera movement" scans Quinn's apartment and shows a blurry family picture on the wall, suggesting that Quinn is still living in the past, and that he has recently faced a traumatic event (his family died). The family photograph on the wall is one of the first instances of intermedial uncannines, not only because the photographic medium suddenly intrudes the graphic novel's sequence, but also because it presents a continually blurring image that suggests the uneasy state of mind of the protagonist, his clinging to the realm of the dead (because photography is another medium through which the dead are preserved in the memory of the living). In this sense, it evokes an old fear connected to the power of photography that a photo must be a sinister trick: "it fixes, that is, steals one layer after the other, until nothing remains of the specters and the photographed body" (Kittler 11).

To the list of cinematic similarities David Coughlan, in his analysis of *The Graphic Novel,* adds elements like the voice-over narration of the film, "which can be compared to narrative captions in comics, and both [media] contain sound effects" (835). However, the sound effect in *The Graphic Novel* is merely a visual representation of the telephone, which goes "ring ring ring" on the ninth page. Thereby, unsurprisingly, the first and most important incorporation of another medium in the graphic novel is the use of cinematic technique in creating a visual narrative, and also serving as a means of identity construction of the main character, Daniel Quinn.

In the opening scenes of the graphic novel, Quinn's identity confusion is presented through a series of cinematic devices: zooming in/out and panoramic view. Panels at the

bottom of the third page indicate a visual scanning of Quinn's New York apartment from the left to the right. From the bookcase and the blurry picture on the wall (showing a once happy family life), the view moves to the window, through which the city space is revealed: it is full of bricks, buildings, rooftops, and more windows. In the next sequence this panoramic movement stops, and gives ground to a zooming in on the large view of New York. This zooming in intensifies until the shapes and lines of the buildings loosen, become blurry, then gradually transform into a maze. The zooming in finds closure again and suddenly pulls back; the labyrinth becomes smaller, and finally it takes the oval shape of a fingerprint smudge (see fig. 8).

Both Martha Kuhlman (9) and Cara Williams (24-26) argue that this sequence is an equivalent of Auster's literary description referring to Quinn's state of mind, in the form of the so-called visual metaphor. Paul Karasik contends in the interview *Coffee with Paul Karasik* that he used Hitchcockian methods to establish the atmosphere: "it's the old fairy tale storyteller's trick of getting the audience situated" (Kartalopoulos, *Coffee* 24). He adds that the objects exposed are connected to Quinn and offer information about his emotional state: "There's the window, a fingerprint on the pane is a sign of identity, but it's not a fingerprint, it's a maze. There's a bookshelf containing books written by Quinn, but under a different identity. There's the ghost photo on the wall, a memory of a past identity that resurfaces and fades" (24).

The window, a transparent barrier, symbolically holds together Quinn's fractured self through the representation of his fingerprint's integrity, but, at the same time, it demonstrates that just as the fingerprint lies next to the city and yet is disconnected from it, so Quinn is isolated and suffers from loss and solitude.

The above discussed sequence is also an example of what McFarlaine calls a "selective interpretation" (7), that is, a cutting and compressing of the source text in order to produce a new work of art.[88] Julie Sanders considers adaptation as

> an act of re-vision in itself. It can parallel editorial practice in some respects, indulging in the exercise of trimming and pruning; yet it can also be an amplificatory procedure engaged in addition, accretion, and interpolation. Adaptation is frequently involved in offering commentary on a source text. (18)

[88] Hutcheon also states that the adapter's job is one of subtraction or contraction (19).

McFarlaine also provides a typology regarding the relationship of the *new text* to the *original*. Thus, adaptations can be transpositions, commentaries or analogies (10-11). Karasik and Mazuchelli's graphic version is clearly a commentary of the prior material, retaining the core of Auster's text, while significantly reinterpreting it.

Although many pages of Auster's novel were condensed, and some key sentences were eliminated, vital information regarding the main character was not lost, but substituted by visual motifs, so that the meaning of what they represent became amplified. There are two important sentences in Auster's narrative that are missing from the above-discussed panels' captions: "[Quinn was] lost, not only in the city, but within himself as well. […] The world was outside of him, around him, before him, and the speed with which it kept changing made it impossible for him to dwell on any one thing for very long" (*City of Glass* 4).

The visual motifs that fill the space of the missing words are the images of the city transforming into a labyrinth, then into the fingerprint. This can be interpreted as a visual analogy to the source text, unifying both its form and content. Such a condensation of information that would otherwise have to appear in the captions' verbal narrative, shapes up what I call "pictorial subnarratives," which enrich the graphic novel's narrative and operate on two levels: they are inclusive of and supplementing the source text, and seem to be a perfect means of intermedial reflexivity, that is, the graphic novel takes pleasure in its creative possibilities regarding the use of comics' and other media elements in unique ways. Also, the images and the captions' text are not necessarily connected: for example, the first pages *do provide* a lot of information about Quinn, like "more than anything else, what Quinn liked to do was walk" (*The Graphic Novel* 4), but in the meantime the drawings *show* Quinn's apartment full of static objects together with the view of the city through the window, and not Quinn walking on the streets, as the reader might expect. This tension between image and text is creative, but also disturbing: the reader must engage in a mental play, and *imagine* the character walking, while gradually forming an overall picture about Quinn's state of mind with the help of the above-analyzed visual motifs. The act of walking actually occurs without being shown. It is neither the words, nor the images that provide the meaning, but the reader's ability to link the concepts triggered by the visual metaphors.

Similar image-text oppositions are constantly encountered in the graphic novel, and this is what creates a subjective perception on the part of the reader. Hence the disorienting techniques through which the narrative communicates the character's interior emotions towards us. Obviously, this kind of interrelationship between word and image is responsible

for the appearance of intermedial uncanniness, and causes a certain uncertainty within the reader that can be disturbing. More particularly, it sets up a sense of unfamiliarity which appears at the very heart of the familiar, that is, things are not as they have come to appear through habit and familiarity regarding comics' conventions, that they may challenge all traditional interpretation on the part of the receiver. Word and image are not simultaneously grasped by the reader. The perception of the visual is much more immediate than that of the verbal. Thus, a gap precedes the cognition of the written word, and it is this gap in which Karasik and Mazuchelli find their field to play. The images and words in the window/fingerprint sequence seem to interdepend, but also conflict with each other, so that the reader is forced to seek relations between things that resist connection.

A similarly disturbing image/text tension occurs later, during Quinn and Virginia Stillman's telephone conversation (84-85). This sequence is the reversal of the initial fingerprint/labyrinth imagery: now, through the technique of zooming in, the fingerprint grows bigger, transforms into a labyrinth, then into a dead end with a locked door, while the speech balloons point towards the right side of the panels, suggesting the ongoing conversation between the two characters about how the old Stillman disappeared and Virginia is scared; a circumstance that develops a sense of failure in Quinn regarding his identity and work as a detective, mirrored by the fingerprint/labyrinth/locked door panel sequence. On many occasions, the reader has to construct the narrative that will draw together the disparate series of images and various intermedial imitations as well. For example, different elements from the audiovisual media are brought together (on page 105) in a scene, when Quinn, after losing not only the case, but also the track of the Stillmans, sits in a restaurant and tries to drink a coffee. Sound effects are referred to by the words "click," when he wants to write with his pen, "bzzt, bzzt, bzzt," when he tries to call someone, supposedly Virginia, and "tap, tap, tap," when he, instead of drinking, gently strikes the cup's mouth with his fingers. Such audio elements repeat the same elements from pages 100 and 102, as well as previous visual motifs, like the telephone and the pen. These, of course, are also visual and aural substitutions of the source text's descriptions regarding Quinn's state of mind. Certainly, intermedial uncanniness in *The Graphic Novel* is not merely a matter of mysterious, bizarre, and frightening multimedial occurances, as it appears to be in the case of image and text tensions, but it also involves a duplicity (both doubling and deception) within the framework of the familiar (that is, traditional elements of the comics medium). In *The Graphic Novel* intermedial uncanniness is realized through visual metaphors that draw out subtexts in Auster's fiction, because the same unsettling themes are repeated through visual symbols that echo one another.

Another intermedial reference in the source-text is an ekphrastic description; before visiting the Stillmans, Quinn walks the streets feeling estranged from the city, and he remembers a famous painting:

> He thought for a moment of Vermeer's Soldier and Young Girl Smiling, trying to remember the expression on the girl's face, the exact position of her hands around the cup, the red back of the faceless man. In his mind, he caught a glimpse of the blue map on the wall and the sunlight pouring through the window, so like the sunlight that surrounded him now. He was walking. (15)

I read this intense memory as Quinn's attempt to orient himself in the world: by visualizing every detail of the painting his self is anchored to "reality," he continually tries to remember who he actually is. Yet, it becomes more and more difficult for him to distinguish reality from illusions. This strong intermedial reference to the medium of painting does not seem to appear in the graphic novel's visual translation. On a closer inspection, however, one can find references to Vermeer's painting in the positioning of characters in various panels. The absence of the painting in the graphic novel is signaled by a completely empty speech balloon, the tail of which comes out of Quinn's head as he sits on the sofa in the Stilmans' living room. On the next pages, after Peter Stillman's monologue, Virginia Stillman and Quinn remain alone, and in their dialogue scene the positioning of their figures reminds the reader of the positioning of the soldier and the girl in Vermeer's painting (25, 30). Strangely, in this case the roles are reversed: Quinn is in the position of the girl, listening intently to Virginia (the soldier), who is in the immediate foreground in the panels, sometimes turning her back to the viewer (see fig. 9). Other fragments of Vermeer's painting are echoed in the presence of maps as well as Quinn holding a cup in various panels throughout the graphic novel (44, 101, 105). This thematization as well as imitation of Vermeer's painting foregrounds a media combination (bringing together the original painting, Auster's literary text, and the graphic novel's images) that grows out of palimpsestuous intermediality closely connected to intermedial uncanniness.

The concealed reference to Vermeer's painting by similarly composed images points to a struggle for assertion of media dominance: the graphic novel takes hold of both painting and literary text and forcibly inscribes these other media into its own texture. In this multiplication of media layers that challenge and overwrite each other the repressed medial Other (here Vermeer's painting) returns as something "familiar and old-established in the

mind" (Freud 10) and reveals its hidden significance with traumatic suddenness. In all of these case the references to other media forms included in the graphic novel serve a similar purpose to the functioning of doppelgänger characters: they shape up the reduplication and dissolution of identity. This relationship between the "painterly," the "literary," and the "photographic" continually folding into the "graphic" and vice versa is perhaps the graphic novel's most relevant characteristic. Intermedial overlayerings also reflect on the painful remembering of a past trauma in the case of Quinn, thus generating an uncheimlich experience (regarding both the characters and the intermedial incursions). For example, when Quinn arrives to the railway station to find the old Stillman, he sees a huge photograph that covers almost entirely the station's wall:

> Across the way, occupying the greater part of the station's east wall, was the Kodak display photograph, with its bright, unearthly colors. The scene that month showed a street in some New England fishing village, perhaps Nantucket. A beautiful spring light shone on the cobblestones, flowers of many colors stood in window boxes along the house fronts, and far down at the end of the street was the ocean, with its white waves and blue, blue water. Quinn remembered visiting Nantucket with his wife long ago, in her first month of pregnancy, when his son was no more than a tiny almond in her belly. He found it painful to think of that now, and he tried to suppress the pictures that were forming in his head. "Look at it through Auster's eyes," he said to himself, "and don't think of anything else." He turned his attention to the photograph again and was relieved to find his thoughts wandering to the subject of whales, to the expeditions that had set out from Nantucket in the last century, to Melville and the opening pages of Moby Dick. From there his mind drifted off to the accounts he had read of Melville's last years—the taciturn old man working in the New York customs house, with no readers, forgotten by everyone. Then, suddenly, with great clarity and precision, he saw Bartleby's window and the blank brick wall before him. (62-63)

This ekphrastic description in the source-text appears in the graphic novel as one central panel, showing Quinn as he stares at the giant canvas that resembles a huge screen displaying an idyllic image (47). In the source text Quinn manages to repress the traumatic memory through remembering other media forms, for example, evoking Melville's *Moby Dick*, but his

chain of thoughts finally stops in his clear and precise visualization of the scrivener's symbols of urban isolation: windows and brick walls. Such an intertextual reference to Melville's lonely character—Bartleby—will find its visual counterpart in the graphic novel's renderings of brick structures and windows, all connected to Quinn identity (de)construction. Both in the source-text and in the adaptation the Nantucket photography is a disturbing intermedial presence for Quinn: it is an unaltered imprint of a past moment, of an earlier reality that keeps haunting the protagonist. All of these intermedial intrusions (both in Quinn's memories and in the graphic novel's narrative) generate anxiety and a sense of "unsettledness" on the part of Quinn which brings about more and more disorientation.

Substitution of parts from the original text with visual motifs, and setting up an intermedial uncanniness also occur in the case of young Peter Stillman's monologue. In Auster's text, when Quinn meets his "client," Peter Stillman Jr, he notices that Stillman is "machine-like, fitful, alternating between slow and rapid gestures, rigid and yet expressive. [...] It was like watching a marionette trying to walk without strings" (17). His mind is retarded; his communication is fragmented, claiming that he is the only one who can understand his own language. A series of strict and regular panels provide the visual equivalent to the above quoted description. Stillman's face and body are drawn in a distorted way, all angles and knife-edged lines, as if he were an android or an animated robot.[89] Similarly to Auggie Wren's storytelling in *Smoke*, when Peter Stillman starts speaking, a cinematic technique is used, to ensure full emotional immersion on the reader: it is as if the camera were zooming in on his mouth, until it actually enters his mouth, which then appears to be the mouth of somebody else, or a mere hole. At the end of his monologue, the panels suddenly become entirely black and the size of the entire page, the gutters transform into the white bars of a locked prison door with Peter's speech balloon coming from the depth of the cell. Such large, full-page panels serve to break the rhythm and the reader is thus invited to slow down in the reading process. The next image shows the image of a broken puppet boy, symbolically reflecting both on Peter's inner feelings (traumatized and broken by his father), and on his physical movements that are machine-like and automatic (see fig. 10). In Auster's original text he actually speaks about himself like a puppet: "I know that I am still the puppet boy" (26).

[89] Peter Stillman's figure can be interpreted as a direct intertextual reference to Heinrich von Kelist's story about the marionettes: the description of the puppets shatters common concepts of aesthetics, as the puppeteer claims the artificial dolls are more perfect and graceful in their movements than human beings. Human clumsiness is due to the development of human consciousness, the loss of our place in the Garden of Eden (Kleist 211-16), a view that finds its strange reflection in old Stillman's "scientific" experiments regarding the building up of a new world.

A *locus desperatus* for comics' artists, a monologue is particularly difficult to translate into graphics, yet Karasik and Mazuchelli solved the task wonderfully. Karasik asserts that when they started to work on Peter's monologue "it was natural that the tail of the balloon should go down Peter's throat, as well. We're going to take a little journey into the heart of darkness inside of this guy. […] You realize we're going down into the depths of the soul of this damaged man" (Kartalopoulos, *Coffee* 40).

Throughout the panels presenting Peter talking, the speech balloons always come out of the mouth of different figures, objects, or out of various holes. For example, on the 16th and 17th pages a strange character appears, supposedly Charon, the boatman of the river Styx, who slowly arises from water. This mythological reference implies that now the reader will be taken to the other side, that is, where Peter's tormented soul lies. With the surreal image of Charon's rising, as Karasik adds, "the truth is rising to the surface" (Kartalopoulos, *Coffee* 52).

These visual metaphors foreground the strange metaphysical experience Quinn has during this conversation: he loses his sense of time; he cannot tell how long he has been there; nor can he tell whether it is daytime or night-time. Karasik says about this atmosphere that "it's quiet, slow, still, and very methodical as a counterpoint to the staccato mumbo-jumbo dialogue coming out of this creature's mouth" (Kartalopoulos, *Coffee* 56).

It is precisely the use of the speech balloon, a unique element of comics that marks the intersection between the verbal and the visual media, thus creating a hybrid medium. It is also the main element responsible for creative/destructive intermedial tension: it can separate and bring together text and image, but is itself also constituted of text, albeit implied, and image. The speech balloon functions as a graphic counterpart for a narrative comment explicitly stating a character's tone of voice. The tail of the balloon actually functions as a linking device between the visual and the verbal codes, and—pointing to a character—indicates who is speaking. In *The Graphic Novel* there are speech balloons which refer to "invisible" characters. For example, when Quinn later talks to Virginia Stillman (26), the image shows Virginia, while a speech balloon is pointing towards the previous panel, the direction in which the reader assumes Quinn is sitting. This sequence is reminiscent of the shot/reverse shot technique used in the cinematic medium. Moreover, the shape of the balloons varies in the case of each character in the graphic novel, therefore, on pages 60, 84-85 Quinn's oval, regular balloons suggest a steady tone of voice, while Virginia's balloons are irregular, with a tail shaped to resemble a bolt of lightning, suggesting anxiety in her voice.

Auster's narrative reveals that Peter Stillman's voice has a strange, modulated tone with much repetitiveness to it. A graphic transformation of this is to be found in the change of the tail of the speech balloon, as coming out of a phonograph: a means of repeating any record, but now is stuck in a groove. A peculiar unit in this sequence of images is the sketchy drawing of a cave painting. The view is zooming on it as it grows bigger and bigger. Karasik argues:

> It's a drawing that I got from a book of cave paintings from Lascaux, I wanted a primitive depiction of the very basic building blocks of language here, which is the pictogram, the cave drawing. And I searched for one that also looked to me like a large creature attacking or overpowering a human... (Kartalopoulos, *Coffee* 58)

I read this insertion of the pictogram (see fig. 11) as a highly self-reflexive tool, with which the graphic medium is reflecting on its own historical origins; and it also functions as a metagraphic ironic as well as iconic protest against the scholarly opinion that does not recognize comics as a legitimate medium.[90] Hence one of the novelties *The Graphic Novel* introduces: it abandons the standard drawing, the so-called "baseline-style," and employs "iconic representations" (Kartalopoulos, *Three Questions* 7). For example, when Virginia Stillman recounts her husband's childhood experiences, her storytelling is constructed of stylized warning signs used in traffic sign system (see fig. 12). I read these pictorial signs (prohibitive and warning of danger) as a specific narrative strategy: they serve as means of warning the reader that a shocking story will be told, that of child abuse. But the most complex iconic representation (that functions as one of the most important plurimedial components) appears in the case of another character: the old Peter Stillman.

Stillman Sr. is preoccupied with the nature of prelapsarian language and writes a book entitled *The Garden and the Tower: Early Visions of the New World*. His ideas are presented visually in a style that imitates medieval woodcut engravings and inserted reproductions of paintings: Albrecht Dürer's engraving "The Fall of Man (Adam and Eve)" from 1504 (see fig. 13), and Peter Bruegel the Elder's oil painting "The Tower of Babel" from 1563 (see fig. 14). Cinematic zooming is used in the sequence of these images, showing close-ups on specific

[90] Both Eisner and McCloud attempt to find a historical grounding for the graphic medium in the historical tradition of medieval inscriptions/engravings, Chinese and Japanese pictographs, Egyptian hieroglyphs, and early cave drawings (Eisner 13-15, 101; McCloud 9-23) that are obviously bearers of cultural meanings.

fragments of the paintings. I conceive of this intermedial combination also as a multiple intertext: first of all, it is a literary intertext, because Stillman's work is reusing and summarizing ideas from a fictional pamphlet written by Henry Dark (a character invented by Stillman), and utilizing ideas from Milton's *Paradise Lost*; and secondly, it is a visual intertext of the above-mentioned works of art. The painting and the woodcut engraving with their atmosphere of history and past cultural values serve as counterpoints to the modern urban world represented by maps of North America, and stylized pictures of the "Big Apple" or "I love NY" inscribed objects in the surrounding panels. These inserted reproductions and pictures also serve to remind readers of the kind of double-think they are engaged in, and to increase the level of disturbance in them. Through stumbling across the insertions of an artwork, a picture from our actual world on the pages of the graphic narrative, readers are reminded of their own relationship to the story being told. Thus, *The Graphic Novel*, which seems at first to be uncanny only in terms of intermedial occurences (dissonance between word and image) ends up being uncanny in terms of reader response as well; that is, it stimulates a disturbance caused by the aforementioned opposition between word and image.

All in all, through the cinematic technique of cross-cutting several visual texts are brought together into the same aesthetic experience, intersecting, and mutually reflecting on each other. As they constantly call attention to one another's status as cultural texts, they openly announce their overt relationship, and become what Robert Stam identifies as *hypertexts*. Stam, making use of Genette's term of *transtextuality*, claims that a *hypertext* always "transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends" (25) the *hypotext*. In this sense, not only the combined elements within the comics' (already mixed) medium (drawings and paintings' reproductions) work as hypertexts to one another, but also, in a broader sense, the graphic novel uses the source material, Auster's novel, as a hypotext, extending and amplifying it through its visual motifs, thus becoming the hypertext.[91]

Respectively, a media representation (art of painting) is itself represented in another medium, while referring to the specific features of each medium. Szczepanik in an essay discussing the concept of intermedial reflexivity maintains that

> as one media form takes over and transforms the structural components of another, the hidden or automatised structural components of both media

[91] Lehtonen observes that intermediality is developed from intertextuality and defines two types of intertextual relationships: horizontal and vertical, the former viewing explicit relationships between primary texts, thus inevitably containing intermedial dimensions, the latter prevails in between the primary text and other texts that explicitly refer to it (75-76).

> become defamiliarised. Thus, a new hybrid form emerges that reflects the structural features of each colliding media. (29)

In the case of Karasik and Mazuchelli's work, the mixed media forms reveal their own structures precisely through their interconnectedness. The inserted paintings, engravings, and warning signs alongside the drawings in the graphic novel, call the reader's attention to the medium of graphics, already a mixed medium that makes use of various methods of representation, and repeatedly reflects on its nature as a constructed piece of art.

Such an intermedial reflexivity is also foregrounded in *The Graphic Novel* by the intensive use of image repetition and multiple visual embeddings. Discussing the proliferation of images in general, McCloud analyzes Magritte's famous painting, on which the inscription points out that a painting of a pipe is not a pipe. McCloud further complicates this by claiming that what the reader sees is not only not a pipe, but not even a painting of a pipe: it is a printed copy of a drawing of a painting of a pipe (24-25). Karasik and Mazuchelli's graphic novel also starts with a sequence of images which actually deconstructs the signifying function of pictorial images: the telephone rings, and what the readers see is only a fragment of a telephone, but as the view zooms out, it turns out it is just an image of a telephone on a phonebook, and finally, the "real" phone is shown as resting on the phonebook, giving the impression that on further zooming the series of phones continues *ad infinitum*. Alex Shakar observes that this "prepares us for the […] inevitable collapse: in the end no representation can be trusted" (18).

