AS FILM IS, SO GOES THE NOVEL: THE IMAGE, FILM EKPHRASIS, AND HISTORY IN THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

by

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Abstract

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My dissertation studies the use of the verbal representation of analog film in the novels of contemporary writers Paul Auster, Adam Thorpe, and Orhan Pamuk. I look at these authors' use of the moving image in relation to the existing poetics of the ekphrasis of still images and art objects. Film, understood as the "temporalization of space," informs the way in which I interpret film ekphrasis different from the ekphrasis of still objects that "spatialize temporality." In trying to emulate this temporal art form with words, these authors create a poetics of *film* ekphrasis, which constitutes a representation of the past in the present continuous. Their allusion to the analog image enables them to find creative means of constructing history and memory. My study also addresses the "digital" image and explains how its construction of time differs from the analog image. In order to grasp the tension between the analog and digital, and to reveal how visual artists are responding to emerging technologies, I turn to the films of Jean-Luc Godard, Michel Gondry, and Wim Wenders, as well as to JoAnn Verburg's photographs and Sam Taylor Wood's mixed media art. Understanding current practices in the visual arts, I suggest, can produce interpretive strategies for the ekphrasis of digital films.

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I would like to thank my dissertation adviser Professor Gerhard Joseph and my committee members Distinguished Professor Mary Ann Caws and Professor Peter Hitchcock. It was their inspirational seminars and scholarship that led to the conceptualization of this dissertation and their unceasing support and genuine interest that helped me complete it. I consider myself particularly fortunate for having had the privilege of completing this work under the guidance of Gerhard Joseph. Gerhard was the embodiment of wisdom and intellect I frequently turned to throughout my studies. In addition, he was also a benevolent friend to my husband and me. My most productive summer was when Jeff and I spent a summer in Gerhard's beautiful turn of the century house. There I had the joy of reading passages from Gerhard's tired-looking copy of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* (from which I quote in the following pages!) and enjoyed the comfort of his backyard where I awaited the arrival of the words that would eventually become another page in my dissertation.

I would also like to thank my parents, Melek and Mete, and my brother, Cem. Without my wonderful family, I would not have learned to love the arts and literature. Cem was the first avid reader I knew. Being the younger sister, I had to imitate him in everything he did, and therefore, following in his footsteps, I became an English major! My mother Melek was *the* confidant one dreams of when pursuing a Ph.D. She never complained that I skipped yet another semester break, summer vacation, or her birthday. Of all the people in my life during my dissertation-writing phase, she was the only person I can remember who never asked the nauseating question: "When will you be done?" She

supported me unconditionally and proved that she is indeed a “melek,” an angel whose gentle wings stretch out from the beautiful Bosphorus and across the ocean.

When I browse my library today, I see that just about every book that left a permanent impression on me was given to me by my father, Mete. Inside every book, he had the habit of inscribing a witty note. The last book he gave me was Paul Auster’s *The Invention of Solitude* and in it dad had written in clumsy childish letters “OKU ECE OKU” (Read Ece Read)—an allusion to the very first sentence I (and millions of other children) were taught to read in school. Several months after receiving this gift, my father was diagnosed with cancer and he passed away in 1998. Like Auster’s father, Mete also became “the invisible man” yet he left behind many “books of memory” that in the end gave me the will to dedicate my life to reading.

It is when writing the dissertation that one discovers and understands the true nature of solitude. I would not have been able to tolerate the extreme isolation dissertation work demands without Jeff’s presence in my life. His dedication to the “cause” together with me, his patience and grace, and the learned feedback he gave to every page I wrote are the reasons why I was able to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

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INTRODUCTION

Historians Robert A. Rosenstone and Anton Kaes have persuasively argued in their respective works that the return to history could be by way of shifting our attention to film. Conveying a postmodernist approach to history, Rosenstone proclaims film provides an effective critique of "traditional History" and allows the past to be told self-reflexively and from multiple points