In the intermingling of the different media modes of engagement and their narrative techniques there is always a consciousness of intermedial difference. Pictograms, engravings, and paintings do not serve as merely *memories* of past visual art forms for the comics' medium, but work as a certain *graphic unconsciousness*, and are inscribed into the visual text of the comics, while adding another layer of meaning to it. The relationship between these media elements is that of a diegetic heterotopia: their insertions into the graphic text function as tools of differentiating the narrative levels (the old Stillman's ideas are presented in the style of woodcut engravings, Peter Stillman's monologue is like a never-ending curve always snaking up from some tiny hole, Virginia's storytelling is full of danger warning signs).

What is more, the elements of the comics' medium openly suggest the togetherness of image and language, while the *trap* (as Foucault calls it) of these two distinct signifying systems, in fact, functions as an impossible, intermedial space. Discussing the calligrams Foucault speaks about a double paradox, claiming that such a double-faced text "never speaks

and represents the same moment. The very thing that is both seen and read is hushed in the vision, hidden in the reading" (*This is Not a Pipe* 25). Nevertheless, Karasik and Mazuchelli's graphic novel, precisely through subverting the conventions of the comics' genre[92] emphasizes the unique interweaving of the two media forms (verbal and visual). Using different visual styles for each embedded narrative and introducing visual motifs, as well as iconic representations, a unique plurimedial work of art is created, in which image and text do not illustrate/accompany each other, but exist in an in-between, heterotopic interface. Their elements are intertwined, bringing about a new graphic language open both towards the "inside" of the genre, that is, related to self-thematization and self-reflexivity, and towards the "outside," that is, in the direction of the oscillation of the media elements that come in contact within the medium of the comics.

Furthermore, the graphic novel presents one of the most important concerns of Auster's text, that of linguistic signification, through a very innovative technique. The relationship between signifier and the signified is the major subject of research for Stillman Sr. He analyzes prehistorical times, the origins of language, when there used to be a strong bond between words and the things they denoted, thus signifiers were inseparable from their signified. Such an Eden-like state, as Stillman's theory views it, was shattered by the fall of the first human couple. The graphic novel, in an intriguing illustration, presents this moment by showing Adam, who walks with his shadow following him everywhere. In this image, *shadow* is both the word and the thing it denotes. After Adam's fall (he is presented as literally falling down from a cliff), his shadow is standing separately for a moment before "it also falls from purity of meaning" (Williams 7). This break between word and meaning, as represented by an ingenious graphic pun, draws the reader's attention to the instability of all forms of representation (both verbal and visual). The graphic episode also thematizes the conflict between traditional literary criticism and comics' criticism. Kuhlman writes that McCloud (the father of comics' criticism) raises "the fusion of signifier and signified to the status of a desired ideal. Like Professor Stillman, he is nostalgic for an imaginary hieroglyphics radiant with meaning" (7).

As a conclusion, *The Graphic Novel* constitutes a manifesto for a new approach in comics' criticism. Its originality consists in the unique way of using the plurimedial components of the graphic medium as transpositional elements in the adaptation process. All

[92] See previous analysis on the fingerprint-window-identity visual motif, and in what follows the grid-like/window panel structure, as standing for decomposition and deconstruction (on the level of both form and content).

in all, visual motifs, such as the window/fingerprint/labyrinth, as well as inserted iconic representations exemplify a great number of things: condensation and substitution in the process of adaptation, intermedial uncanniness, intermedial reflexivity, and the identity (de)construction of the main character, Quinn.

### *3.2. (Narrative) Identities and Visual Motifs*

Both the original text and the graphic version are concerned with issues of authorship and identity. As it was discussed in the previous subchapter regarding the fingerprint/labyrinth visual motif, the protagonist, Daniel Quinn, lives in a self-imposed isolation and solitude as a result of his deep loss: his wife and son died five years ago. In his grief Quinn has withdrawn into the safety of his apartment, embracing a peaceful solitude, while becoming more and more disconnected and distanced from the outside world. At the beginning of the graphic novel, he is already looking through a symbolic barrier between society and himself, that is, through the transparent window. As the sense of order is lost with the death of his family, Quinn desperately tries to make order out of his own decentered world. To make up for his loss, he entirely dedicates himself to an artistic activity: he is writing stories of crime and mystery. Instead of making real social connections, he retreats into the world of words and reduces the outside world to simple sources of inspiration: "Whatever he knew about [crime], he had learned from books, films and newspapers..." (*City of Glass* 8). Bernd Herzogenrath argues that Quinn is "an intertextual subject" defined within various discourses—not only within the medium of literature, but in discourses like art/paintings, cinema/movies, music/opera, sports/baseball as well—and the media: his only contact with the outside world is limited to television, letters, and the telephone (28).

Strangely, these various media do not necessarily aid an intermedial reconstruction of the self (as it is the case of Paul Benjamin or David Zimmer), rather, they provide an intermedial framework in which Quinn becomes uncertain regarding his own sense of selfhood. He gradually distances himself from his identity as Daniel Quinn and adopts many other identities. An intertextual play begins with characters' names and double identities (ranging from biblical references to various literary works and figures, such as Don Quixote, William Wilson, and so on), and the novel's fictional world becomes populated with doppelgängers and versions of the same character.[93]

In *The Graphic Novel* the fragmentation of Quinn's self is represented right in the first panels, by showing nothing more than his foot as he walks across the room. It is only the

[93] Doubling appears also in the case of Auster introducing his *author self* into the narrative. When the creators of the graphic novel remediated this occurrence (Quinn visiting "Paul Auster," a scene in which the drawings of Auster and his wife and son are perfectly mirroring the real Auster and his family) a specific intermedial flânerie shaped up: various media forms (Auster's source-text and the graphic adaptation) as well as reality and fiction ovecrossed, stalked each other. While in the case of *Blue in the Face* intermedial flânerie brought about a mutually supportive, heterotopic connection, here it is bound to (opening up to) palimpsestuous intermediality and intermedial uncanniness, generating a sudden, uneasy feeling both for Quinn and for the readers.

bottom of the third page where his face finally appears, but it remains sketchy, almost two-dimensional, and bearing stylized features throughout the entire graphic novel (often having no mouth and his eyes are reduced to dots). This sketchiness sets up the effect of making the character such that the reader must fill in with details. It is precisely this sketchiness that renders both the character and the narrative *scriptible*, demanding an active role on the part of the reader. On the other hand, the technique of shading is used quite frequently throughout *The Graphic Novel*: when Quinn is waiting for old Stillman at the railway station, shading lines run across all characters standing in line, making their faces impossible to individuate, suggesting graphically their—and most importantly Quinn's—blending into the crowd, as well as Quinn's loss of identity.

Struggling to find his own identity, Quinn is, in fact, split into a triad of selves: he writes his detective fiction under the pseudonym of William Wilson,[94] but he would like to live his life as his own fictional character, Max Work, a "private eye narrator" (*City of Glass* 6). It is the identity of Wilson through which he maintains the minimal contact with society, and it is the persona of Work through which Quinn is able to express his emotions. As the fictional character of his stories becomes more and more real, so does Quinn begin to think and behave like Max Work, and finally "stopped thinking on himself as real. […] The more Quinn seemed to vanish, the more persistent Work's presence in that world became" (*City of Glass* 10).

In the hierarchy of these identities or triple selves "Wilson served as a kind of ventriloquist, Quinn himself was the dummy, and Work was the animated voice that gave purpose to the enterprise" (*City of Glass* 6). In an attempt to establish order in this triple layering of identities, Quinn is trying to make sense of himself with the help of puns and metaphors, but cannot escape the grip of language:

> Private eye. The term held a triple meaning for Quinn. Not only was it the letter "i," standing for "investigator", it was "I" in the upper case, the tiny life-bud buried in the body of the breathing self. At the same time, it was also the physical eye of the writer, the eye of the man who looks out from himself into the world and demands that the world reveal itself to him. (*City of Glass* 9-10)

[94] This intertextual reference to E. A. Poe's short story with the same title introduces the theme of the doppelgänger par excellence, thus, what we see here is a "postmodern mirror hall" of intertextual references from Auster's obvious reference to Poe, as the father of detective fiction, to the double-doppelgänger structure of the two stories (Poe's and Auster's).

Herzogenrath connects the triple meaning of the pun to the triad of the selves. Based on a Lacanian reading, he argues that "the 'private investigator' would be Quinn as Max Work. The 'physical eye of the writer' alludes to Quinn as William Wilson, and the 'I' refers to Quinn as himself, Quinn as Quinn" (29). Developing Herzogenrath's ideas further, I claim that an intermedial correlation is thematized in this sequence of the triad of the selves: writing and performing (through being the ventriloquist's dummy) are interrelated, hence there is a constant shift between Quinn's belonging to the verbal/written and the medium of performance.

In the graphic novel the motif of the doppelgänger, also suggesting intermedial coexistence, is presented in parallel panels: Quinn is shown side-by-side with his creation, Max Work, and they appear to be equally real. Work is truly presented as more animated, more active, compared to the lifeless, static, dummy-Quinn. Alex Shakar observes that

> there is a hierarchy of sketchiness at work in the renderings of characters. Quinn's face, for example, is less detailed than that of his own fictional creation, the detective Max Work. […] If Quinn's self pales before his Work, it pales still further when juxtaposed with the character Paul Auster, who possesses the liveliest face in the book.[95] (9)

Subsequently, in a panel showing Quinn mechanically writing on a typewriter, the figure of William Wilson grows behind him as a giant shadow, representing a controlling (narrative) force: the ventriloquist, or symbolically a father figure (see fig. 15). The emphasis on the "I" here immediately draws the reader's attention metanarratively to the identity problems of Quinn. On the top of the "I" that appears on the business card of Max Work, and is the first letter of the word "investigator," the image of an eye is drawn, which echoes the word pun from the source text, and creates a sort of eye-rhyme referral between image and text. This also brings into focus the fact that in both the novel's and the graphic novel's world all characters function as duplicates of each other, and their relationship can be of two kinds: hierarchical and mirroring. This, of course, also thematizes mutually reflexive intermedial relations.

[95] Of course, Paul Auster's face is the most detailed, since it takes after the "real" Paul Auster. I also interpret this inclusion of Paul Auster as a *cameo appearance*, a term used in film criticism, denoting the short appearance of the director/writer in a minor role, in his own work.

The first time Quinn steps out of his static and silent attitude occurs when he receives a telephone call (the irruption of the auditory medium), intended to the detective named "Paul Auster."[96] Quinn quickly decides to take this new role and answers: "Speaking... This is Auster speaking" (*City of Glass* 12). He immediately abandons the role of the dummy, and becomes a speaking-acting agent. However, as Brendan Martin states, this "decision to impersonate Auster is symptomatic of his loss of selfhood" (106).

While Quinn occupies the position of the dummy in the hierarchic structure of the Wilson-Quinn-Work triad, in what follows, he will encounter perfect doubles in the personae of the two Stillmans. This next triad of character doubles, Quinn/"Auster"—Peter Stillman—old Stillman, forms a mirroring structure, often based on father-son relations. The first instance of this mirroring-doubling occurs when Quinn meets the young Peter Stillman and is overwhelmed by the uncanny atmosphere of their interview. Quinn immediately notices the strong resemblance between the white-haired young man and his own dead son, whose name was also Peter. But this is not the only manifestation of the "return of the repressed." In the graphic novel Peter Stillman's doll-like figure mirrors Quinn's "dummy" existence exactly: they are both reduced to immobility, with mind and body out of control.[97] Similarly to Quinn, Peter Stillman is not able to determine who he is: "For now, I am still Peter Stillman. That is not my real name. I cannot say who I will be tomorrow" (*City of Glass* 26). Quinn later identifies with the young Peter Stillman, even doubling his speech style, his sentences: "The darkness. To think to myself in that room, screaming. [...] All I can say is this: listen to me. My name is Paul Auster. That is not my real name" (*City of Glass* 47-49).

The next manifestation of the doppelgänger appears when Quinn tries to locate Peter Stillman Sr. at the railway station. Suddenly, another similar man appears, and Quinn cannot decide between the two Stillmans; he cannot say whether it is an illusion or not. He is hesitating, likely to split himself into two distinct parts to follow both of them. Finally he

[96] I will refer to the character Paul Auster in quotation marks ("Paul Auster") or "author self," to distinguish him from Paul Auster, the author. Regarding the transformation of himself into a fictional character in the *City of Glass*, Auster claimed in an interview: "I think it stemmed from a desire to implicate myself in the machinery of the book. I don't mean my autobiographical self, I mean my author self, that mysterious other who lives inside me and puts my name on the covers of books. What I was hoping to do, in effect, was to take my name off the cover, and put it inside the story. I wanted to open up the process, to break down walls, to expose the plumbing. […] Paul Auster appears as a character in City of Glass, but in the end the reader learns that he is not the author. It's someone else, an anonymous narrator who comes in on the last page and walks off with Quinn's red notebook. So the Auster on the cover and the Auster in the story are not the same person. They're the same and yet not the same" (McCaffery and Gregory 14-16).

[97] According to Roberta Rubenstein, Peter Stillman, Jr. may represent Daniel Quinn's own "dark" childhood, including the universal phase of infant helplessness where one knows "nothing of time," and the "automaton" of unconsciously driven behaviour that precedes selfhood and the emergence of language (Rubenstein 89).

chooses "this shabby creature, so broken down and disconnected from his surroundings" (*City of Glass* 68) convinced that he must be the "mad Stillman" (*City of Glass* 68). He chooses him, because he resembles Quinn very much, representing the same isolation, the same madness. Quinn becomes obsessed with Stillman: he follows the old man, not because this is his duty, but because his interest in him deepens day by day. "He had lived Stillman's life, walked at his place, seen what he had seen" (*City of Glass* 80). The choice Quinn has to make also serves to symbolize the constant shifts between the multilayered narratives within Auster's text, that is, the process in which the readers can choose different narrative possibilities. Hazel Smith argues that "Quinn's position is analogous to the reader of the hypertext who must choose between two equally weighted alternatives" (39).

The more he follows the old Stillman the more he loses his selfhood. The visual equivalent of this in the graphic novel is the repetition of the city labyrinth/fingerprint motif, but this time with a slight variation: after the blurred lines are rearranged, they do not form a fingerprint again, but the maze ends in a locked door of what seems to be a prison cell, similar to that of the young Stillman's. This repetition with variation, however, does not only represent Quinn's identity confusion and the gradual disintegration of his self, but also the detective's inability to solve the mystery: apparently, he has to face a "dead end" both as far as the case and the narrative go.

The rhyming and mirroring of visual motifs is clearest in the representations of the old Stillman's wanderings, and Quinn following of him. Analyzing Auster's text, Brendan Martin claims that "Stillman is revealed to be a duplicate of Quinn, and the rhetoric that Stillman employs in his journey through New York City seems inspired by Quinn's own desire for escape and obliteration" (111). Indeed, Quinn attempts to find a pre-established plan behind Stillman's wanderings, being unable to realize that the old man's actions may simply lack any kind of order and logic. It is Quinn who tries to control and analyze Stillman's footsteps, much similarly to the old Stillman's early attempts to structure his own son's words.

In the graphic novel there are three representations suggesting the ways in which Quinn textualizes Stillman's walks, each mirroring the descriptions in the source text. At first, Quinn is shown linked to Stillman through a dotted line (tracing the old man's steps), which I read as a thematic adaptation of the act of linear following. As a private eye, he observes and copies the old man's itineraries and movements, while meticulously recording everything. Secondly, Quinn is presented as a single flâneur, and his image of walking is superimposed on a map of Manhattan, which I interpret as a representation of the very abstract notions of conceptual mapping, thinking, and walking. Finally, the reader sees Quinn's own maps drawn

in his notebook, which is a textual representation of the words on the page. Quinn finds out the meaning behind Stillman's walks: the old man performs a literal inscribing of a sentence into the grid of the city. As Quinn analyzes the letters, they spell out: OWEROFBAB. Thinking of Stillman's book, Quinn realizes that the entire sentence will read: THE TOWER OF BABEL. Coughlan observes that "rather than locating the words in the streets of the city, Karasik and Mazuchelli instead draw attention to their placement on the page (of Quinn's book, of Auster's book, and of their own comic book)" (841). Besides the fact that this is an obvious self-reflexive manifestation, this visual composition is also an intertextual reference to the source text, since in Auster's novel three of the nine letters appear in the same graphic form.

In the panels that follow, the pavement on which the walker steps is presented to collapse and the small pieces fall into the paper of the notebook, which contains the nine letters and Quinn's observations; a symbolic shift from one medium to another (from the visual/graphic representation back into the literary/written text). This focus on the form, rather than on the content, is also emphasized in Spiegelman's comment on the graphic novel, which is shaped "so that each cluster of panels took up proportionally about as much space as the corresponding paragraphs did in Paul [Auster's] prose original" (iii). This is also an example of the combination and mutual mirroring of the two media modes of representation (verbal and visual).

The trinity of these characters (Quinn and the two Stillmans) gave ground to very different critical interpretations. Quinn, through three memorable dialogues engages in a word play with the old Stillman and assumes different roles, hence entering the medium of performance. First he introduces himself as he really is: Daniel Quinn, then as Henry Dark, and finally as Peter Stillman Jr. Brendan Martin contends that "Quinn's authorial intention is evident in his interaction with Stillman" (112), but it is unclear what he understands by *authorial intention*, and how exactly Quinn exercises it over the old man. Herzogenrath analyzes Quinn's identity splits according to the Lacanian *mirror stage*, maintaining that the different characters represent the different sub-stages in Quinn's *mirror stage* (32-33). It has become, however, a critical commonplace to look at Quinn's identity development merely from a psychoanalytical point of view. Going against the interpretation of Alison Russel that considers *The New York Trilogy* a deconstructive anti-detective fiction, Pál Hegyi argues that Auster's novel is a meta-anti-detective[98] story (167), and provides a very thorough analysis of

[98] Madeleine Sorapure also arrives at this conclusion in her "The Detective and the Author: City of Glass" (72).

the three dialogues between Quinn and the old Stillman, considering them a metamorphosis of three stages in which Quinn gradually gets rid of his identity (202-08). In the first dialogue Stillman, with engaging in a game of associations regarding Quinn's name, disseminates him, and erases the memory of his previous identity (Hegyi 204). All forms of self-mirroring[99] appear in these dialogues (the motif of the doubles, father-son relations), as symbolic of the quest for identity. However, in the case of Quinn, this quest does not end with the regaining of his identity-integrity, but with the dissolving of it. In my understanding of Quinn's identity multiplication and (de)construction, I follow Hegyi's notions, when I look at the ways Quinn assumes different selves and finally loses himself in the process. Being part of two triads of selves, Quinn engages both in a father-son and mirroring relationship with his doubles, and it is the "Paul Auster," the author self, that connects the two triads of selves.

In the graphic novel the members of the second triad of the selves (the two Stillmans and Quinn) are powerfully linked through the visual motif of the puppet or automaton, and of the crying child's face. The graphic novel's entire narrative is intricately structured with the help of these recurring images, including the nine-paned window and the fingerprint. They serve as leitmotifs, refrains in the text, which propel interlocking and repeating movements that construe a vital aspect of the visual narrative's aesthetic structure.

At first, Quinn's resemblance to Peter Stillman is represented through transforming both of them into puppets (Peter like a broken marionette, Quinn as William Wilson's ventriloquist dummy). To this mirroring structure the image of the old Stillman is added. He is rendered as a wind-up toy man, walking the streets of New York endlessly (the repeated images appear at the right bottom of page 56 and 57). (See fig. 16). Coughlan observes that these rhyming panels can be read as visual similies, suggesting Stillman is like a mechanical man (846). Hence a reference to a literary figure of speech. Such mirroring images also serve as punctuation marks in the visual narrative, either as means of framing or providing continuity, stopping or directing the pace of reading.

In addition to the above-mentioned visual motifs, media combinations are brought into focus via the presence of black panels and the crying child's face. The repeatedly occurring completely black panels as elements that refer to the verbal and/or cinematic medium: they are the counterparts of the blank/white page in a book, or the black or blank screen in film. The presence of the black panels may refer to the medium of literary text, as the very first page of the graphic novel is entirely black and the text "It was a wrong number that started

[99] Hegyi distinguishes three forms of self-mirroring in Auster's oeuvre: characters can be mirror images to each other; or doubles/twins/doppelgängers; or fathers and sons to each other (207-08).

it...” is typed with white courier fonts. Williams contends that “the simple design of white font on the black background is a reversal from a conventional novel, which has black font on a white page” (44). This media combination already introduces the idea that nothing will go on as expected in this graphic novel. By utilizing white ink on a black paper, a deliberate, legible palimpsest is created, superimposing conflicting sentences as well as Quinn’s conflicting emotions on top of each other. The black and white inked images, however, integrate a cultural code regarding both form and content: film noir of the 40s and 50s, and traditional crime dramas, elements that serve to “prepare the reader for a complex mystery– relying on the cultural notion of good and evil represented as white and black” (Williams 44).

The black panels that appear occasionally inserted among the other panels function, in my view, as the image of the absence of image (see fig. 17). Gilles Deleuze, interpreting Noël Bruch’s similar ideas, claims that “‘the absence of image,’ the black screen or the white screen, have a decisive importance in contemporary cinema. [...] They no longer have a simple function of punctuation, as if they marked a change, but enter into a dialectical relation between the image and its absence, and assume a properly structural value” (200). Thus, as Deleuze argues, the interstice between two images is more important than mere association between them, and this *cut* in a sequence of images becomes an irrational one, neither belonging to one image nor to the other, but sets out to be valid for itself (200). In my view, the black panels not only disrupt the reader’s aesthetic perception, but are also inserted among the other panels as covering devices that conceal the ruptures caused by the media elements’ intrusion into each other’s spaces. In spite of the fact that the graphic narrative is occasionally interrupted, it paradoxically maintains the continuity of those *stories*, which *happen* in-between the frames/panels.

Sometimes, the black panels are not entirely black: captions are inserted at their bottom containing a text as for a normal panel, just the image is missing. These captions, similarly to the filmic subtitles, do not function as mere dividers between intercut frames, but become new extensions of those *irrational gaps* that signify the intersecting media borders. They disrupt the reader’s immersion in the visual narrative, precisely through embedding the medium of written text. The black panels become the sites for the readers’ imagination, common spaces, in which the different media elements can exist together. Thereby, they can be interpreted as heterotopias of pure (inter)mediality, that is a space, which needs to be filled in with images and/or words, setting up what Blanchot calls “the fullness of the void, something one cannot silence, occupying all of space” (qtd. in Foucault, *Thought From Outside* 152). The graphic novel gives a new dimension to this intermedial gap, because

pictures, words, pictograms have an equal value in the moment of filling in this in-between space. Most of these black panels are part of the diegesis and signify the disruptive presence of Quinn's memories or the alterations of his state of mind (10, 41, top of 45), while those black panels that are not accompanied by the written narrative function as concealing the irrational (intermedial) gaps (bottom of 45). Such black panels are no longer entirely black: they take various shapes, such as the form of a nine-paned window.

Moreover, the black panels can be interpreted as defamiliarized intermedial framings, to use Wolf's terminology; that is, a frame-breaking, in which the frame is understood as a tool of disruption regarding the traditional order and convention of narrative. Stunningly similar to René Magritte's painting, *Les Charmes du Paysage*, which, according to Wolf combines various frame-breaking strategies, for example, both displaced and recursive framings with self-reflexive functions ("Defamiliarized Initial Framings" 313-17), in my reading, the black panel here blurs the boundaries between framing and frame, and reinforcing the meta-textual aspect of the graphic novel as well. As Wolf notes, "a further means of defamiliarized framings is to multiply them so that the clear binary structure of framing vs. framed gets blurred through recursive embeddings" ("Defamiliarized Initial Framings" 317). Thus, the black panel, through its frequent recursivity, deploys an overtly self-reflexive function.

If the black panels function as representations of intermedial gaps, the crying child's face drawn in crayon serves as suturing these intermedial cuts (see fig. 18). The rudimentary drawing is repeated many times, and, as each recurring image in the graphic novel, it becomes more powerful, more amplified. Shakar attaches many interpretations to this image: "it will come to signify [Quinn's] dead child; Peter Stillman, his anger at Stillman Sr. [...] Quinn's own childhood, a generalized sense of lost innocence" (12). It appears first between two panels showing Quinn sleeping; perhaps this is the reason why Williams considers it can be linked to "the workings of Quinn's unconscious mind" (54). Previously, I also analyzed the sketchy face as an uncanny element, which signifies the "eternal return of the same" in the case of Quinn (Bökös 3), but its function in the graphic novel's narrative structure is far more complex. Its most crucial role is to suture the *intermedial breaks*. Zoltán Dragon in his alternative approach to adaptations speaks about the juxtaposition and interaction of different media which he calls the *intermedial dialogue*. He argues that there is an *intermedial break* between two (or more) media, that is, the intrusion of an intermedial space into a text, which is veiled over in order to secure the smooth operation of the different modes of representation (Dragon, "Adaptation as Intermedial" 188-89). In this sense, the crying child's face functions

as ensuring narrative continuity, while paradoxically, it also disrupts the narrative. It is an element that simply does not fit into the linearity of the visual narrative, always sticking out of it. Being invisible for the intradiegetic characters, it repeatedly surprises the reader. Stunningly, during its first appearance the caption reads as follows: "Everything becomes essence: the center of the book shifts, is everywhere…" (*The Graphic Novel* 7). This is one of the key sentences of Auster's original text that afforded grounds for many critical interpretations; it is masterfully adapted to a visual motif that also shifts the "center," but now that of the graphic medium: this image will become the central one, the bearer of meaning, appearing relentlessly throughout the graphic novel. Shakar observes: "If the center of the book is everywhere, so is this crude image, the repressed unconscious of graphical representation" (12). The above-mentioned line appears in the source text, and its unusual attachment to the crayon drawing fills the gap opened up by the interconnection of the different media, or more broadly speaking, between source text and its adaptation. It is precisely the overpresence of the crude face that posits it in the center of attention, uncannily reinforcing something that is hidden and/or not present in the source text. It fills a void then, inherent in the adapted text. Thus, it serves as a means of suturing, of concealing the intermedial gap, which in turn brings about the interconnectedness of the two media (visual and verbal). On the level of content, the crying face appears inserted in the midst of visual sequences regarding the relationship between the two Stillmans and Quinn's position in this second triad of selves; it can be read as a visual tool that creates links between the characters and identity triads (50, 52, 104, 119).

The narrative/intermedial shifts in the story are propelled by the various forms of interconnectedness among the triads of selves. It is precisely the identity of "Paul Auster," the author self that serves as a gateway towards other doublings and iterations of stories and characters. It is Virginia Stillman's story that determines Quinn to inhabit his "Work-identity" through the role of the private detective "Paul Auster." Therefore, the author self functions as a means of mobility and maneuvering between the triads of the selves, as well as between the various media: from the Wilson-Quinn-Work trinity to the Quinn-Peter Stillman Jr.-Peter Stillman Sr., that is, from the medium of literature to the medium of performance. After his discussion with Virginia, Quinn feels an unusual euphoria: "[h]e was warming up now. Something told him that he had captured the right tone, and a sudden sense of pleasure surged through him, as though he had just managed to cross some internal border within himself" (*City of Glass* 29).

As an immediate response to this new role Quinn reconnects with the medium of literature. He remembers works which deal with issues similar to the Stillman mystery. He inserts the case into a web of intertextual references—Herodotus, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Kaspar Hauser, etc. (*City of Glass* 40-41)—a reconnection that, according to Herzongenrath, "inevitably leads Quinn's thoughts back once more to his 'inner world' which he has been so hard trying to repress" (34). It is also Quinn's writing and act of investigation that determine a process in which the presence of intermedial elements becomes more than evident:

> [t]hrough Quinn, the process of creative writing emerges as culturally constructed and subjectively cast, intellectual and affective, analytical but irrational, self-generating and yet produced through particular frames of reference. The process also merges popular culture and high art: starting with the detective story genre and then moving outwards. (Smith 38)

Consequently, one of the most intriguing contributions of the graphic novel to Auster's original text is the presentation of a very unusual aspect of Quinn's character. The plasticity with which Quinn is depicted transforms him into a *performing* character (he is also referred to as the ventriloquist's dummy), who re-enacts the many narratives. He can take a variety of other selves, imitating gestures, speech, rhythms of the other characters. If Linda Hutcheon calls adaptations as "palimpsestuous works, haunted all the times by their adapted texts" (6), on a thematic level Daniel Quinn is the purest manifestation of the palimpsest, onto whom several other identities can be ascribed, while being haunted by his previous identities all the time. He is following, and trying to get to, the others, and has the ability to be all of them. Hence the thematization of the theatrical medium both in Auster's original text and in the graphic novel's visual world. However, Quinn's performance always remains on the level of mimicry. He can act and speak like his doubles, but can never truly become *them*, similarly to the relation between the different media: they can reflect on and mirror each other, but cannot *become the other*. These never completely fulfilled roles in the case of Quinn generate the gradual deconstruction of his identity, narrated in his notebook.

The intermedial (de)construction of Quinn's identity is also accentuated by the nine-panel design that transforms into the image of a window, or into a prison door (symbolic of intermedial framing as well). The merging of his two identities (Quinn and "Paul Auster") happens when he buys the red notebook and inscribes his former identity onto it (DQ for

Daniel Quinn), while he takes off his clothes, symbolically becoming a palimpsest, getting himself ready for accepting the new identity, that of "Paul Auster." The panels refer to this with the visual motif of the nine-paned grid-structured window. When Quinn is sitting at his desk writing into his notebook for the first time, the already written pages are spread somewhere around and above him. The nine-panel design of the entire page transforms into a window, and the reader can look through it and see Quinn from the exterior point of view (on page 37 in the graphic novel). (see fig. 19). Similarly to the doubling of the characters, this window image also recalls the cell door previously used in the case of Peter Stillman Jr., and, as Kuhlman points out, represents "Quinn's psychological imprisonment" (10). Moreover, this locked room may symbolize a specific "narrative pregnancy": the pages of the notebook appear in the first five windows, suggesting that Quinn is trapped in the "fifth month" of a nine-month interval, that is, before the birth of the artwork. The reader might wonder whether Quinn is able to finish (to give birth to) a work of art (his narrative), whether he is able to be reborn and abandon all of his constructed selves. Subsequently, what the nine-paned window structure in this case might also suggest is a certain intermedial birth giving, that is, verbal and visual media come together in one panel, contain each other, and give way to one another. The intermedial tension in this example lies in the high/low interactions between image and text. Text is embedded in a visual structure (the writing is in the fifth window), suggesting that the medium of written literature can create the visual medium of graphics, implicitly referring to the adaptation process of Auster's original text.

The nine panels per page structure, appearing to be the nine panes of the window glass or cell door, applies to the entire graphic novel, introducing another unusual technique of representation in the comics' genre (before Karasik and Mazuchelli's work very few comics used the three-by-three rendering of panels). According to Cara Williams,

> this structure calls attention to the narrative function of the image. In the same way savvy readers have come to recognize the distortions of a conventional narrator in a novel, the reflection of the panel structure in the windows of Quinn's apartment questions the objectivity of visual narrative. (48)

The shift in the panels' layout suggests the shift in narrative viewpoint. If, on page thirty-seven the reader has an exterior point of view on Quinn, in the previous panels exactly the opposite occurs: at the beginning (pages 6-7), during the first telephone conversation Quinn is shown in his apartment in front of the nine-paned window, an image repeated in the

first panel of the following page, in which Max Work appears next to Quinn, and answers the phone (pages 6-7). This, however, can be seen as an echoing of the panels' schema, symbolically interiorizing the narrative viewpoint. It "indicates a separation, a divider between the reader and the character […] It limits the visual range, confining the reader to a specific view of the window's object—in this case, Quinn and the narrative" (Williams 48).
The proliferation of the window-images serves to emphasize the proliferation of many narrative layers. On page eleven, in the central panel Quinn is represented again sitting at his desk, but this time he is looking through the window with his back turned to the reader, while the shadow of his head is imposed over the window. Williams observes that, in a broader sense, "the reader's head becomes a shadow imposed over the 'window' of the page, the window-like structure of the panels. It is oddly voyeuristic; it creates the sensation of a chain of windows through which a different character can be seen going on indefinitely" (48-50). Based on Williams's above-mentioned notions, I conceive of this structure as a means of framing, specific to the cinematic medium that represents the many embedded narratives within the graphic novel's text: Quinn's own writing in the notebook, the story of Henry Dark (his birth and life as Quinn learns from Stillman's book), and, last but not least, the young Peter Stillman's narrative. The nine-grid schema also represents the relationships between the fragmentary units and the whole, playing with the readers' conventional expectation to make a coherent whole out of the fragments. (Narrative) unity, however, is an illusion. All frames, all panels can fall apart at any moment.

Interpreting Robert Greer Cohn's ideas about the symbolic meaning of windows,[100] Patricia Allmer claims that the window can transform our actual reality into art, more precisely its frame is responsible for marking out "the 'here' and 'there,' the 'inside' and 'outside'" (125). Allmer argues:

> The frame marks the difference from, and the deferral of reality. It is a bar, creating spaces, creating breaks, and splits. The frame is the sign of the creation of the other (perhaps this is why Lacan sees the initial division between me and you in the mirror stage)—less so because of the mirror, but more so because the frame, which creates some kind of other space which is not mine any longer, which I cannot penetrate, which does not belong to my

[100] Cohn interprets, in fact, Stéphane Mallarmé's perspective regarding the window, that is, the window functions as a crystallizaton of reality into art, since the window is complex, polysemic sign, containing all the ambiguities of the French word *glace* as *verre* (*de fenêtre*, *de miroir* and as *eau gelée*) and bringing the dichotomies of transparency and reflection into play with each other (qtd. in Allmer 125).

> world and yet is in my world. The frame, in its ambivalence, in its production of this strange other space, belongs to the site of the uncanny, the neither here nor there, the both/and. The frame is an added space-between, creating a betweenness which is truly the territory of ghosts, of the closely knit relations between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. (125)

The image of the window, the frame structure corresponds to its meaning of being a structure for the intertwining of narratives and intermedial framing processes. The repeated reflection of the panels' layout in the window is also a self-reflexive tool, with which the graphic novel exposes its nature as a constructed artifice. It is also this nine-paned window/panel structure that symbolically holds together the narrative's (and Quinn's identity) integrity. Karasik argues that they used "this grid in all sorts of ways in the first half of the book to reinforce this rigid structure that Quinn has locked himself into. Bit by bit we're going to break down the grid in subtle ways. As his sanity leaves, the drawing itself will start going off-kilter" (qtd. in Kuhlman 10).

By the end, parallel with Quinn's mental disintegration, the panels fall apart into squares and spread across the page, which might represent the fall into an original, pure existence, that is, the language of pictograms. Accordingly, there is an uncanny relation between the motifs of the window and the act of writing, or more precisely the world of words. All along his investigation Quinn is looking for transparency, for a clear view; he wants to find unity and comprehension between words and objects. In this sense, he is mirroring the old Stillman's quest for the prelapsarian language, and when he loses both Stillmans out of sight, he even repeats the old Stillman's earlier experiment: he isolates himself in young Peter Stillman's apartment, and begins to write into the notebook, until he descends into a different "reality,"[101] into the nonplace of the heterotopia. Quinn feels that "his words had been severed from him, that now they were a part of the world at large, as real and specific as a stone, or a lake, or a flower. […] He wanted to go on writing about it, and it pained him to know that this would not be possible" (*City of Glass* 156).

Coughlan contends that it is possible that Quinn finds the prelapsarian tongue in the language of signs, and this is more obvious in the graphic novel (845). Indeed, the regular

[101] There are many critical interpretations for Quinn's final loss of touch with reality. Herzogenrath writes that Quinn "has finally entered the realm of the dream, the level of the free play of signifiers; [and] is about to dissolve into the anonymous 'murmur' of discourse" (68). Alison Russel claims that Quinn's final disappearance illustrates Derridean dissemination: "in *City of Glass* characters 'die' when their signifiers are omitted from the printed page" (75).

structure of the panels disappears at the end; they fall apart and float on the surface of the page, and finally, there is nothing left but darkness, represented by the blackness of the page. All frames disappear. Will Eisner asserts that the absence of the panel's outline is designated to convey unlimited space and contributes atmosphere to the narrative (47). The black pages, containing only the last, floating page of Quinn's notebook, also suggest the enormity of the emptiness against which he stands alone. The final image in the graphic novel presents only fragments of images: a puppet, a broken eggshell, the face of the crying child and so on, piled together with the burning notebook on the top, suggesting the final disintegration of Quinn's thoughts. What the original source text only hints at, the graphic version seems to fulfill: words turn into things, they materialize into objects, or, more precisely, into pictograms, the oldest and purest forms of human communication. Coughlan asks: "is the comics' page of panels, then, a window onto another world, visual narrative more transparent, more immediate, more true than the non-visual, and visual language the one, universal language?" (845). A good answer to this might be Karasik and Mazuchelli's choice to position the image of the old Stillman and his sentence "You see, I am inventing a new language," before the introduction, as a self-reflexive tool, with which they refer to the way of subverting comics conventions and inventing a new graphic language, which, paradoxically, is a return to the origins, to the world of pictograms.

The reference to the preverbal language is present both in the source text and in the graphic novel. Quinn buys the pen, with which he writes into the notebook, from a deaf-mute, and the pen has an inscription that urges the buyer to learn the language of signs. Virginia's narrative in the graphic novel is presented through pictograms, and Quinn draws the diagrams of Stillman's steps to which he attaches a visual meaning, before reading them as letters and finding out the full sentence. Thus, searching for coherence in the world that surrounds him is Quinn's major concern. When the two Stillmans disappear, he reaches another dead-end (both in the case and in his quest for selfhood), and his identity slowly dissolves. Russel maintains that the "quest for correspondence between signifier and the signified is inextricably linked to each protagonist's quest for origin and identity, for the self only exists insofar as language grants existence to it" (72). Quinn from a free agent becomes a passive observer. He sits in an alley, not eating, not communicating with other people, but becoming one with the city. His static, unresponsive attitude is presented in the graphic novel through the brick-wall imagery.

Throughout the graphic novel, views of the city always include massive brick buildings the end of which can hardly be seen. Brick structures are everywhere, suggesting confinement and isolation. Williams argues that this powerful imagery stands for representing

the construction of Quinn's identity (54). However, this image is not suggesting the holding together of the self, but rather, its disintegration. When Quinn isolates himself in that alley, he is visually presented as literally melting into the wall. Then, a following panel shows a tower of bricks with a human face, and the caption reads: "Quinn had always thought of himself as a man who liked to be alone" (*The Graphic Novel* 111). Brick walls and stones symbolize his rigid, unhappy state of mind, and also the loss that he experiences. Quinn, by merging into the brick wall, becomes a stone-man, an automaton, thereby the ultimate reflection of the Stillmans. The stone image appears also earlier in the graphic narrative in scenes, when Quinn is visiting young Peter Stillman, and sits in front of him similarly puppet-like and motionless, or when he visits "Paul Auster," a panel shows him as transformed into a piece of stone, while the balloons represent his failure of expressing himself, of speaking coherently (page 91). Obviously, bricks and language are closely associated. In the first dialogue between Quinn and Stillman, the old man states that "most people think of words as unmovable stones" to which Quinn answers "Stones can change. They can erode" (*The Graphic Novel* 68). This alludes to Stillman's theories: language as a fixed, organized system based on the relationship between signifier and signified needs to be altered, hence the necessity of inventing a new language. Walls and stones symbolize the language barrier, which needs to be broken. Moreover, the graphic novel's text continuously attempts to restore an intermedial equilibrium that is figured metaphorically by the motif of brick walls and stones, which are drawn as either destroyed or rebuilt throughout the narrative, with Quinn often finding himself trapped by them, or literally merged into them. Panels that show the fragmentation and integrity of brick structures are symbolic of the intermedial oscillations, of the tensions between text and image, both rupturing and restoring the intermedial coherence of the graphic narrative.

Quinn repeatedly aims for consistency, and the brick imagery might represent the autonomy of his identity at first. But his sense of self is tied to the fact that he repeats and doubles the gestures of the two Stillmans. In this sense, the brick wall can be interpreted as a literal petrification of Quinn's identity into a "structure" (by this I mean the triad of selves that he forms with the two Stillmans) that provides him fortification and coherence. When the pillars of this structure disappear, his integrity is broken and shattered with them. In a last attempt to maintain his integrity, he wants to return to his former, unstable self, but this is not possible any more; now he belongs to a nonplace, he has nowhere to go (his apartment is occupied by others). Therefore, he goes to Peter Stillman's empty apartment with his notebook, takes off his clothes, reduces his food intake until he stops eating at all. He loses all

touch with "reality," the connection between his self and the world is irreversibly broken. His self-imposed isolation occurs in a place that is symbolic for what Foucault calls a *crisis heterotopia*, a place of nowhere, "privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are [...] in a state of crisis" (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* 24). Quinn finds pleasure in the confined space, and has a sense of peace and safety: "he realized he was quite happy where he was. [...] He was inside now, and no matter what room he chose to camp in, the sky would remain hidden, inaccessible even at the farthest limit of sight" (*City of Glass* 152). In his refusal to eat and to live a "normal" life he becomes what Auster coins elsewhere *the hunger artist*.

The art of hunger in Auster's oeuvre refers to an existential art, an art "of need, of necessity, of desire," and the artist is a performer, who does not try to please anyone, and whose "performance cannot even be understood or appreciated" (Auster, *The Art of Hunger* 323-24). Therefore, Quinn's entering the medium of both performative and literary art foreshadows and resonates with Hector Mann's retreat into the world of films. Hector decides that he will never show his films to anyone, and Quinn becomes a hunger artist, writing only for himself.[102] The absurdity of Quinn's project reveals the extremes to which man can go to find his place in a disordered world in which language is also broken. Russell, interpreting Augustine's ideas claims that "an eternal order exists outside the realm of sense" (72). Therefore, the only possible solution is to retreat from a world in which it is impossible to find meaning. Quinn finally gives up his attempts to regain order and transparency, and gradually diminishes his selfhood, until he becomes a work of art "that is the direct expression of the effort to express itself" (Auster, *The Art of Hunger* 323). The Stillman-case served as "a bridge to another place in his life, and now that he had crossed it, its meaning had been lost. Quinn no longer had any interest in himself" (*City of Glass* 156). He continues to write into the notebook, but all of his writings contain mere observations, and not self-narratives, like in the case of his previous identities. Working as a private eye, trying to solve the case by noting his thoughts in the notebook, conveyed a sense of identity-stability for Quinn. His writing compulsion, his engagement with the verbal medium throughout his process of investigation can be interpreted as an attempt to prolong his existence in the text, thus prolonging the narrative. I understand writing into the notebook as the artist's attempt to escape from a loss or pain, trying to escape the meaninglessness of his condition. Without remembering and

[102] This is an intertextual reference to Franz Kafka's story "A Hunger Artist." The similarity is to be found both in the art of hunger, meaning the characters refuse to eat, and in the art of hunger, meaning that the characters are misunderstood artists, whose vision of artistic transcendence is ignored by the world.

documenting his existence, there would be no sense of identity, therefore his act of narration has the role to construct and/or preserve self-identity, self-sameness. He is writing to keep himself alive. The first thing Quinn writes into the notebook is this: "And then, most important of all: to remember who I am" (*City of Glass*, 49). Yet, the integrity of his self disappears, parallel with the defragmentation of his narrative.

Furthermore, narrative defragmentation and shifts in narrative levels are thematized and represented in the graphic novel through various visual motifs and balloon types. Different narrative voices are difficult to decipher in the source text, and each of them expresses unreliability. Narrative authorities always shift, storylines superimpose and give way to one another. Thereby, visual translation of each character's narrative is realized through various uses of speech balloons and font types. Coughlan observes that following what the original text suggests about character-habits, in the graphic novel old Stillman's voice is incorporated in angular-shaped balloons, and his dialogue begins with a large initial, while the young Peter Stillman's mechanic whispering is a mix of small capitals and lower case letters, in always snake-shaped balloons (838). Each narrative layer has a different visual style, from using pictograms or sketchy faces to more complex iconic representations. In an ingenious visual representation of how each character's voice "sounds," Karasik and Mazuchelli realize, in fact, a perfectly balanced intermedial interaction, thus determining the style of drawing to function as an additional layer of information. What occurs here is a specific intersection between verbal and visual media: narrative voices are drawn in such a way that they act as intermedial references to auditory media, that is, they "suggest" sound effects, hence the presence of an intermedial synesthesia.

In Auster's novel there are many narrative voices; it is at the end of the story that the reader learns that the entire story has been told by a nameless character narrator. "This narrator voice shows up about five times in the course of the [Auster's] book... a sentence here, a sentence there... […] It was like a red flag that there was another person looking over the shoulder of this action, the uber-Auster" (Kartalopoulos, *Coffee* 89-91). Except for this frame narrator the entire story is told from the perspective of a consistent third-person narration, into which the several substories are embedded. Regarding writing in the first person and writing in the third person, Auster notes that he attempts to bring them so close that they may possibly touch, even overlap: "in *City of Glass* you have a book written in the third person throughout, and then, right at the end, the narrator appears and announces himself in the first person—which colors the book in retrospect somehow, turning the whole story into a kind of oblique first-person narrative" (McCaffery and Gregory 18).

Subsequently, when Quinn writes into his notebook, the first person narrative is used to represent his own narrative identity. His observations appear as a handwritten text in the panels of the comic book. When the point of view shifts back to the third person narrator, the image of the typewriter appears, and the caption presents a text typed in courier font, as if emerging from the typewriter: "At this point the information has run out. I returned home from my trip to Africa in February. I called Auster, and he urged me to come over" (*The Graphic Novel* 136). Hence the thematization of a literary text in the graphic text.[103] Coughlan argues that the image of the typewriter and the typescript serve to "re-emphasize the textual nature of Quinn's identity" (850). The last sentence of the graphic novel is also the last handwritten sentence of Quinn's notebook. It appears to be surrounded by different images and the rest of the narrative that is typewritten. This visual arrangement is a representation for the different media combinations that emerge within the graphic novel, and focus on the questions regarding the authorship of the text.

To sum up, the doubling narrative layers, the shifting relations between different levels of the text bring about a certain interactive storytelling in which the reader can make choices between alternative narrative paths. The graphic novel presents character doublings and (narrative) identity shifts through visual metaphors and iconic images, propelling the presence and thematization of the different media forms within the graphic text. Thus, hypertextual relationships are construed both between the combined media elements in the graphic novel, and, in a broader sense, between the adaptation and its source text. As Spiegelman puts it, the visual adaptation of Auster's novel is "a strange doppelgänger of the original book" (*Introduction* iii).

The graphic novel's narrative is structured around visual metaphors (the crying child's face, the black panel, and so on) that serve as leitmotifs which suture the intermedial breaks, both disrupting and ensuring narrative continuity. It is precisely the intermedial gap in which different media forms can come together in a heterotopic space. The triads of characters' selves thematize intermedial references through their ways of connecting to each other (via literature or the art of performance). On the narrative level, shifting panel layouts, different font types and speech balloons suggest the shifting narrative viewpoints. I have argued that the graphic novel contains recurring motifs and narrative strategies which set up the thematizations of intermediality and/or visual/literal intertextuality. The graphic text both

[103] Herzogenrath argues that this "split between the *third-person narration* and the *first-person narrator* hints at a final split that takes place 'outside' the book: the split between 'Paul Auster' as the *writing self* or 'implied author,' the 'I' of the narrator, and the *being self* of the 'real' Paul Auster—the one on the cover of City of Glass" (69).

points inwards to itself (by bringing together media elements in a hypertextual space), and outwards to the process of adaptation (by using Auster's novel as its hypotext), completing and amplifying the meaning of the source text. Unlike the mere intermedial references (thematization and imitation) in *Smoke* and in *The Book of Illusions*, plurimedial components in *The Graphic Novel* are responsible for the integration of other media signifiers, and set up media hybridity, while serving as crucial transpositional elements in the adaptation process. If the always intruding filmic texts in *The Book of Illusions* (the scripts of Hector's films) acted as a *return* of visuality and recalled what Mitchell coins as "the fear of the image, the anxiety that the 'power of images' may finally destroy even their creators or manipulators" (15), in *The Graphic Novel* one can see a strange reversal of this idea: both verbal and visual techniques may generate an uncanny effect on the part of the reader, especially through the oppositions between image and text. Thereby, in *The Graphic Novel* both intermedial uncanniness and intermedial coexistence are ensured not only through intermedial references, but also via media combinations and transformations. While in *Smoke* and in *The Book of Illusions* one could detect only references to other media systems (that is, not materially present, but being described, suggested, referred to), *The Graphic Novel* benefits from more forms of art (visual and verbal) which are materially present in its text, and uses these as specific adaptation techniques. As opposed to Paul Benjamin, Auggie Wren, and David Zimmer, for whom intermedial occurences were means of identity construction, Daniel Quinn's (narrative) identity is continuously deconstructed both in the source text and in the adaptation. In *The Graphic Novel* visual motifs aid this process of fragmentation, while media combinations shape up an intermedial uncanniness that hooks the reader into the graphic narrative.

## 4.

## Intermedial Flânerie: *Leviathan* and *Double Game*

*Some people called her a photographer, others referred to her as a conceptualist, still others considered her as an artist, but none of these descriptions was accurate.*
(*Double Game* 60)

*Everything is connected to everything else, every story overlaps with every other story. (…) I'm the place where everything begins.*
(*Leviathan 57*)

Paul Auster's seventh novel, *Leviathan*, appeared in 1992, and, apart from the well-known themes—identity, chance, the moral responsibilities of the writer, "reality" versus illusions—it is concerned with the question: how can one endlessly empty and construe a self in and through various artforms? What is the motivation of the fictional characters of the novel to create works of art, or live their lives as art? If Auggie Wren in *Smoke* was able to cheat, lie, and submit to various sacrifices for the sake of art, I will argue that in the case of *Leviathan* or Sophie Calle's *Double Game*, the predominant motivation that lies behind artistic activity is an inherent sense of danger rooted in every action's unpredictability, a pleasure that lies in the continuous risk of revealing the true self publicly; moreover, in the ongoing hesitation between self-withdrawal and self-exposure, as well as between truth and deceit, reality and fiction. In an interview Auster claimed:

> What I am after, I suppose, is to write fiction as strange as the world I live in. When I talk about coincidence, I'm not referring to a desire to manipulate—mechanical plot devices, the urge to tie everything up, the happy endings in which everyone turns out to be related to everyone else—but the presence of the unpredictable, the powers of contingency. We brush up against these mysteries all the time. (McCaffery and Gregory 2)

Indeed, mysteries and strange coincidences proliferate in *Leviathan*. The narrator is Peter Aaron, who learns at the beginning of the novel that his friend, Benjamin Sachs, has blown himself up (perhaps accidentally) in the course of an assault on one of the copies of the Statue of Liberty. Aaron feels an obligation to start his own investigation and find answers to

his questions connected to Sachs. He also demands to tell the story of Sachs's properly—by reconstructing his life events piece by piece—before the agents of law enforcement can create their own version. From Aaron's memories we learn that Sachs served time in prison, because he opposed America's participation in the Vietnam War, and wrote a brilliant novel in there without seemingly much effort, while Aaron was a struggling novelist, always amazed by his friend's talent. After they meet, their lives become intertwined; however, when Sachs almost dies in a freakish accident (he falls from a fourth-floor fire escape), he begins to grow more and more distant from those around him. As a result of this sudden change in character, he leaves everyone behind (even his wife, Fanny, whom the narrator secretly loves) and moves to a cabin, where he starts to work on his novel entitled *Leviathan*. Soon he disappears and leaves the work unfinished. As Aaron tries to recreate all the pieces of Sachs's life (sometimes by living Sachs's life) into a coherent whole, he stumbles across different persons, including an artist, Maria Turner; her friend, Lillian; and the latter's husband, Reed.

The fictitious character of Maria is based on French conceptual artist Sophie Calle; this is why one can read on the copyright page of *Leviathan* the following statement: "The author extends special thanks to Sophie Calle for permission to mingle fact with fiction." Auster reuses eight artistic projects originally created by Calle and transcribes them into his novel as if they were the rituals created by the fictional character Maria Turner. Seven years later Sophie Calle publishes her book *Double Game* (1999), and, it is her turn to acknowledge Auster appreciatively: "The author extends special thanks to Paul Auster for permission to mingle fact with fiction" (n.p.). She must have been intrigued when Auster transformed her into a fictitious character in his book, thus she decided to invert the process and live her life according to the "rules" Auster imposed on Maria, while also proposing Auster a new collaboration. In the *Rules of the Game* she writes:

> In his 1992 novel Leviathan, Paul Auster thanks me for having authorized him to mingle fact with fiction. And indeed, on pages 60 to 67 of his book, he uses a number of episodes from my life to create a fictive character named Maria, who then leaves me to live out her own story. Intrigued by this double, I decided to turn Paul Auster's novel into a game and to make my own particular mixture of reality and fiction. (*Double Game* 1)

Calle's art is characterized by an apparent interest in the unseen, in the unknowable; and she exposes the results of her investigations as connected to the formation of the self. She

turns artistic conventions upside down by exposing things that should have remained secret. Whitney Chadwick contends:

> like the Surrealists before her, Calle embraces artlessness and purposelessness (or unconscious motivation) over the motivated plots of detective fiction. Operating, like the Surrealists, in the gap between art and life, she also operates between self and other, revealing that in the "disparate space between words and images, vision and knowledge is the camouflage of desire." (116)

Such thematic preoccupations are more than evident in *Double Game*. The book has three distinct parts: in the first one Calle proposes to live the life of Maria and the way it influenced the life of Sophie. This contains Calle's adaptations or remediations of two additional projects that Auster made up for Maria in *Leviathan*: *The Chromatic Diet* (1997) and *Days Under the Sign of B, C & W* (1998). The second part includes the "life of Sophie and how it influenced the life of Maria" (back cover), presenting Calle's previously elaborated eight projects that Auster borrowed in order to shape Maria: *The Wardrobe* (1998), *The Striptease* (1979), *To Follow* (1978-79), *Suite Vénitienne* (1980), *The Detective* (1981), *The Hotel* (1981), *The Address Book* (1983), and *The Birthday Ceremony* (1980-1993). The third part is entitled *Gotham Handbook*, a photographic and written report of Auster and Calle's collaboration; a particular example of intermedial in-betweenness and intermedial flânerie. *Gotham Handbook* is "one of the many ways of mingling fact and fiction, or how to become a character out of a novel" (back cover), as Calle notes. *Gotham Handbook* came into being at Calle's special request: she demanded Auster to create a fictive character whose actions she could play out. Instead, Auster sent her the handbook with instructions to follow ("Instructions for SC on How to Improve Life in New York [Because she asked…]").

What occurs in the case of these different texts (*Leviathan, Double Game*) is not only a continuous interaction between the fictitious characters investigating and generating multiple selves (Peter Aaron, for example, tries to decipher the various personae of Benjamin Sachs), but also a combination of the two authors' texts belonging to different media forms, thus setting up a continuous remediation.[104] Accordingly, even the novel's title, *Leviathan* can

[104] Names have scriptural as well as allegorical aspects. For example, both Peter and Aaron were priests. Benjamin is Auster's middle name. St. Paul was a Benjamite. Peter in Aramaic is Cephas bar Jona. Sachs (Ashkenazi "holy seed") assumes a prophetic role like Aaron's brother Moses. The triangulations of Moses/Aaron/Miriam prefigure the triangulation of Sachs/Aaron/Maria. The foundational theme of the rivalrous brothers proliferates throughout the Old Testament. Paul Auster wrote *Leviathan* during the manhunt for the

raise speculations. As Mark Osteen has pointed out, the word "leviathan" comes from the Hebrew "leviath," meaning "what is joined or tied together" (87), an aspect that curiously alludes to the thematic rendering of the interrelatedness of characters and media forms. Calle's and Auster's twisting narratives can be described as intermedial border crossings, or, in other words, intermedial metalepsis. Within these works narrative, as well as artistic identity are continuously constructed and deconstructed, rendered uncertain and unreliable, and each of the creators (Auster and Calle) claim authorship over the same work by endlessly remediating it. Therefore, a specific *intermedial flânerie* occurs, which I understand as an artistic attitude that appears in both media (novel and concept art) on the thematic level via different medial transgressions and intrusions, as well as (actual) life lived, framed, and influenced by artifice.

In addressing the concept of intermediality, the general critical approach (Rajewsky 44-50) sees it, in a boarder sense, as the term denoting the interaction of different media forms in the field of various disciplines. Through Auster and Calle's example I will demonstrate that a certain *metaintermediality* shapes up, one major component of it being the continuous oscillations between fact and fiction (itself a postmodern feature per se), an oscillation which takes place in an intermedial framework; or, it may be the in-betweenness of intermediality that generates its presence. Consequently, since a lot of intermedial actions are self-consciously constructed and manipulated (as in the case of Auster and Calle), intermediality can no longer be considered as a term denoting merely relationships between various artforms in an interdisciplinary context, but it grows into a concept denoting the interaction of culture-shaping functions. By culture-shaping functions I mean the very abilities to preserve, remediating previous artistic practices and making them accessible, while setting the playground for newer and newer artistic perceptions and interpretations, thereby giving ground to an ongoing self-interpretation. So, I will deal with the Calle/Auster/Calle interactions accordingly, regarding them as manifestations of a *metaintertextual metaintermediality*. The presence of Sophie Calle as Maria Turner in Auster's novel as well as Auster's subsequent intrusions in Calle's works serve as deliberate means of self-reflection and self-thematization, calling attention to their intermedial working mechanism intentionally, thus they become metaintertexts. By using intermedial elements self-consciously together with these metaintertexts, so that Calle and Auster (similarly to the fictitious characters of

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Unabomber—who was identified by his brother. His brother identified him by his writing style in the manifesto "Industrial Society and its Future" published by the FBI.

Zimmer and Hector Mann) enter into a narrative relationship in and through various media forms, a specific metaintertextual metaintermediality results, pointing to that collaboration.

*4.1. (Re)mediated Narratives and Metaintertextual Metaintermediality*

Auster and Calle's collaborations can be considered hypermediated (intermedial) art forms aiming to express a hypermediated artistic experience of our actual reality. In the gaps between Self and Other, Calle and Auster play with multiple personae and pseudonyms. In these collaborations several media are used and reconfigured in one another, such as: photography, concept art, and language, while bringing into focus a sense of immediacy through positioning the different media in contrast with actual reality, or through constructing and deconstructing one's personal self through these intermedial interconnections. Before analyzing them, especially the various forms of remediation, a brief review of the applied critical terminology is due.

Based on McLuhan's idea that "the 'content' of any medium is always another medium" (qtd. in Pethő, "Remediating the Real" 48), several theorists have examined the possibilities of medial communications as being able to undergo transformation and to be transcribed onto one another. Pethő asserts that "mediation is commonly understood as a process through which one is able to communicate not only *with the help of* different media, but one communicates *through* different media. Medium, as its denomination suggests, is supposed to stand 'in the middle,' to act a sort of mediator" ("Remediating the Real" 48, italics added). Furthermore, interpreting Jay David Bolter's and Richard Grusin's theories, Pethő highlights that, culturally speaking, one medium never operates in isolation, but always in a relationship of respect and rivalry with other media, and new media always repurpose and remediate older media ("Remediating the Real" 48). Remediation involves two concepts: *immediacy* (media transparency) and *hypermediacy* (multiplication of media or self-conscious over-signification). Bolter and Grusin contend that these concepts do not stand in opposition; rather, they are intertwined:

> Although each medium promises to reform its predecessors by offering a more immediate or authentic experience, the promise of reform inevitably leads us to become aware of the new medium as a medium. Thus, immediacy leads to hypermediacy. The process of remediation makes us aware that all media are at one level a "play of signs." (qtd. in Pethő, "Remediating the Real" 48)

In this line of thought Pethő mentions that in our daily life "hypermediacy can often be integrated into our sensations of the real" (48), thus mediation does not only refer to media

represented in other media, but also to the remediation of our actual reality, as Bolter and Grusin claim: "despite the fact that all media depend on other media in cycles of remediation, our culture still needs to acknowledge that all media remediates (sic!) the real" (Pethő, "Remediating the Real" 49). In Auster's *Leviathan* one can encounter a certain transparent immediacy, that is, the reader becomes absorbed in the medium of literature while various artforms are thematized in the novel through Maria's character and her projects. In this sense, the character of Maria functions as an intermedial suture between the arts of Auster and Calle. In Calle's *Double Game*, especially in her collaboration with Auster, hypermediated artistic occurrences dominate, that is, the reader or spectator becomes aware of the medium, and, therefore, a specific intermedial border-crossing takes place: the new medium places the old medium in a new context (as in the case of Calle remediating Maria's projects through reediting the passages from *Leviathan*, or through changing and acting out the projects). Remediations in Calle's and Auster's individual texts as well as in their collaborations occur in three different ways stemming from, and leading back to, one another: at first, it is the strongly intermedial aspect of Calle's original projects that Auster finds intriguing, thus incorporates them in *Leviathan*, so that the novel's text becomes abundant in intermedial imitations and thematizations; secondly, it is Calle who turns to Auster's "text" and remediates it in *Double Game*; and thirdly, it is their collaboration that gives birth to a specific hypermediacy in *Gotham Handbook*. Such interaction, however, inextricably leads to a balanced presence of various media in these artistic projects, so that intermedial interactions ultimately aim at the same thing: to surpass the restrictions of representation in order to heighten both the reader's and the artist's experience of actual reality. Subsequently, in the case of Auster and Calle one can see a threefold remediation: their individual artworks already remediate other artworks (through thematizations and imitations), in their collaborations they remediate each other's works, and, last but not least, they also remediate actual reality. As these intertextual references (bringing Calle into *Leviathan's* text as Maria Turner) and mutual intermedial incursions are predominantly self-conscious and self-reflexive, they can be interpreted as metaintertextually metaintermedial occurrences.

Sophie Calle's art, although difficult to define, is the best example of endless remediations, while constantly referring to our actual reality.[105] Her artwork mixes

[105] Born in 1953 Calle is best known as a photographer, often considered a conceptual artist. Janet Hand argues that the "undermining of the polarity between concept and expression is at the heart of Calle's practice. She gives more enthusiastic attention to the participatory perspective of observation (observation of rules) than did antecedent conceptual artists, and although the role of game-rules is significant in her work, so too is the emotional register of statements" (467).

performance, image, and text. Her artistic investigations are characterized by personal involvement and self-implication. As Janet Hand claims, "Calle lives her art like a film, lives her art as life and fabricates a life for her art" (477). Certain playfulness can be observed as a defining feature of her art in general, since she always establishes rules of the games (projects), and uses these rules as anchoring points of each work.

> Calle's work thus explores what art historians call a "post-studio" paradigm, in that she locates her projects outside the artist studio by constructing programmed but never fully controllable situations that will allow her to study the permeable dividing lines between public and private, subject and object, self and other, art and life. (Gratton 108)

Similarly to the ways Auster's characters live their lives, Calle, in her artistic games, often relies on the power of chance, which involves a sense of danger. Unlike Auster, Calle lives art out. Auster considers writing "as a vehicle to tell stories, imaginary stories that have never taken place in what we call the real world" ("I want to tell you a story" 1). This is exactly the opposite of Calle's art: she often prefers to turn actual things into fiction. In contrast with Calle, for whom fieldwork outside the artist studio provides the perfect terrain for artistic games, Auster's art is often tied to the solitary experience of "sitting alone in a room with a pen in your hand, hour after hour, day after day, year after year, struggling to put words on pieces of paper in order to give birth to what does not exist—except in your head" ("I want to tell you a story" 1).

Calle takes photographs (rarely asking the permission of her subjects), waits, relentlessly observes, asks questions, and also takes notes. She meticulously documents her fictionalized performances and experiences. She narrativizes photographic sequences through literary means. Despite the fact that these photographic series describe her intimate encounters with the subjects of her observation, the pictures are stunningly free of emotions. They function more like evidences in diaristic photo-textual works. Calle assembles the bits and pieces of the collected material into installations and books; and one common element in these is that they all juxtapose image and text, thereby referring to the materiality of the media of expression, perceived as parts of our palpable reality. Photographs, therefore, can be understood as direct imprints of actuality, and, by mixing them with other media elements, Calle manages to intertwine the real and the mediated, thus setting up a perception of the world as seemingly authentic and consisting of different mediations. Gratton observes about

Calle's projects that "whether exhibited or published, [they] are rarely fixed products. Their form and content will vary from one exhibition space to another, from one book format to another" (109). He further claims that Calle's works "take on the unstable form of autobiography that has come to be known as *autofiction*" (112). Accordingly, she is characterized by a constant oscillation between truth and deceit, fact and fiction. As it is formulated by her fictional doppelgänger, Maria Turner: "What he [Sachs] especially seemed to like was the combination of documentary and play, the objectification of inner states. He understood that all my pieces were stories, and even if they were true stories, they were also invented" (*Leviathan* 142-43). The passage is an example of mixing fact and fiction, since it describes Calle as an unreliable artist via Maria Turner. In the novel's world when Aaron first introduces Maria in his narrative, we get a picture of a provocative young woman who likes to make up different projects for herself and whose art cannot be put in any artistic categories:

> Maria was an artist, but the work she did had nothing to do with creating objects commonly defined as art. Some people called her a photographer, others referred to her as a conceptualist, still others considered her a writer, but none of these descriptions was accurate, and in the end I don't think she can be pigeonholed in any way. Her work was too nutty for that, too idiosyncratic, too personal to be thought of as belonging to any particular medium or discipline. (66-67)

This description resonates well with the characteristics of the actual Sophie Calle and her art. By looking at Calle's projects, the first thought that comes to one's mind is whether these can actually be considered artifices, and how are they related to art per se? Analysts of her works cannot formulate an interpretation without considering Calle's life and personality: the background of the works. Of course, Sophie Calle, the creator of the projects is not to be identified with "Sophie Calle," who narrates her experiences in first person, and she is not the performing character in these projects, who also happens to be called "Sophie Calle." However, it is not easy to provide a clear definition of the relationship between these three selves. As Khimasia asserts, it is "difficult to determine and define the edges of her roles as author and subject. Calle not only disrupts the binaries of author/subject and fact/fiction, but simultaneously explores the materiality and temporality of identity in such a way that the latter remains ambiguous" (7). Moreover, Calle also challenges the boundaries of actuality and fiction: the readers never know if her stories are coming from authentic acts, or were just

made up and staged by her. She constructs her works with so many details (giving the exact time, place, name) that no one can doubt the reliability of her narrative, but, as Khimasia points out, "on closer inspection there are gaps, elements that contradict each other. We inevitably detect something that allows the narrative to come unraveled, something that makes us doubt the 'truth' of her tales" (12). The continuous oscillation between fact and fiction is a result of a conscious play in and with the mediums of performance and photography that sets up and shapes the presence of metaintermediality in Calle's projects.

One of the projects that confuses the reader's perception of what is credible and what is not is *The Striptease*, a project of Calle that was incorporated in *Leviathan* as Maria's project entitled *The Naked Lady*, with slight changes, though. Calle insists on providing details at the beginning of her photo-report, thus attempting to create reliability. She recalls a childhood experience:

> I was six. I lived on a street named Rosa Bonheur with my grandparents. A daily ritual obliged me every evening to undress completely in the elevator on my way up to the sixth floor, where I would arrive without a stitch on. Then I would dash down the corridor at lightning speed, and as soon as I reached the apartment, jump into bed. Twenty years later, in 1979, I found myself repeating this ritual every night in public, on the stage of one of the strip joints that line the boulevard in Pigalle, wearing a blonde wig in case my grandparents, who lived in the neighbourhood, should happen to pass by. (*Double Game* 44-45)

The reader presumably accepts this story as something that truly happened, and the black-and-white photographs that were taken during her performance serve as evidence. Regarding the blonde wig, Khimasia notes, that "is often a stand-in or sign for Calle's *performative self.* It is connected to disguise and the hiding of self—it is both self and not self. The 'telling' of this incident also works like a *palimpsest* where the event is now informed and remembered through her more recent story of the striptease" (15). Subsequently, apart from the obvious remediation of a life event (remembered as a childhood memory) in another carefully constructed narrative, *The Striptease* combines two media forms: theatre and photography. What we see on the stage is a striptease dancer in a genuine theatrical situation: everything is pretense. As László Földényi claims: "Calle strips and dances, that is, she enacts a complete set of actions. But because she enacts these on the stage, her actions are real, while they are pretended at the same time: she not only strips and dances, but also acts out how she strips

and dances" (30). Paradoxically, it is a context in which she is extremely artificial: her eyes are lifeless, she does not look anywhere. Her facial expression is so blank that it resembles the sketchy face of Quinn from *City of Glass: The Graphic Novel*, a symbolic (intermedial) palimpsest onto which several identities can be ascribed.

There is a man next to the stage resting on his elbow. He is looking at her with a gaze full of desire; a perfectly natural posture and look in such a case. The fact that she does not look back at him, that she takes no notice of him generates a lot of tension, and, as Földényi observes, the woman's distant look unveils the man's gaze: it would be natural to look back at him, and her behavior would be directed by the voyeur's gaze. By ignoring him, she unveils his gaze as a male gaze. While she is playing, pretending on the stage, she is actually exposing herself to, and concealing herself from, the male gaze; and with this gesture she is also questioning the man's naturalness. The man behaves according to a primordial role: he imitates and repeats a pattern that is culturally determined. In a way his is also performing; he is an actor on the stage of civilization (31-32). (See fig. 20) Developing Földényi's ideas further, I interpret the presence of the attractive woman on the stage as being set up to inspire and receive the gaze of the surrounding men and of the photo-camera, yet this female nakedness is sterilized for the viewer of the photograph. The emotionless face, the distancing passivity towards the male spectators defetishizes the female body, and serves as a means of masking, but also liberating the female identity. It is precisely this conscious play in and with the medium of performance that renders the performer's body machinelike as well as less desirable. The defetishized body, together with the constructedness of her performative act, also brings into focus the medium's constructedness and self-reflexivity.

The scene functions as a strong bond between mutually reflexive media forms (photography, performance), while it brings together a triad of selves: Sophie Calle as the creator, narrator, and performer of the same story. Similarly to the triad of selves discussed in the case of Quinn in *City of Glass*, one can also see here a relationship between the ventriloquist and her dummy. In Calle's project the ventriloquist is the author who voices her *ventriloquised self* through the act of performance. Moreover, the scene also serves as a fine example of double remediation, since in *Leviathan* Maria, as Calle's prototype, is also portrayed as an object of male desire, and acts out a culturally predetermined role, thus enters the medium of performance. Aaron describes her:

> I liked the way she carried herself in her clothes, with a kind of prim, sensual grace, a reserve that would unmask itself in little flashes of erotic

> forgetfulness—letting her skirt drift up along her thighs as she crossed and uncrossed her legs, for example, or the way she touched my hand whenever I lit a cigarette for her. (65)

Calle's personal and bodily implication in this project clearly leaves an intermedial trace of her personal bodily experience in the pictures. Her own performing body becomes a mediator between the represented reality and the reality of the viewer (both of the photograph and of the performance). In *Leviathan* Maria Turner also uses her (performing) body as a mediator between herself and the "world." Just before her striptease, she wore shorts and T-shirt, because "she wanted to affirm the reality of her body, to make heads turn, to prove to herself that she still existed in the eyes of others" (71). In her act, "The Naked Lady," she was "consciously turning herself into an object, a nameless figure of desire" (72). As Scott Dimovitz argues, for Maria "roles are identity constructions in relation to the other and compensate for a feeling of loss and uncertainty of subjectivity in relation to the self" (450). Furthermore, Maria's "The Naked Lady" accentuates a double remediation: on the one hand, it reuses Calle's *The Striptease*, and, on the other hand, it remediates an experience from our actual reality (if we believe Calle's childhood experience truly happened).[106]

The last picture in the black-and-white sequence of *The Striptease* shows Calle crumpled on the floor, while her blonde wig is removed and her eyes are closed. (See fig. 21) The text near this picture reads:

> On January 8, 1981, as I was sitting in the only chair in my trailer, one of my colleagues, to whom I refused to give my seat, tried to poke my eyes out with her high heel and ended up kicking me in the head. I lost consciousness. During the fight she had, as the ultimate stage of stripping, torn off my blonde wig. This was to be my last performance in the profession. (*Double Game* 67)

[106] This, might be, in fact, a multiple remediation, if one also looks at the fiction of Siri Hustvedt. She is a figure who shows up in all of Paul Auster's projects after 1981. She, in turn, recontextualizes both Auster and Calle in her fiction, particularly *The Blindfold, The Enchantment of Lily Dahl, What I Loved. Along with Christina Ljungberg.* For example, Iris, the narrator of *The Blindfold*, appears as Peter Aaron's wife. Her performances prefigure Calle's "Striptease" and "The Naked Lady," and prefigure Maria Turner's installations in the novel *Leviathan.* Calle's projects of inferring a life by means of objects ("The Hotel") is mirrored by Iris in her temporary employment with "Mr. Morning." These writers' particularly provocative and productive triangulation may provide such an inspiring research that is, unfortunately, beyond the limits of the present work, but undoubtedly provides new perspectives and possibilities of expanding this subject.

She lies on the floor as if sleeping or being in a trance-like state. The wig that concealed her author self is now gone, thus she became transformed into what she is in actual life: Sophie Calle, and now she can easily be recognized. This shift from the mediated back into actuality is, perhaps, the first step towards self-fulfillment: from the childhood strips in the elevator (a trance-like situation) she finally arrives to an actual state of unconsciousness. Past and present meet each other in one photograph. Khimasia asserts:

> The photographic documentation both authenticates the performance while also denying it: could this have happened while someone was taking photographs? The removal of the wig leads us back to Sophie Calle, the author and narrator of these stories—through Sophie Calle the *performer* of these tales. […] Almost Brechtian in its presentation, *The Striptease* and the other projects in *Double Game* abruptly disturb the narrative from being completely absorbed, believed and/or convincing. (15)

Hence a specific hypermediacy at work in Calle's above-analyzed artistic project. It is this hypermediacy that functions as a connecting link between the various selves. Moreover, Calle's *Striptease* operates on two additional levels of remediation: on the one hand, it is generally remediating photography and theatre through positioning these media in a new context (as parts of a new artistic project later republished in *Double Game*); on the other hand, it is a particular work of art, a specific installation that makes reference to, and thus constitutes itself in relation to, photography and theatre.

In comparing Calle's projects to Maria's in *Leviathan*, one can observe a duplicity not only between the two different media (Auster's and Calle's works), but also on the level of characters in Auster's narrative. Sachs mirrors Maria in a sense that he is blatantly mingling "reality" and imagination (and similarly to Calle, he has a traumatic childhood experience at the Statue of Liberty, which he later reuses in order to ensure his fulfillment in the field of politics), heavily depends on his lies, and always generates confusion. Even if Aaron has a strong commitment to his friend and his art, he is always oscillating between trust and distrust. Sachs is introduced to the readers as a contradictory personality, "an emblem of the unknowable itself" (164). Aaron has to follow the dubious cues if he wants to solve what lies behind Sachs's mysterious identity. Aaron describes him as a sweet-tempered person, but also rigidly dogmatic in his thinking, sometimes producing terrifying outbursts of rage generally

directed at the world, earning the title of the troublemaker. No one was able to define him clearly:

> Sachs was too unpredictable for that, too large-spirited and cunning, too full of new ideas to stand in one place for very long. […] I don't claim to have more than a partial understanding of who he was. I want to tell the truth about him, to set down these memories as honestly as I can, but I can't dismiss the possibility that I'm wrong, that the truth is quite different from what I imagine it to be. (20-25)

This description is very similar to that of Maria. As Arthur Saltzman claims, "Sachs is consistently portrayed as an embodiment of the difficult balance between unpredictability and pattern that Aaron tries to emphasize in his record," thus his story "quickly evolves into a book-long delineation of the inevitability of storification" (164). If Maria attempts to construct her identity through the different media forms she is using in her art, and permanently lives in and through these art forms, Sachs and, respectively, Aaron mirror this endeavor by holding onto the verbal craft (and to performance in the case of Sachs). The mirroring relationship between members of this triad of selves, Aaron-Sachs-Maria, thematize the heterotopic connection between the media forms. Khimasia observes about this endless mirroring structure of the narratives that "Aaron is in the middle of writing a book about Sachs, who, in turn, was *also* in the middle of writing a book when he disappeared. The *mise-en-abyme* (as endless, 'illimitable') becomes a motif in both Calle's and Auster's work" (7). Aaron, for example, speaks for Sachs, actually doubles him by starting to live his life, and repeatedly refers to him as the source of all information (that is, the stories come from Sachs) to render his record authentic, while constantly being aware of the fact that the whole story can be a lie. Aaron's narrative is similarly unreliable, because he speaks for himself and for Sachs too. As Aaron begins to live Sachs's life and becomes more and more immersed in his secrets, he is always pondering what to reveal and what to hide throughout the novel. Even if he tells Sachs's story he repeatedly stops at crucial moments and withholds information. Aaron and Sachs become implied in each other's lives so much that they can be interpreted as doppelgängers. However, they cannot truly become the other. As Saltzman claims, "Aaron literally edits Sachs—he 'ghost writes' the Phantom of Liberty (Sachs mediagenic signature) into a palatable, if not confirmable, complex of intentions and activities" (165). By investigating and authenticating Sachs's life, Aaron attempts to reestablish his own

fragmented life. As Mark Osteen points out, "in telling Sachs's story he simultaneously reforges their connection and breaks it. In becoming Sachs's phantom, he finds his own liberty" (90).

What links Aaron and Sachs, and their complex web of acquaintances are the personal secrets they share. According to Osteen these secrets "in turn, generate second selves, 'artificial men,' phantoms who embody the liberty those covenants both permit and prevent" (87). The social network of their friends functions as a means through which they are reconnected over and over again. Maria's role is crucial in bringing them together (symbolically connecting media forms); she serves as a mediator between the two. Aaron and Sachs's exchange of identities is again mirrored by Maria and Lillian's trading of places that ends with Maria being beaten up by one of Lillian's customers, a man whom she tries to secretly photograph. Osteen points out that "the lesson—which also applies to Aaron's authorship of Sachs's life—is that nobody can fully possess or become another person, not even by appropriating the other in a work of art" (88).

Maria gets reconnected with Lillian—her childhood friend now earning her living as a prostitute—through a mysterious notebook she finds on the street. The address book is a symbolic mediator that allows Maria to spy on the lives of others and to become part of those lives. She begins an investigation, a new artistic project, in which she attempts to create the portrait of the anonymous owner of the notebook by asking the persons, friends, and relatives, whose names she finds on the pages. Osteen observes that "because the address book also leads Lillian to Reed Dimaggio, and thus indirectly connects Sachs to Lillian, it is a phantom version of Aaron's own book. Like Aaron's book, it both conceals its author and identifies him through social contacts" (88). For Maria the address book "had been transformed into a magical object, […] a storehouse of obscure passions and unarticulated desires" (*Leviathan* 74). The address book, however, stands for the dangers and unpredictable outcomes that might occur if someone intends to create a work of art. Maria, similarly to Calle, often relies on randomness in her artistic projects, and learns that the pursuit for art can vary from being merely in danger to ending up in a truly lethal situation.

Maria's aforementioned project in *Leviathan* is, in fact, the remediation of one of Calle's project's, entitled *The address book* (1983). Calle found an address book in Paris on the rue des Martyrs, and started to construct the profile of its owner by contacting, asking, and interviewing his friends and relatives listed in the book. She managed to contact two dozens from the 408 names. The written version of these interviews, together with the photos of the people, of important locales mentioned in their conversations, and of objects connected to the

man, was published in the *Libération* as an installment piece covering a month period. Her investigation lasted twenty-eight days, thus twenty-eight articles were published. Calle said: "right from the first description, I found myself liking him" (*Double Game* 191). She became so deeply implicated into Pierre D.'s life that she stopped living her own life and seeing her friends, in order to devote herself entirely to him. "I could almost say that I knew him well. I had left my home to move into a more anonymous place so I could immerse myself more radically in his life and habits" (*Double Game* 192). When the man returned to Paris and recognized himself in the articles, became angry and asked for the right to reply. He was provided half a page in the same newspaper, so he expressed his anger, not at his friends, but at Calle for her invasion of his privacy.

Paradoxically, the more information we have about Pierre D. and the closer we feel him to us, the more distant he grows. The most important aspect in the reconstruction of his personality is that he is absent. All media forms are reused in one work in order to generate his profile; *Double Game* reproduces the images of the newspapers, the notebook, the photographs, but neither Calle nor the readers can get any closer to the subject of the observation. His physical absence grows into a profound sense of lack, and brings about frustration and sadness in the observer.

The first photograph that appears in Calle's photographic sequence shows two statues, presumably representing a man and a woman. (See fig. 22) The woman bends her head on the man's shoulder; her gentle facial expression is clearly visible, her eyes are closed. The man's face however is cut out; only a black hole is visible in its place. This symbolizes the presence of absence, while the accompanying text reads: "I'm going to know him" (*Double Game* 191). I also interpret the black hole in the photograph as an intermedial suturing device that calls attention to, but also veils, the gaps caused by one medium's intrusion into the other. Calle interlaces her text with an incessant treatment of mainly visual media. This trick photograph[107] cannot only be interpreted as the medium's self-reflexive tool, but also as a metaphor, or starting point, for intermedial reflection, since it thematizes the art of representation as such. Moreover, the people interviewed reacted consciously to her questions and to her camera, thus what she recorded was both the process of photographic representation (the "reality" of the medium) and freezing moments from the always changing actual reality. Actual reality and representation are constantly juxtaposed, mixed, and

[107] A particularly interesting connection can be observed here regarding Auster's life. His semi-autobiographical writing, *The Invention of Solitude*, starts with presenting a family picture from which the figure of the father had been erased, thus generating another visual symbol for the presence of the absence, while referring to the apparent nature of photography as constructed artifice.

connected to one another. The very fact that Calle photographs the address book on the street and renders a detailed description to it regarding its physical characteristics[108] functions as a way through which actual reality frames the object and, therefore, brings about a sense of authenticity. But what does Calle learn about this man?

What we find of Pierre D., is the portrait of a man, who is meticulously organized, takes care of his words and gestures, an intellectual who does not show off, consequently is lonely and mysterious: "Someone who would be capable of disappearing without trace" (*Double Game* 191). Through Calle's writing and photos he becomes fictionalized, almost reaching the proportions of a mythic hero. Földényi observes that "to reconstruct an absent personality means to create him. […] The result is a human face, about which, on the one hand, we know a lot more than himself, on the other hand, we do not know him at all; it is only his absence that can help us form a picture" (72). What we encounter here, is a ghost-portrait, a leviathan that cannot reveal the true self, and all the clues lead to the absence of clues. This repetitive pattern recalls the Biblical interpretation of the leviathan, the sea-serpent; an image of the monster that keeps coming back, suggesting a cycle of quick reappearance and destruction. I conceive of this powerful image of the leviathan as a symbolic means of intermedial bordercrossing (implying intermedial "deconstruction" and "reconstruction," or, in other words, remediation) in Auster's novel and predominantly in his collaboration with Calle, thematizing a continuous metaintermedial play with various artforms.

However, anything we learn about Pierre D. is far from being important. *The address book* is not about him, even if it seems to be so. By attempting to reconstruct the identity of an unknown person, Calle, in fact, tries to access her own self. According to Földényi she is the real protagonist of this story (73). The entire investigation serves to put her in the center of attention, to generate her own self-portrait. She continuously deconstructs and reconstructs her identity by experiencing new (artistic) situations that are not part of her. Not only this project, but also the others are characterized by a threefold process: a circular movement from self-knowledge, towards self-creation, and ultimately leading to the loss of the self. Földényi argues that only through experiencing the identity of the other does it become possible for her to construct her true self (74). It is as much as suggesting that she would like to drain energy from the other, without knowing what the nature of that energy is. It is a real vampiric situation—as Földényi contends—when the only precondition for survival is the intimate

[108] "In this thick, faded hardback notebook with torn red binding and a black spine, measuring 15 by 12 centimeters, there were 408 names" (*Double Game* 189).

coexistence with the other, while keeping the other as distant as possible (24). This strategy is perhaps best visible in another project of Calle entitled *The Hotel* (1981):

> On Monday, February 16, 1981, I was hired as a temporary chambermaid for three weeks in a Venetian hotel. I was assigned twelve bedrooms on the fourth floor. In the course of my cleaning duties, I examined the personal belongings of the hotel guests and observed through details lives which remained unknown to me. On Friday, March 6, the job came to an end. (*Double Game* 140-41)

What Calle purports with this action is precisely an art of collection driven by the fascination of blending the medium of photography and actual life, that is, collecting slices of others' lives while they are absent, and doing it through photographing their most intimate objects. What results is a series of texts and images that could generate a wide range of associations and stories. According to Michael Sheringham, the black-and-white photographs with the entries referring to each occupant allude to

> the discourse of photographic reportage, and indeed in their use of strong contrast they resemble the scene-of-the-crime shots. […] Their main effect is to isolate the object, and the photographs are presented in groups of three or six so that the enumeration and exhibition of the items […] are the extension of an act of selection and classification. (417)

Gathering others' life stories stems from the motivation to construct an alternative life, an independent identity. Her photo collection can encode a personal narrative not only of the guests observed, but also of herself. In this sense, as Sheringham argues, Calle "registers her identification, or lack of it, with tastes in clothes, books, and accoutrements. […] Indeed, she opens suitcases, empties bags of dirty laundry onto the bed, roots around in cupboards and drawers, and inspects bed sheets" (418). She spies on the guests; moreover, she actively intervenes in their lives by using their things: eats the leftover desserts, drinks the half finished Coke, uses their make-up and perfume, and reads their letters. Obviously, she documents what they do and who they are, more precisely speculating on what they might do in an endless variety of ways. She is not interested in personal histories, rather in something less graspable, but indispensable from life. According to Sheringham,

> Calle's personal reaction to the absent occupants is to underline the uncanny sense of transgressing the boundary between the private and the public. […] Such familiarity actually underlines distance; yet in another sense it places observer and observed in a communal space, as participants in everyday actions located at some kind of remove from settled, classifiable, and fixed identities. (418)

For such a project the hotel seems to be the perfect location. It is a neutral space, a nowhere, allowing people to live their lives in a completely different way. A heterotopia without geographical markers alludes to a nonplace where people can retreat in a crisis situation (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" 25). Hotel guests can settle down while being aware of the fact that it is a transitory state; that they belong to nowhere. According to Földényi, "in a hotel man can set himself free from reality, thus experiencing a new level of reality: that of irresponsibility" (49). However, it could be argued that the feeling of belonging to nowhere, the sense of a "nonplace" free from social constraint or responsibility is an illusion for which one pays rent. Hotel guests have entered the domain owned by a rentier. It is precisely the constant shifts between distance and proximity that generate the tension in this project, and make it possible to render public whatever is private. It is the nonplace between the lack of people and the actual evidence of their presence where Calle finds herself at home.

Calle's actions pursue a relentless incursion into the guests' private spaces that are made homogenous with the private space of the artist herself. The project-diary with the photo sequences and the accompanying texts is also about life in general and about the way the artist can record it, while also telling a self-narrative. Hand points out:

> Calle's practice is directly attentive to how located social rituals and their conditions are significant to the making of an artwork and how they can be transformed, reframed, shown to be staged or re-employed effectively, rather than to where and why things are already located as they are in any ethnographical way. [...] Calle undermines the rhetorics that bind the document to the dematerialization of the art object (understood in terms of commodity fetishism), she also recontextualizes the documentary photograph as an art object. (471-72)

Such recontextualization is the defining characteristic of remediational practices. In *The Hotel* verbal and visual media are brought together in such a way that they set up the presence of a plurimedial work of art through the combination of different media that are each present in their own materiality, while the project reuses these media in a new artistic context, under the form of a project-diary.

In the world of *Leviathan*, Maria Turner does the same: "she took photographs; again she invented life stories for them based on the evidence that was available to her. It was an archaeology of the present, so to speak, an attempt to reconstitute the essence of something from only the barest fragments" (70). Yet, such an "essence" is ungraspable, unknowable, always hidden, and nobody can reconstruct it. Calle's fascination with the imprints on bed (sheets, pillows) left by people's bodies and by different objects supports this line of thought, since she photographs the absence of the people who left the traces. The essence is always missing. If the projects (of both Maria and Calle) had ended with a palpable resolution, and had provided a meaningful motivation, the whole point would have been lost (similarly to the situation in which Martin Frost ends up in *The Book of Illusions*: once he solves the mystery of Claire, the magic is lost). A confrontation between the pseudo-detective and her object of surveillance may bring about catastrophic outcome. After Maria Turner gets caught photographing one of her subjects (one of Lillian's clients) and gets severely beaten up, she becomes spiritually defeated: "For the first time in her life, Maria had been chastened. She had stepped over the boundaries of herself, and the brutality of that experience had altered her sense of who she was" (*Leviathan* 85). About Calle's project Sheringham observes that she goes on

> to evoke a "décalage" between "la presence hyperréaliste des objets" and an absence. […] As in many projects there is a hiatus between activity and result, such that the purport or resonance of the activity is not limited or circumscribed in advance. […] Accordingly, […] the roles of the agent are not fixed, and this is reflected in the variety of discourses Calle uses. (417)

Drawing on this statement, Calle's photographs function as means of a very personal self-reflection, and are reflections of a collection of scenes coming from actual reality. In this profound act of detection and investigation—similarly to *The address book*—there is some kind of latent danger, a sense of aggression that does not affect the guests, but their observer. It is Calle who takes the risks of the victim, it is she who constantly feels threatened, not only

because the guests can enter and unveil the voyeur unexpectedly, but also because their faceless existence, or nonexistence symbolized by their absence, is generating depression and frustration in her. Calle attempts to construct her narrative/artistic self in and through them. This constant sense of danger is remediated in the construction of the fictional character of Maria Turner, to whom Auster adds a specific turn: by putting an end to this always tense situation (of watching others while being afraid of not to be caught watching) and providing a resolution by letting Maria suffer a severe punishment for one of the projects in which she was intruding upon someone's intimacy, Auster manages to subvert the subverted. As for Calle, the first-person approach and the realistic representation through the photographs are, however, combined with carefully elaborated artifice. In many of her projects spontaneous actions are alternate with planned performance.

All in all, the various remediations, such as Calle performing the photos of her performing, Calle narrating Calle performing, chambermaid and striptease-dancer Calle remediated in Auster's text in the figure of Maria Turner, occur self-consciously and foreground a specific metaintermediality combined with metaintertextuality.

*4.2. (Authorial) Identities and Metaleptic Turns*

In *Double Game* one can encounter a specific dynamics of intermedial relations, that is, the combinations of, and plays with, various media forms. This construes, of course, a dialogic relationship between artworks (and their authors) involving mutual intrusions in one another's texts, thus drawing attention to the fictionality of the stories. As Khimasia argues "[f]or Calle performing Maria's projects—who is already a rewriting of Calle performing "Calle"—makes it difficult to distinguish where one stops and the other begins; they always carry the trace of the other" (20). Hence, *Double Ga*me consists of a series of remediations in which the quality of one medium is transformed into another medium, one artform reflects on the other, so that different abstract ideas become concrete media representations.

Drawing on the previous examples of the always alternating levels of actual reality and the represented (that is, framed and constructed texts, parts of Calle's and Auster's intertwined narratives) it is quite apparent that their interconnectedness is similar to the technique of narrative metalepsis. The phenomenon in its narrative variant was first coined by Gérard Genette, and is described as "taking hold of (telling) by changing level" (Genette 235),[109] combining the principle of narrative levels with the logic of the trope, bringing about intrusions that disturb the differentiations between narrative levels, between "real" and "fictional."

It is precisely Sophie Calle's presence in *Leviathan* (albeit disguised) that brings into focus the novel's textual construction. And, simultaneously, by acting out Auster's texts, Calle repatriates fiction into actual reality, which, in its turn becomes another piece of art. The transpositions of factuality into fiction and vice versa position Auster and Calle's double game in a heterotopic nonplace, where the various media constantly mirror, mimic, and merge into one another.

The story-within-a-story structure, the shifts between diegetic and nondiegectic are undoubtedly characteristic of both Auster's and Calle's narratives. More interestingly, their works contain several instances of narrative metalepsis that can be identified in, and provide the framework for, potentially unsettling intermedial border-crossings. Pethő also understands metalepsis as a narrative device, "as a means of 'breaking the frame' that separates the

[109] As Pethő points out, "this feature is often highlighted in metafictional works by the introduction of a fantastic element. […] However, this fantastic element is not necessary for generating a metaleptic structure within a filmic narrative" (Pethő, "Remediating the Real" 59-60).

distinct 'levels' of a narrative, usually between an embedded tale and primary story, or as a way in which an author transgresses into the narrative" ("Intermediality as Metalepsis" 71).

Calle's artworks are obvious examples of narrative metalepsis generated by, and setting up, various remediations: they consist of photographs (usually black and white), texts that accompany these pictures, or installations, which constantly filter actual reality through these media. Calle's artworks that are based on detection (following others or organizing to be followed by someone else) generate a certain documentation of street life usually through her photographs, thus setting up the merging of the actuality or the sensory, with the mediated or cultural, while producing a first-person storytelling at the same time. Such intricacies also allude to her quest for an artistic identity. She, thereby, becomes a *flâneur*, wandering in a world that is always remediated, and she can also be considered a *photo-monteur*,[110] who endlessly puts together collections of pictures (like in the case of *The Hotel*) in order to express a particular artistic experience of the world. *Flânerie,* in this sense, denotes a very complex artistic attitude which also implies the reference to various and interconnected media forms. As Sontag argues,

> [p]hotography first comes into its own as an extension of the eye of the middle-class *flâneur*, whose sensibility was so accurately charted by Baudelaire. The photographer is an armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitering, stalking, cruising the urban inferno. […] Adept of the joys of watching, connoisseur of empathy, the *flâneur* finds the world "picturesque." (*On Photography* 55)

Moreover, the coming together of the different media forms in the works of Auster and Calle can be seen as a specific intermedial *flânerie* in which they track down, stalk, overcross, and ultimately remediate each other's texts. Again, it is the dialogism involved in intermediality that can generate palpable manifestations of media interactions. For Calle, Auster's text was both a model and an authority to be challenged, which can be seen in the techniques she uses in order to remediate *Leviathan*'s literary text. She reiterates and highlights her identity as both authorial and that of a subject. Therefore, she literally intrudes Auster's text by including the extract of the pages 60-67 of *Leviathan* at the beginning of *Double Game*, and she does

[110] "The *photo-flâneur* (who extends the eye with the photographic apparatus and roams the streets armed with a 'camera-eye') joined the *photo-monteur* (decontextualizing images, fragmenting, and reassembling the world into pictures)" (Pethő, "Remediating the Real" 50-51).

not leave them alone. She edits the text with red marks, "correcting" it, so that fiction is no longer fiction, thus reclaiming her narrative, reappropriating her life/art projects. (See fig. 23). She begins with saluting her fictional doppelgänger, by writing across the page "Hello, Maria!" then she goes on with adjusting the facts to mirror her real life:

> She had grown up in ~~Holyoke, Massachusetts~~, the only child of parents who divorced when she was ~~six~~. After graduating from high school in 1970, she had gone down to ~~New York with the idea of attending art school and becoming a painter~~, but she lost interest after one term and dropped out. She ~~bought herself a secondhand Dodge van and~~ took off on a tour of the ~~American continent~~, staying ~~for exactly two weeks~~ in each ~~state~~ [...]. (*Double Game*, insert)

This book-within-a-book structure also functions as an intermedial framing, a paratext that not only introduces and frames the entire *Double Game*, but is repeated at the beginning of each chapter/project: a miniature replica of Auster's text is inserted, in which the lines referring to Maria's actual project are framed again with a red pen. Drawing on Genette's definition, according to which the paratext is made of separable units of text that provide the framing of another text, Wolf treats paratextual framings as liminal phenomena, by claiming that they "possess a characteristic ambiguity: they are positioned in between text and context and belong to the 'work' but not to the text proper. […] In printed literature such 'paratextual' framings include titles, epigraphs, footnotes, postscripts etc." ("Introduction: Frames, Framings" 20). In the case of Calle's inserts, strangely, the paratextual framing is also an intermedial one; it does not merely serve as an element added to the the main text, but it foregrounds the presence of both the transmitting and the receiving medium.

Another framing element in *Double Game* consists of the use of the extravagant typography, such as the outlined letters of various sizes and color, or using pictures that cover two pages, as if being a poster for advertising (for example, the pictures of a smile frame the projects in the *Gotham Handbook*). This typographic variety in the book's design cuts across literary and nonliterary texts, while it alludes to the field of advertising. It enhances an attention-getting function in order to endow the text with a sense of unique and unmistakable identity. Formally, that is by layout, the aforementioned inserts are strictly separate from the proper text, but they explicitly relate to the entire text of *Double Game*. Janet Hand argues that

> by involving his account in her own rather than insisting on the autobiographical authenticity of her life apart from the fictions now proliferating at others' hands, she persists in indicating the confluence of "her experience" in art. In leaving Auster's text legible, she ensures that the contestations between them are foregrounded and in full view to us on the subject of "life projects." (481)

Subsequently, the inserts of *Leviathan*'s text function as means of fragmenting, of disrupting the narrative of *Double Game*, they "behave" as intermedial metalepsis (because they reevoke Auster's fiction, the "imaginary" acts of Maria, and remediate them in the printed version of the book). Therefore, the narrative is propelled to a level where it is impossible to determine who beholds its authority. The editing and the reproduction of Auster's text allude to great precision, and foreground Calle's reclaiming authorship over it. Furthermore, Calle demands Auster to produce new texts that can feature her as a character:

> Since, in *Leviathan*, Auster has taken me as a subject I imagined swapping roles and taking him as the author of my actions. I asked him, to invent a fictive character which I would attempt to resemble. I was, in effect, inviting Paul Auster to do what he wanted with me, for a period of up to a year at most. Auster objected that he did not want to take responsibility for what might happen when I acted out the script he had created for me. He preferred to send me "Personal Instructions for SC on How to Improve Life in New York City (Because she asked...)." I followed his directives. This project is entitled Gotham Handbook. (*Double Game* 234-35)

This self-conscious play with the factual and the fictional as well as Calle's desire to become fictionalized do not lend a merely metafictional aspect to their collaboration; such intentional movements in and out of each other's mediums generate and support the presence of *metaintermediality*. Thus, the boundaries between the triad of narrative agents (Sophie Calle/Maria Turner/"Sophie Calle") are blurred, and artistic/narrative identity becomes the very site for (meta)intermedial play. In this sense, as Trofimova argues, "Calle undermines Auster's authority and authorship over his own work [and] [...] transforms Auster from a master puppeteer into a puppet of his own creation" (164). What marks the *Gotham Handbook* is a deviation from Calle's artistic attempts, since it is a controlled project which

involves no risks and real dangers. Auster fails to understand what propels her previous projects, and is perhaps afraid of generating dangerous situations outside the fictional framework, that is in real life. Thereby, in this collaboration "the confluence of Maria and Sophie is cast in a formalized sequence of photography and text. These works are more strictly determined by the propositional rules and less dependent on chance encounters" (Hand 481). Földényi also claims that the projects in the *Gotham Handbook* are not relevant actions in Calle's oeuvre, precisely because they lack chance and randomness; rather, they are characterized by a desperate attempt to make them appear risky (18). What characterizes Calle's works in general is purposelessness, voluntary actions, performances the meaning of which the artist is not trying to find, rather, she relies on coincidences and embraces whatever life brings to her. That is why, as Trofimova argues, "Auster, who fails to understand the principle of the game, and the logics of the doppelgänger (to lose oneself in the other's traces rewards you by letting you steal its traces, as Baudrillard reminds us), loses authorial control" (180). Auster has very simple humanistic motivations behind the projects of the *Gotham Handbook*: to improve life in the neighborhood with the help of small, emphatic gestures like smiling and talking to people. The atmosphere that he generates is similar to what we have seen in *Smoke*, where the action centers on Auggie's tobacco shop and sets up a positive communal experience.

Anyway, when Calle asks Auster to author her actions for a year, she simultaneously proposes to author his authorship in her own text. Moreover, she finds the gaps and fissures through which she can slightly alter and enrich the original plan, and express her own authority, while remaining submissive to Auster's instructions at the same time. She says: "I have a duty to obey. That was the agreement. I have no other choice but to submit" (*Double Game* 246). However, she personalizes the project, by changing some details. For example, in the project entitled *Smiling* she counts the smiles she gives to strangers, which was not a requirement in Auster's handbook. Throughout the ritual, she invents and photographs mise-en-scènes of her own life. In *Cultivating a Spot* she chooses a phone booth and decorates it to create the atmosphere of home-like comfort. She fantasies about resisting the authority of Auster's orders and about bringing back the real risks that characterized her earlier projects: "Two years of prison for wire tapping a public phone, they said. I have a fantasy: I am arrested, I stand before the judge. He proposes an alternative punishment: smile, distribute food and talk to people. I say: 'No! I prefer jail!'" (*Double Game* 252). Similarly, in the first part of *Double Game*, when Calle decides to perform Maria's rituals that were invented by Auster in *Leviathan*, she, again, introduces a few changes in order to expose and exercise her

own authority over the text. For example, in the *Chromatic Diet* Maria was "restricting herself to foods of a single color on any given day" (*Leviathan* 67), but Calle changed the ritual when she added her own food each day: "since no color was prescribed for Friday, I chose yellow" (*Double Game* 18). These gaps in Auster's writing set up a particular intermedial playground, in which Calle both repeats and changes the source text through the medium of performance. As Khimasia contends, "Calle not only lives out the sameness, she also highlights her differences—her interaction and collaboration as author, filling in the gaps in the construction of this particular 'borrowed' narrative. She reclaims and re-inscribes her *author*ity in the performance through an imposition and narration of the event" (26). Accordingly, the various authorial intrusions provide the possibility of rearranging, restructuring the project's episodes, thus remediating them.

The *Gotham Handbook* and Calle's reimagining of Maria's projects provide sites for intermedial metaleptic instances. In the installations Calle repeatedly includes herself both as an artist and as a character, and combines an immediate (subjective and personal) experience with a hypermediated one (that of constructed representations), thus determining artistic/narrative identities to become constructed of, and generating, the presence of intermedial interactions.

Such remediations bring into focus the need to investigate the medial other in a mutually reflexive framework, and the ways identity is shaped in a unique artistic quest. Maria and Sophie Calle are specific doubles, and, as Trofimova argues, the doppelgänger is a messenger of the medium in which it appears; in Auster's case it is an adaptation, or a collaboration, a doppelgänger of another crossdisciplinary text (145). Therefore, as Auster's and Calle's texts constantly double one another they can be seen as special intermedial variations of the same subjects. Comparing Calle's life projects and Auster's texts one can observe the striking similitude between the acts of detection, all involving the motif of the doppelgänger. It appears in Auster's *The New York Trilogy* and in many of Calle's projects, but most expressively in *Suite Vénitienne* (1980) (an artistic mix of flânerie and collection), and brings into focus the acts of stalking and voyeurism of the double.[111]

The story of the *Suite Vénitienne* starts with Calle meeting a man at a party in Paris, whom she later decides to follow during his vacation in Venice. She becomes a *flâneuse* in disguise by wearing a blonde wig and sunglasses, and starts to record every move of her

[111] Trofimova argues that the two authors' texts appear as "accidental" doubles of one another. Quinn's feeling of being lost and his wanderings in New York City find their mirror in Calle's following of a stranger in the city of Venice (169-70).

subject. Similarly to Quinn in *City of Glass*, she meticulously notes all of her wanderings, sometimes inserting maps of Venice in the book, on which she also draws lines suggesting her itineraries. By absorbing the atmosphere of the place in her investigation, she repeats a detective fiction convention: geographical sites become active ingredients in her narrative, rather than mere settings for the action. Just like New York City in the case of Quinn, Calle's Venice plays an active role in the story. While trying to find the face that once attracted her, she walks the maze-like city, takes photographs, and when she finds him, she hides among the tourists, and photographs exactly the same scenes he was photographing a few moments before. Following his footsteps and gaze, the camera produces a moving picture album of the city scenes, capturing the places marked by the traces of his presence. These black-and-white photos that accompany her narrative "have the affectlessness and artlessness of nineteenth century police photographs of crime scenes" (Chadwick 114). The text is a chronological structuring of the quest in first-person narrative, alluding to the style of a diary:

> Friday, February 15, 10 A. M. I leave the Locanda Montín as a brunette and don my wig in a tiny alleyway near by. *I'll do it this way every day. I don't want to baffle the proprietors. They are already calling me Sophie.* I inquire about Henri B in all the hotels having a first name for a name: Da Bruno, the Leonardo, the San Moïse, the Alex... at lunch time, I look through restaurant windows. *I always see the same faces, never his. I've come to find some consolation in knowing he's not where I am looking for him. I know where Henri B is not.* (*Double Game* 87)
>
> Tuesday, February 19, 10 A. M. From the Bar Artisti I watch, turned toward Campo San Barnaba, waiting without conviction, for him to pass. [...] 3:20 P. M. I see him right in the middle of Campo Sant' Angelo. He turns his back to me and photo-graphs a group of children playing. Quickly, I do the same. Then I notice the woman, who's waiting for him off to the side. He joins her. Our journey begins. [...] (*Double Game* 103)

This is a very different photo sequence from Auggie Wren's photomontage: while Auggie's photos celebrated life through the representations of the dead (Paul's wife), Calle's photos are rather haunting, and suggest a sense of anxiety. In this project Calle not only turns the traditional (gendered) conventions of watching and following upside down, but also resists providing any clues regarding her motivations. The reader remains puzzled: what does she

want to gain from this quest? What does she want from Henri B? For Calle, as Hand affirms, "following is also a means of describing an activity within a game, that may or may not conform to the game and acts as a subtext or distraction to her 'when bored'" (470). Indeed, Calle admits at the beginning of the project that previously she was following strangers on the streets for months, for no particular reason just for the pleasure of following them.

As Chadwick contends, the "cool, dispassionate text differentiates Calle's subject from the female stalker, fixated on a male target, fueled by fantasy, lost in growing obsession" (114). Yet, her continuous attempts to locate him generate a deeper and deeper sense of frustration, and her anxiety grows, when she feels she loses control ("I give up," "He is consuming me," she admits). The tension here is generated by the continuous oscillation between fantasy (what she thinks is going to happen) and actual reality (that there are few chances that he might recognize her).

Calle's exasperating search for the man among the pensions and hotels of Venice always points to the threat that lurks behind her narrative: what if she is unable to find him? Without the object of the investigation the detective becomes purposeless, impotent. Thereby, her chase is full of anticipations, expected confrontations, and filtrations with danger. Also, there is a certain mechanical attitude attached to this quest which involves the repetition of actions. Considering her Auster's female double, Trofimova observes that she becomes machinelike, like Maria Turner in *Leviathan*, an embodiment of a devastating automaton, a sophisticated sex-doll beholding the potential to become a catalyst for plot developments (166). Then, she adds that "the precision with which she [Calle] responds to her double [Auster] by mimicking it resembles a sort of writing machinery at work. Calle becomes machinelike in copying, editing, and multiplying Auster's work" (173). However, while Calle obeys his rules written in *Gotham Handbook*, she also attempts to infiltrate them with her own ideas as I previously mentioned. Trofimova asserts that Sophie Calle as an automaton is best manifested in *Gotham Handbook*, where she takes the role of a puppet and fulfills Auster's instructions:

> Although her work has a strong performative element, it is almost always ritualistic and based on her obedience to preset rules. It therefore can be seen as prosthetic, automatic. […] Her act of editing Auster's text as well as carrying out the tasks and roles ascribed to her by Auster is likewise purely automatic. […] In the Calle-Auster doppelganger game, what we witness therefore is machine versus a human. (174)

Indeed, Calle's art is controlled, it uses repetitions and reenactments of specific (narrative) scenes, but a mere copying of each other's texts (of Auster and Calle) would exclude any dialogic relationship. There is always a room for change; therefore, I would consider both texts as similarly automatic and non-automatic bearing metaintertextual and metaintermedial traces. In *Suite Vénitienne* she does, indeed, follow a repetitive pattern especially in terms of locating Henri B; for example, she tells us the names of the hotels and pensions (in alphabetical order) she phones in order to find him. Yet, the mechanical logic of her project is always interconnected with the sense of danger and she often lets chance control her narrative. The technique of surveillance employed by her is used "as a means to generate drama within her pedestrian setting and activities" (Hand 474).

> Wednesday, February 13, 9 P. M. This evening is my first nigh out as a blonde. A man follows me for about ten minutes but doesn't dare to approach me. I slip through the streets. A dread is taking hold of me: He recognized me, he's following me, he knows. (*Double Game* 84)

The same anxiety is depicted in Auster's doubling of similar events, in scenes, for example, when Maria also gets picked up on the street, or when she follows strangers taking risks of becoming the object of others' gaze. She participates in "the drama of watching and being watched" (*Leviathan* 69). Moreover, the idea of machinelike actions is also sustained by Scott Dimovitz in his observations regarding repetition compulsion in Maria Turner's case. He also claims that all the characters in *Leviathan* are "dominated by patterns of repetition, playing and replaying the traumas that structure their lives" (448).

Regarding Calle's anxiety stemming from the incident that she is followed by someone else, Hand asks the question whether this anxiety is fabricated or not in retrospect for dramatic effect (Hand 475). Accordingly, the critic analyzes the spatial relations between the follower and the followed, which are sometimes too distant to be represented objectively, other times they are so close that they might generate conflict; and arrives at the conclusion that it is rather a part of a well-crafted choreography playing with the dramatic effects of proximity and encounter (475). Thus, Calle's project is definitely authored, even if it massively includes elements of chance encounter.

> [W]e see her pedestrian activity artfully crafted through classical dramatic means: unities of time and place are observed. She observes conventions of sequencing action and the dramatic consequences of one scene on another. Although there are numerous variations to the public form of the work—it is a book, an installation, a number of different photo-text wall-work exhibitions—it is consistent as a narrative work. [...] Following also implies a practice in the sense of reiteration, a repetition, a rehearsal. Calle's following, in accord with this understanding, is a generative activity that reissues [...] a series of conventions in play form bound to representation. (Hand 476)

Through creating the anxiety that foreshadows imminent conflict, while utilizing classic narrative principles, Calle's following is also reminiscent of both improvised and suite music (as also referred to by the name of the project), hence it can be considered an intermedial imitation of a musical suite, since it is based on different pieces that are brought together in one composition. Yvette Bíró discusses the analogies between Calle's suite and the musical composition, shedding light on the various meanings of the word "suite": on the one hand, a personal suite denotes a retinue, that is a group of people retained in the service of royalty, a suite (coming from French: what follows) of retainers; on the other hand, it is a modern instrumental composition that is free regarding the nature and number of sequences (189). In this sense, the cat-and-mouse game Calle is playing with Henri B alludes to both of these meanings: it is a personal, anonymous following and a carefully constructed work with an open structure. Calle's project, thus "becomes a playful act that goes against genre conventions, in being an open composition, bringing together unusual levels (instruments) to construe an irregular content" (Bíró 190). In my reading, Calle's *suite* can also be symbolic of a certain *intermedial suite*. The "dance" of media forms takes place on two levels: first, between Auster's and Calle's texts, and secondly, between the media signifiers that make up either Auster's or Calle's narrative (in *Leviathan* one can see intermedial thematizations through Maria's projects, while Calle's works are media combinations per se).

When Calle's book, *Suite Vénitienne* was published, it appeared with Jean Baudrillard's essay in it. In "Please Follow Me" Baudrillard appeals to Calle, and generally observes that "the seductions in Calle's work are not issued by her authoring of following: rather, they are issued by means of 'her erasure' in the work as a 'subject'" (qtd. in Hand 479). What emerges from this idea is the interpretation of the self as illusory, according to which Calle's artistic identity, just as Quinn's in *City of Glass,* is perfectly erased in the act of

following. The self is always under deconstruction, split into fragments, similarly to a distorted reflection in the mirror: "Tuesday, February 12, 12:52 P. M. I arrive at Piazza San Marco and sit against a column. I watch. *I see myself at the labyrinth's gate, ready to get lost in the city and in this story. Submissive*" (*Double Game* 83).

In this "hall of mirrors" her identity is ambiguous, as Földényi notes, wearing her blonde wig she is uniting in herself two incompatible selves, just like the mythological Minotaur (41). In such circumstances she can self-consciously decide which features of her self she will (or will not) expose to the other, and with the help of which media, thereby providing an illusion of multiple selves. Hence, identity becomes a locus for (meta)intermedial play. Similarly to Calle, when Maria in Leviathan starts to follow a man in New Orleans, she wants to "keep herself hidden, to resist all contact with him, to explore his outward behavior and make no effort to interpret what she saw" (71). Calle turns herself invisible in the act of following the other, then "steals" the traces of the other via different media forms (photographing the places where he had been a moment before, writing about him, and so on), thus she reconstructs her own existence. This, however, brings forth a similar dialectic in terms of intermediality: both in Auster and Calle's collaborations and in their individual works various media forms are lost in the others' traces, to "steal" those traces, and, by doing so, reclaim a new intermedial presence.

Becoming the shadow of Henri B, she attempts to find her self through him, that is, again, creating an identity from portraits in absentia. In Auster's text Maria's projects reflect this same preoccupation, as Dimovitz points out: "a concern with *being-for-others* as a construction of an otherwise empty self" (450, emphasis mine). When Maria, among her "elaborate set of bizarre, private rituals" engages into following a man in New Orleans she attempts to construct his portrait from precisely the traces of his absence, from "still fragments caught in time by the other's gaze (in the form of a camera)" (Dimovitz 450).
Therefore, Maria has a feeling that she "had abandoned her life for a kind of nothingness, as though she had been taking pictures of things that weren't there. The camera was no longer an instrument of that recorded presences, it was a way of making the world disappear, a technique for encountering the invisible" (*Leviathan* 71). This alienation is highlighted in the next project, when she attempts to invert the roles: she asks a private detective to follow her. When, at the end of the project, she reads the record, she feels "as if she had become a stranger, as if she had been turned into an imaginary being" (70). This, of course echoes Calle's other project, *The Shadow* that she launched right after *Suite Vénitienne*: she asked her mother to hire a detective that could follow her and provide "photographic evidence of her

existence" (*Double Game* 122-23). Then, Calle asks one of her friends to follow the detective and record his movements in a notebook with a pen. The act of following has now three layers: Calle's records, the detective's, and the friend's. What we see here is a carefully planned performance, an organized theatrical play, as Földényi notes (58), in which none of the characters can synchronize. It is, again, a play of seduction, in which Calle attempts to show places to the anonymous detective, places that are important for her. This mutual act of investigation (in *Double Game* the records are juxtaposed, using different font types) alludes to the intermedial cat-and-mouse play Calle and Auster are performing with, and through, their texts.

To sum up, while the previous chapters analyzed intermedial references and media combinations in Auster's own works and collaborations, that is, the relations between various media and constructed fictitious worlds respectively, in *Double Game* one can see a continuous shift between, and remediation of, actual reality and work of art. In such intermedial oscillations authorial as well as narrative selves are always unstable, being continuously constructed and deconstructed. The main structuring device of both Auster's and Calle's works is that, in terms of syuzhet, everything is based on coincidence, on the fact that anything can happen any moment. Similarly to Calle's characters, Auster's figures behave almost like conceptual artists. When they encounter a chance, they develop an artistic project out of it through the use of various media forms (performance, photography, film, or literature). The combinations, the merging and development of Auster and Calle's works occur through the dialogism of the different media forms that are brought together in their collaborations. A defining feature of these common projects is a specific intermedial *flânerie* that also ensures the border-crossings between art and life, making it possible to live life as art. The unique intermedial dialogue in *Double Game* relies on a constant transgressing of fact and fiction, since through the text of *Leviathan* Calle's life and artworks became fictionalized, and by reenacting Maria's schemes she wholeheartedly embraces the fictional. In *Gotham Handbook* actual reality becomes transposed onto the written text and image, as Calle follows Auster's instructions. As Ulrich Meurer points out: "it is not unmediated reality which provides the project's core but the process of re-mediation, making the artwork visible in the first place; outside the realm of signs the well matched players Auster and Calle [...] have no common ground whatsoever" (185). In *Double Game* one can observe the constant play of and the in-between relationship of different representational techniques, thus by attempting to oppose, to take control over each other, to "follow" one another, and ultimately to

complement each other they shape up a high level of self-reflexivity, subsequently marking the process of remediation.

## Conclusions

The main objectives of the present research were to delineate two important aspects of Paul Auster's works: intermediality and the formation of narrative/artistic identity, as inextricably tied together in mutual interdependence, one always a prerequisite for the other. Auster's fondness for intermediation renders intermedial elements and the various interactions between media forms a major structuring and supportive device of his oeuvre. At the heart of my intermedial investigation lies not only the simple purpose to locate boundaries of various media presence in the selected texts, but also to identify the dynamic movements/shifts from and to different media that challenge, even transgress, widely accepted intermedia concepts, or, on the contrary, aim at preserving them. Heterotopic intermediality as well as metaintertextual metainteremdiality result continuously supporting and being formed by the construction and deconstruction of artistic/narrative identities.

As for the concept of intermediality, one general understanding seems to pervade all critical approaches: it foregrounds the aspect of mutual genre interaction. However, a merely comparative approach regarding intermedial relations seems to be a critical commonplace. For my own contribution to the interart and intermedia theoretical discourses I conceive of intermedial relations as they truly are, in the actual sense of the word: interrelations that are ultimately formed through superimpositions of one medium over another. Moreover, such intermedial interactions lead to a certain remediation and redefinition of the media that intersect and influence each other, thus giving birth to a freshly emerging media product. While looking at concrete examples in Auster's own and collaborative texts I realized that it is possible to set up a typology of intermedial relations. At first, I attempted to keep track of the specific intermedial references (imitations, thematizations, that is, borrowings) between different artforms. Thereby I could formulate a general framework for intermediality as a heterotopic in-betweenness; and, secondly, I interpreted intermedial occurrences as palimpsestuous reinscriptions (it is in the very nature of intermediality to constantly "desire" reflection and reinscription) that are fundamentally tied to narrative identity construction.

I found that in Auster's works, the participant-narrators can construct and deconstruct their artistic/narrative selves in and through various artforms; artforms that are in a mutually reflexive intermedial relationship with each other. Such an "in-between" existence generates an interconnectedness between media forms, that is, media do not dominate but reinterpret and preserve one another. Artistic creation is not merely a means of self-expression for Auster's characters; it can be understood as a strategy of survival and of finding one's place in

the "world." One can witness a manifold intermedial presence in Auster's oeuvre that manifests itself through intermedial imitations and thematizations. Intermedial occurrences and their relationships are responsible for, and are thematized in, the shaping up of an artistic/narrative identity in Asuter's own and collaborative texts, a process in which reader/spectator experience is closely tied to any of these intermedial practices.

Therefore, while establishing a specific intermedial scheme in Auster's works under discussion, I have come to the realization that a pattern of intermedial practices is at work; not only particularly present in Auster's works, but also generally valid for any intermedial construction. His intermedial works are comprised of three indispensable elements—or stages if you like—*intermedial uncanniness, intermedial suturing,* and *intermedial survival*.

Starting from the tensions and high/low interactions between verbal and visual media forms—an aspect I discussed in more detail in the third chapter—intermedial occurrences are inherently uncanny because of their very capacity to transpose and change one medium's component into another. The gaps and fissures, left in one medium by the intrusion of the medial other, are veiled by intermedial sutures that can appear in many forms: either as intermedial framings, intermedial thematizations and imitations; or, in the form of various characters and tropes (examples may include the character of Hector Mann as well as Zimmer's transcription of his films). Intermedial suturing, then, sets up a dialogic relationship between different media and aids narrative/artistic identity formation. Intermedial uncanniness and intermedial suturing may be closely connected, especially in terms of generating an uncanny experience for the readers/spectators, and may foreground ways in which they are "stitched" into the literary and/or filmic text. Such processes of intermedial uncanniness and suturing ultimately make intermedial survival possible; that is, one medium becomes remediated and preserved in the other, as it happens, for instance, in the case of Hector Mann and Zimmer, or in the case of Auster and Calle's collaborations. I conceive of intermedial survival as a manifold intermedial transposition that can take place within one work, through the act of one medium symbolically "sacrificing" itself (either in the form of intermedial imitation or intermedial thematization), so that the medial other could (re)gain vitality. The idea of sacrifices leads back to the thematic rendering of Auster's works, and, once again, to the question: to what extent are everyday people able to submit to sacrifices so as to be able to stay alive? Similarly to media forms surviving in one another, many of Auster's characters manage to survive through creating works of art.

In *Smoke* the characters' humanitarian actions, the constantly shifting father-son relationships thematize the in-between intermedial interactions, while they aid a healthy

(re)construction of the self. While in *Smoke* it is precisely the intermingling of the various art forms that provide redemption and a new start in life for characters like Paul Benjamin, Auster's other texts shed light on how creating an artifact and the artist's moral choice relate: Hector Mann conceals and destroys his films as a form of self-punishment, Martin Frost sacrifices art for the sake of love—a "combination of humanism and nihilism [which] is at the bottom of Paul Auster's films, and, in fact, his entire oeuvre" (González, "Words Versus Images" 42). Thus, personal tragedies and deep depression are repeatedly juxtaposed with a very strong instinct for survival combined with an appreciation of the beauties of the world. Indeed, some works display pessimistic, nihilistic undertones, but these are inextricably tied to the image of the eccentric artist (see the "collaboration" with Sophie Calle). The various artistic activities of the fictional characters are important points of departure and catalyze the ways intermedial interrelations emerge and function in Auster's works.

Subsequently, character interactions with different media forms function in Auster's collaborative projects as healing, life-maintaining, and -enhancing devices. In *Smoke*, for example, the characters' continuous construction and deconstruction of their selves mirror, generate, and are determined by intermedial incursions. Auggie's cigar shop signifies freedom, lack of hierarchy (symbolically pointing to the in-between coexistence of media forms), and interpersonal relations. Trofimova argues that *Smoke* can be read as "an ode to productive creativity, the magic of storytelling, and the power of fiction" (98). Artistic experiences produce as well as intensify social and cultural awareness. The underlying processes characterize and are thematized in the appearance of Rashid's character, in the inclusion of racial underpinnings in the cinematic text, and in the adaptation of "Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" to a black-and-white film sequence. Through investigations of the nature of different media forms the self can gain access to rarely visited dimensions of consciousness.

Elsewhere, intermedial imitations and thematizations serve as means for identity construction (for David Zimmer) and deconstruction (Hector Mann). The script-like descriptions in *The Book of Illusions* can be interpreted as a specific intermedial dialogue in which each medium participates with its own system specificities. Many examples in which characters represent different media forms—both in *The Book of Illusions* and the movie adaptation of *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*—and the complex relationships and/or conflicts between them (doppelgänger mirroring in the case of Mann/Zimmer, artist and muse connection in the case of Martin/Claire, Fortunato/Anna) are in fact narrative enactments of intermedial relations that eventually lead to a balanced interconnection. Moreover, *The Inner*

*Life of Martin Frost*, the film directed by Auster, is much more than a simple adaptation of the fictitious film script in *The Book of Illusions*; it is a story about the ways of coming together of medial influences and the painful, yet pleasurable act of creating a work of art, as well as the sacrifices that love or art can entail. The above-mentioned developments are all triggered by a specific experience of Auster: according to González, in all his films Auster has been trying to add the third dimension novels have ("Smoke and Illusions" 67). Trofimova also observes that "Auster tries to add more 'real' substance to the medium of film not by packing it with cinematic effects but, quite the opposite, by stripping the stories bare in order to bring the film closer to an oral or written narrative" (103).

Discussion of the performativity of the self takes the major role in all of my chapters. Daniel Quinn, through his repeated performative/narrative actions, becomes a palimpsestuous character, onto whom several other identities can be ascribed, similarly to Sophie Calle, who combines mutually reflexive media forms (photography, performance, and so on) in her projects, remediates life-events, generating a hypermediacy that functions as a connecting link between the various selves. By looking at the intermedial correspondences between Auster's *Leviathan* and Calle's *Double Game*, I came to understand that, in many cases, the predominant motivation that lies behind artistic processes is an inherent sense of danger rooted in the unpredictability of every action, and the pleasure inherent in the continuous risk of revealing one's self; moreover, the necessity to choose between truth and lies, actual reality and fiction. Auster and Calle challenge, reinscribe, and remediate each other's texts; they enact what I have identified as a specific act of *intermedial flânerie*, that is one text attempts to follow but also to author the other and vice versa. The unique intermedial dialogue that characterizes *Double Game* relies on a repeated mingling of fact with fiction. The two authors' self-conscious mutual intrusions and their use of each other's works function as means of self-reflection and self-thematization, thus generating metaintertexts. Moreover, the self-conscious use of various intermedial elements together with these metaintertexts generate what can be called a *metaintertextual metaintermediality*. Metaintermediality can, in fact, be observed in Auster's and Calle's individual works as well. *The Book of Illusions*, *Smoke*, or *Double Game* will be cases in point, where certain characters intentionally use and live through different media forms. The artistic endeavours of these characters are often coupled with a certain social and cultural awareness, while intermedial elements serve to preserve, remediate, that is, to refresh such artistic practices. Thereby, the term "intermediality," besides its very common meaning of referring to different media relationships in an

interdisciplinary context, also comes to denote the interaction of culture-shaping functions in general.

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# Appendix

## Chapter 1


Fig. 1. *Smoke*. Dir. Wayne Wang and Paul Auster. Miramax, 1995. An intermedial reference. Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* (1942).

Fig. 2. *Smoke*. Dir. Wayne Wang and Paul Auster. Miramax, 1995. Photomontage.

Fig. 3. *Smoke*. Dir. Wayne Wang and Paul Auster. Miramax, 1995. Framed (triangle) composition.

Fig. 4. *Smoke*. Dir. Wayne Wang and Paul Auster. Miramax, 1995. Creating credibility and intimacy.


Fig. 5. *Smoke*. Dir. Wayne Wang and Paul Auster. Miramax, 1995. Black-and-white sequence.

**Chapter 2**

Fig. 6. *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*. Dir. Paul Auster. Alma Films, 2007.

Fig. 7. *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*. Dir. Paul Auster. Alma Films, 2007.

**Chapter 3**

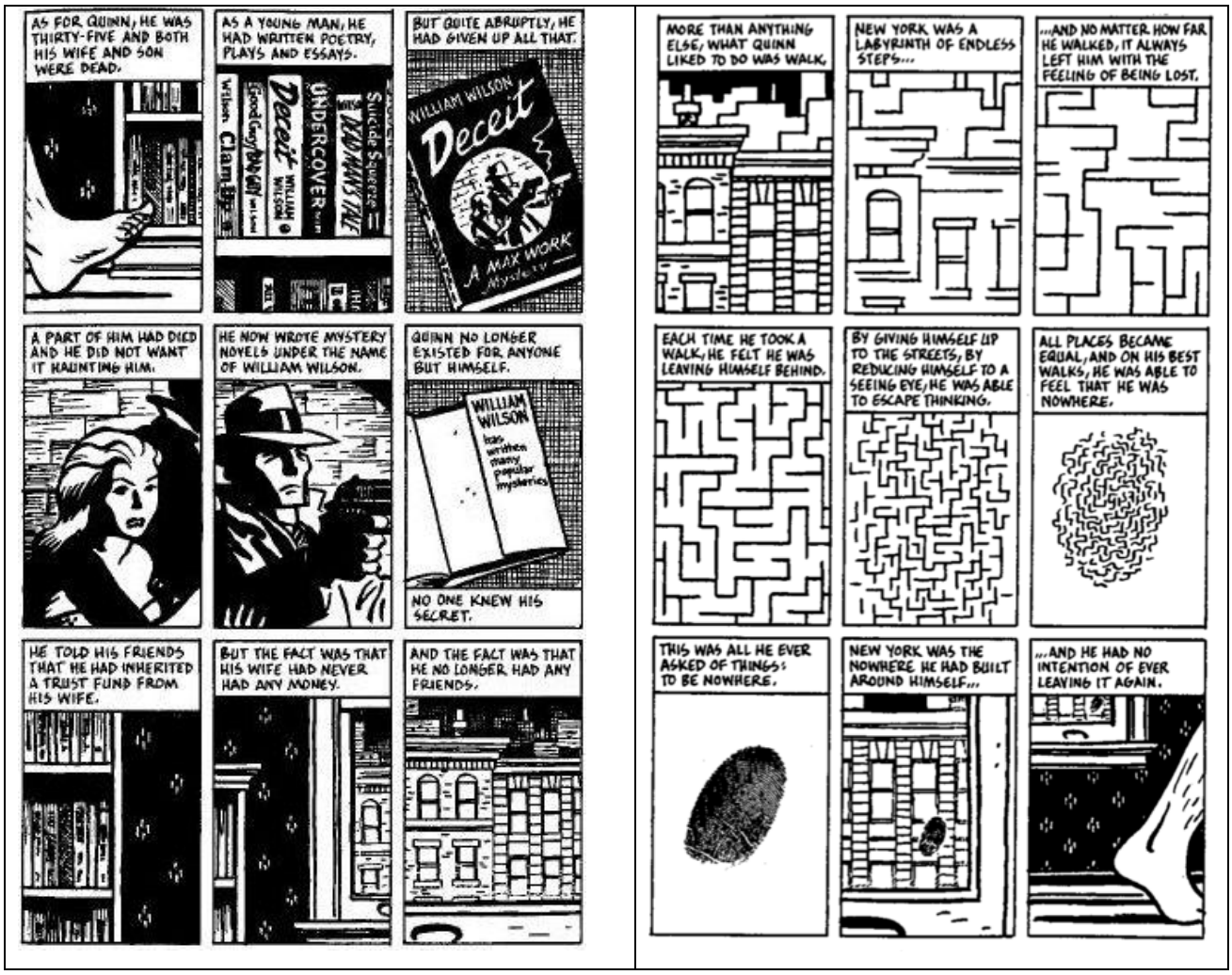


Fig. 8. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994.Cinematic zooming and the fingerprint/maze motif.

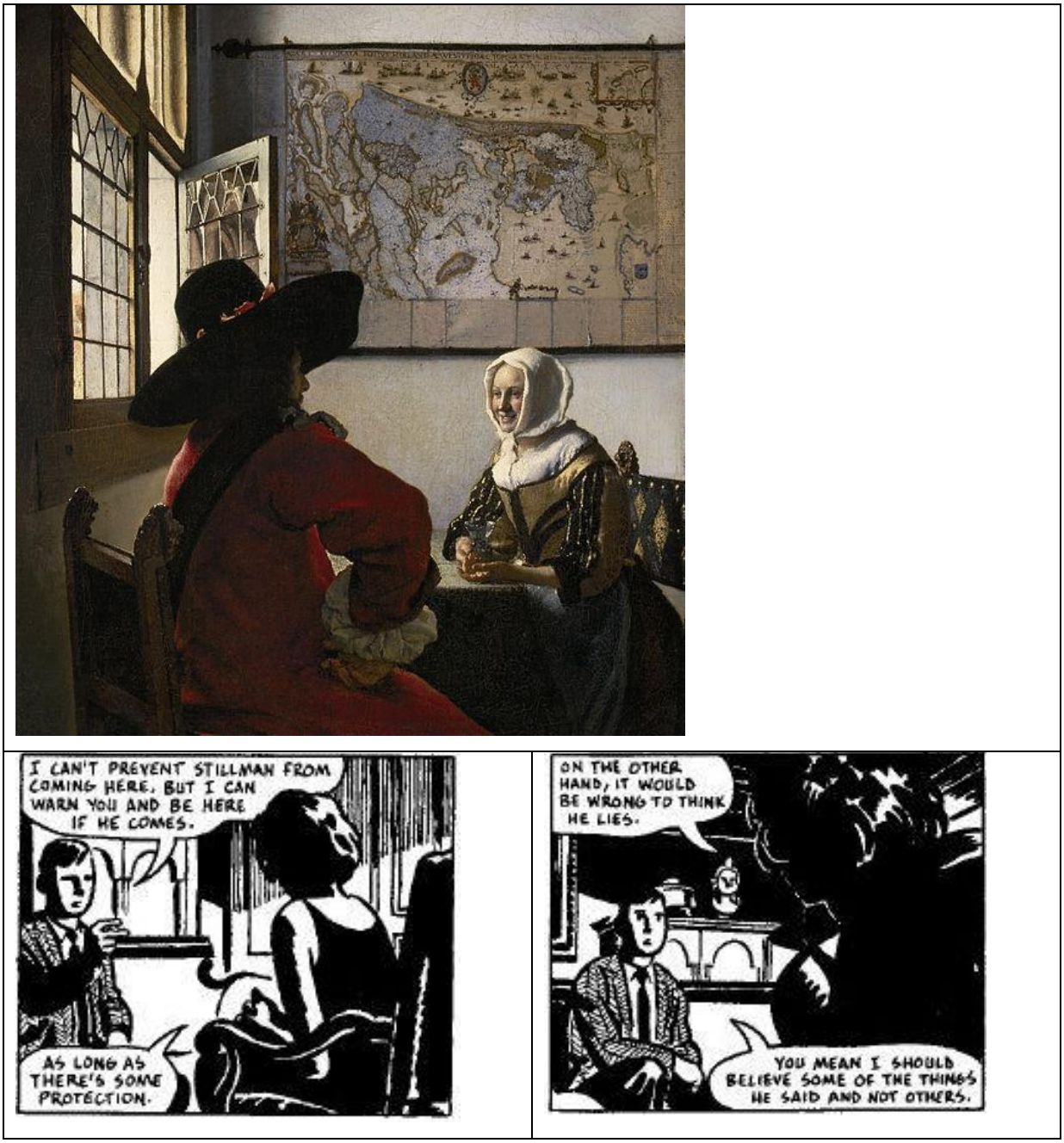


Fig. 9. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Intermedial reference to Johannes Vermeer's *Soldier and Laughing Girl*, c. 1657.

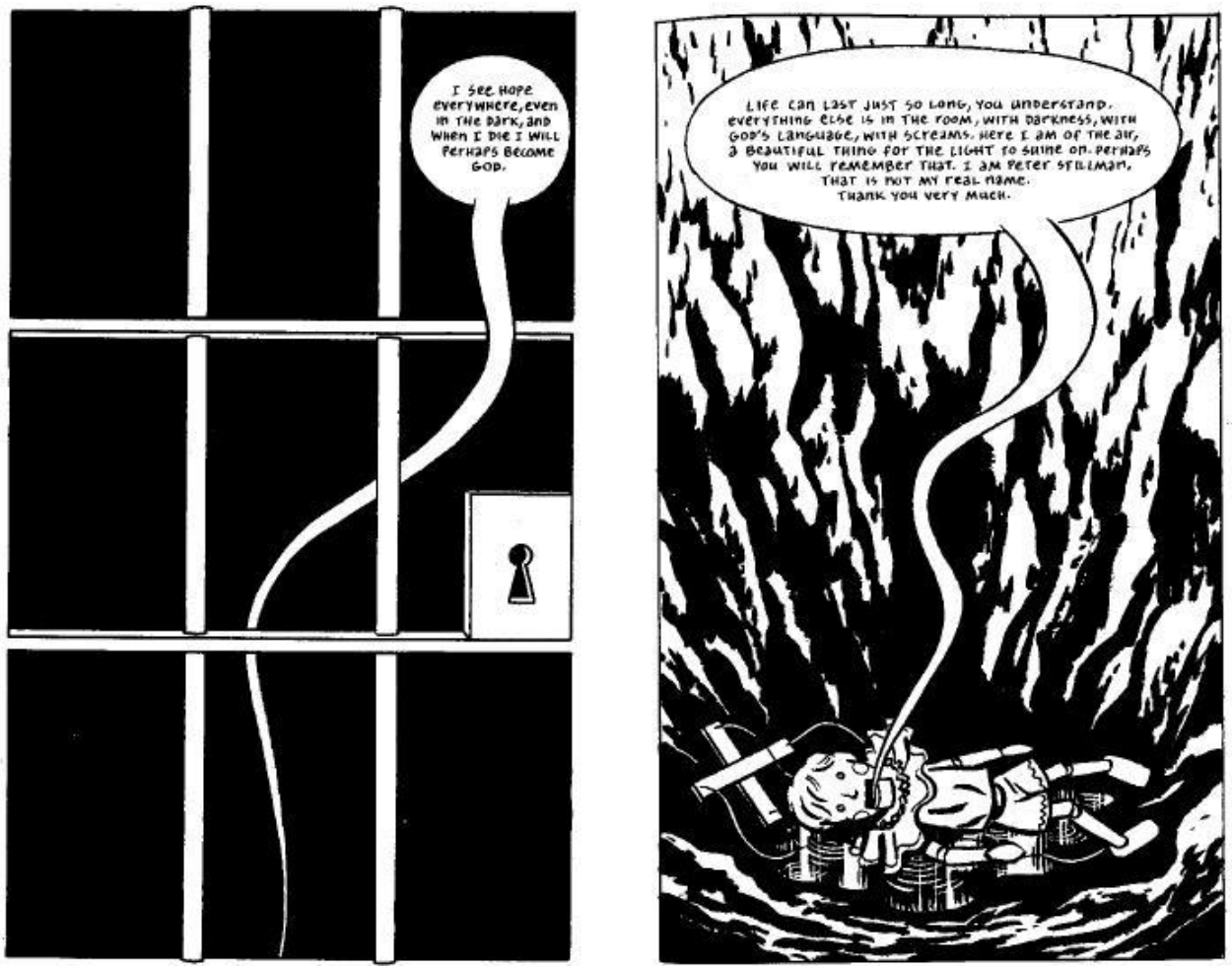


Fig. 10. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Representation of panel transformed into prison door, and the puppet-automaton motif.


Fig. 11. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. A visual intertext: representation of the pictogram.

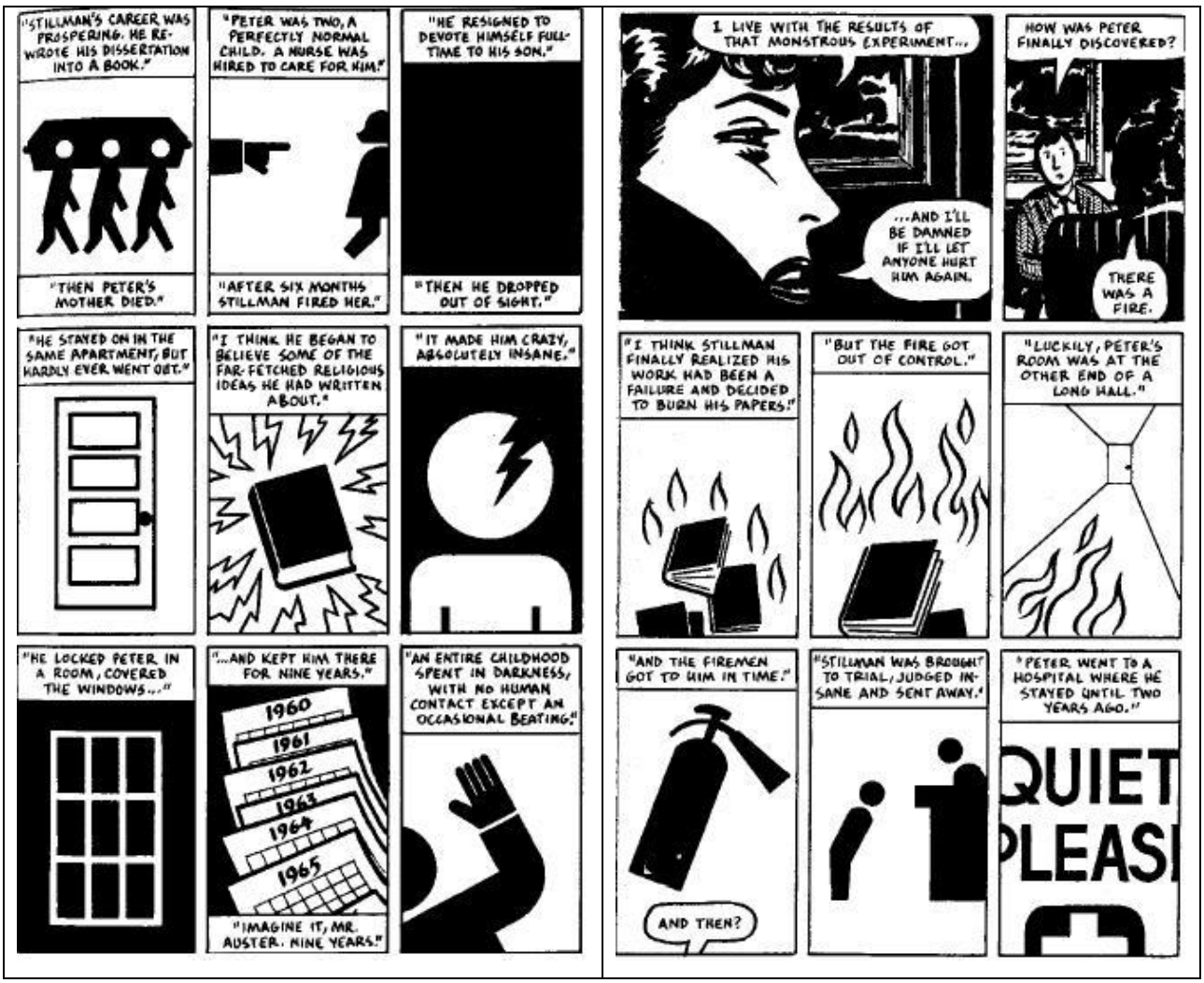


Fig. 12. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Virginia Stillman's narrative.


Fig. 13. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Albrecht Dürer: "The Fall of Man (Adam and Eve)" – 1504.

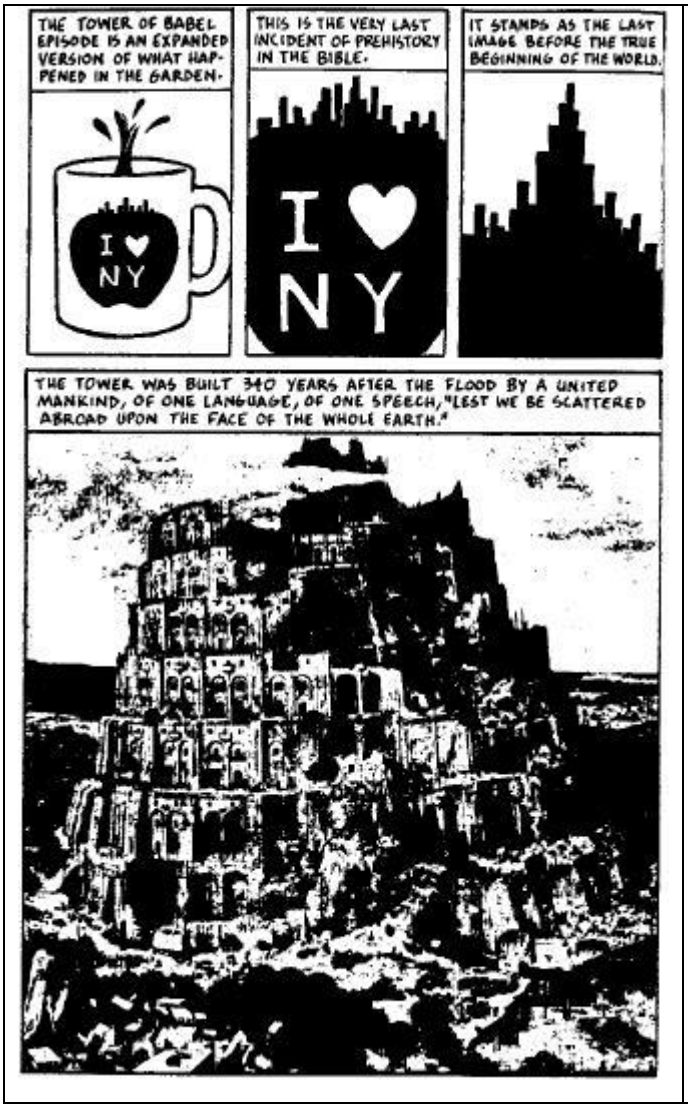


Fig. 14. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Peter Bruegel the Elder: "The Tower of Babel" – 1563.


Fig. 15. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Triad of selves in the graphic representation.

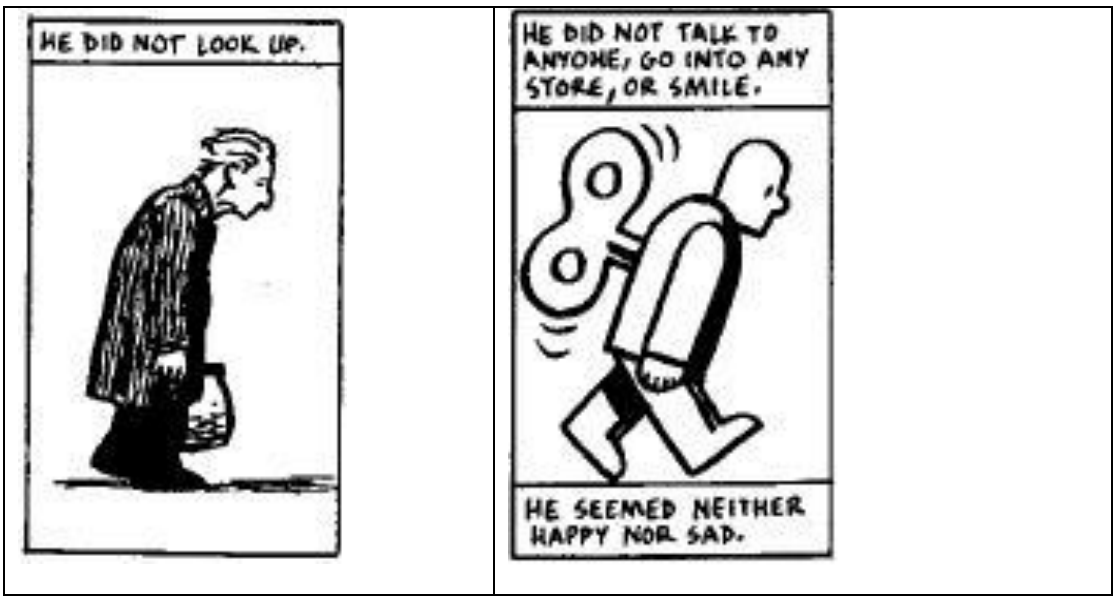


Fig. 16. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Visual similies: the mechanical man.

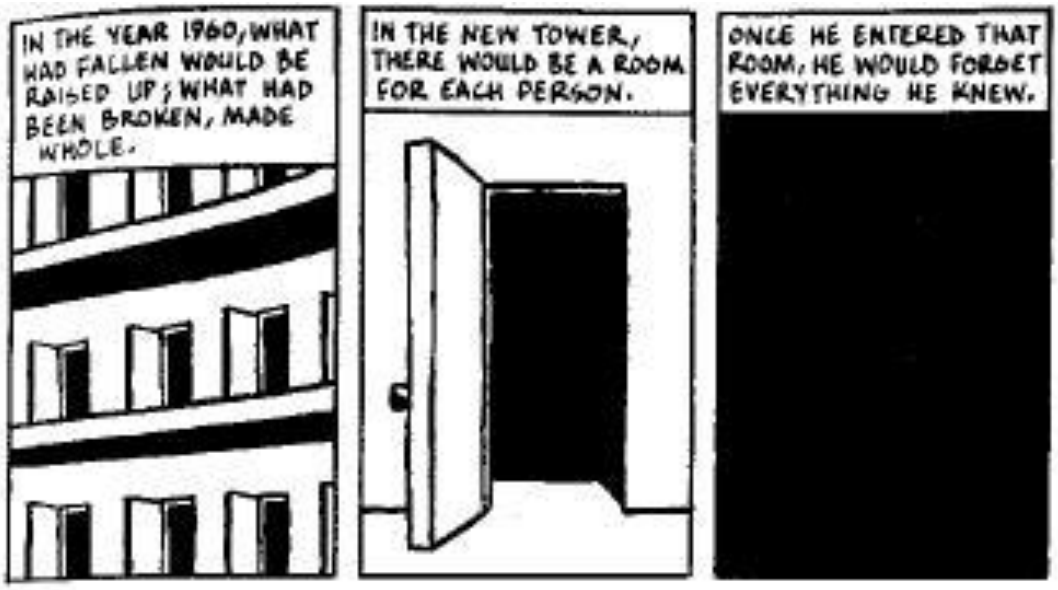


Fig. 17. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. The black panel: the absence of image, the irrational intermedial cut.


Fig. 18. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. The crying child's face: a means of concealing the intermedial gaps.

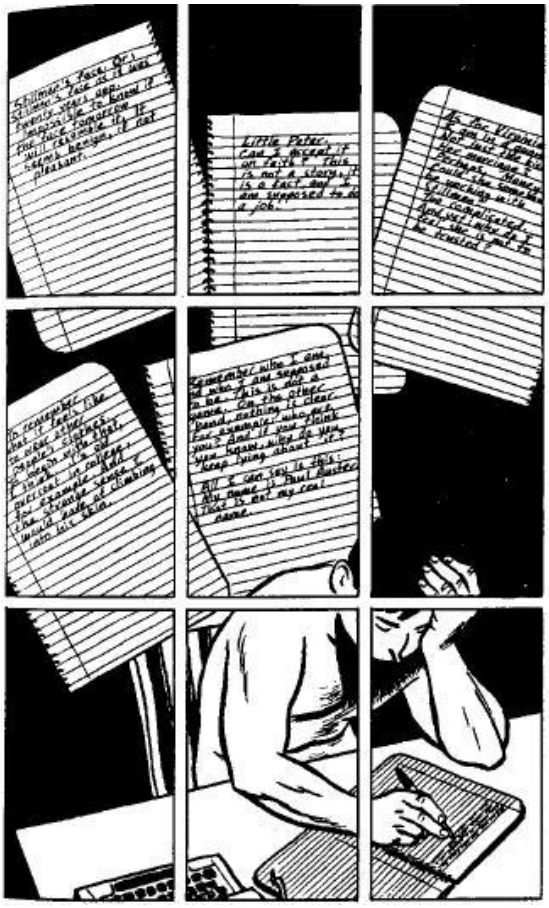

Fig. 19. *Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Adapt. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli. Art David Mazzucchelli. Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated. New York: Avon, 1994. Nine-panel structure transformed into a window.

**Chapter 4**

Fig. 20. Calle, Sophie. “The Striptease (1979)”. *Double Game*. London: Violet, 1999.

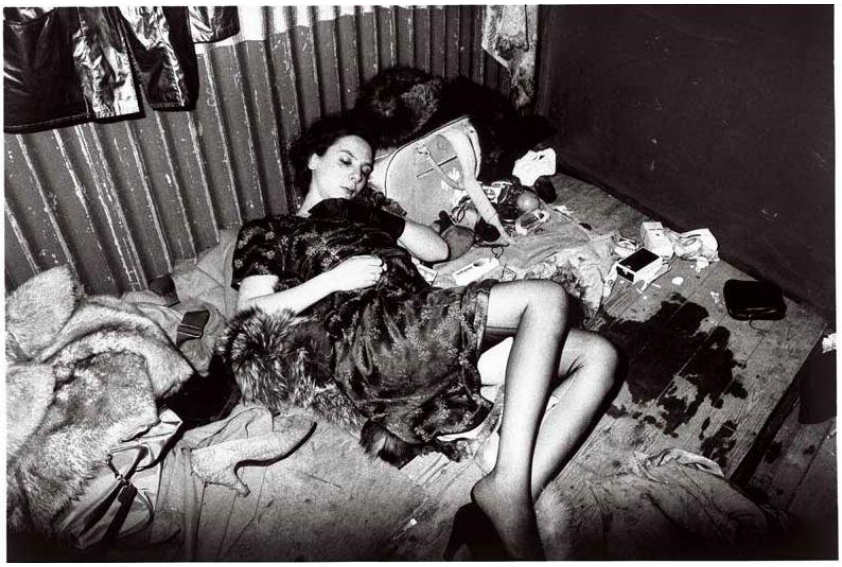

Fig. 21. Calle, Sophie. “The Striptease (1979)”. *Double Game*. London: Violet, 1999.

Fig. 22. Calle, Sophie. “The Address Book (1983)”. *Double Game*. London: Violet, 1999.

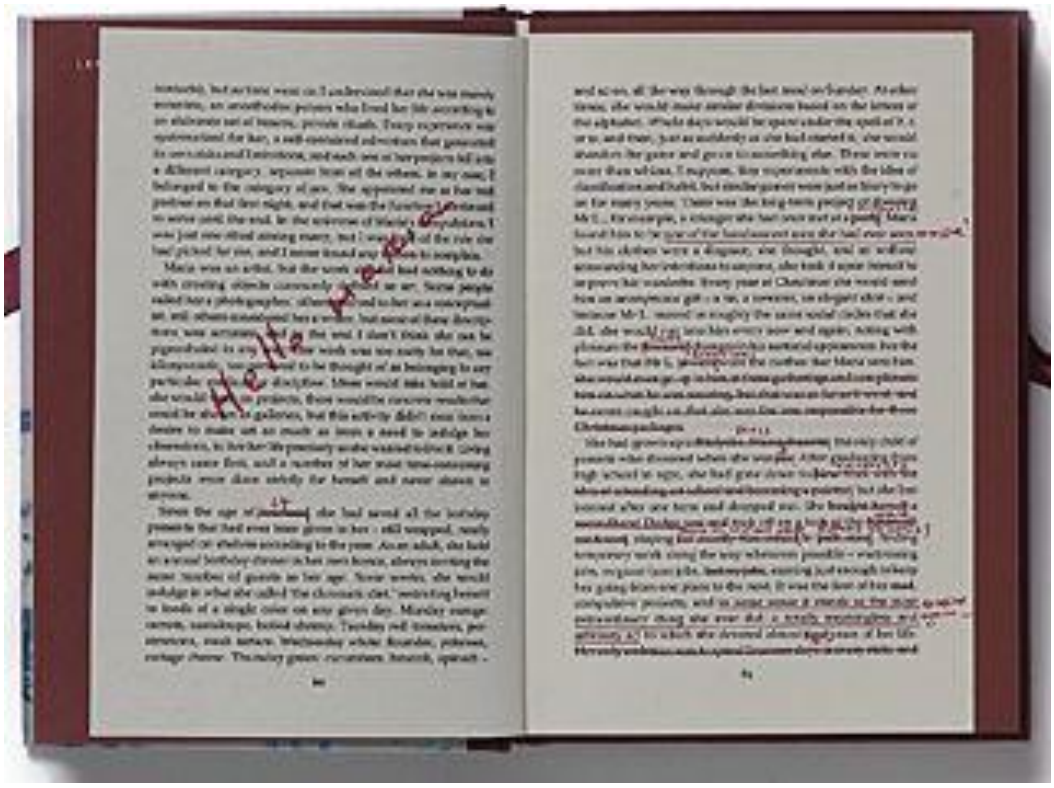

Fig. 23. Calle, Sophie. “Insert of the *Leviathan*’s text”. *Double Game*. London: Violet, 1999.

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1. "Identity Shaped by Intermediality: Monstration and Narration in Paul Auster's *The Book of Illusion (2002)*" *(Inter)personal communication in a(n) (inter)cultural context.* Piteşti: University of Piteşti Publishing House, 2013. 27-37. Print.

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8. "New York City Anxiety." HJEAS (Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies) 15.1 (2009): 202-05. Print.

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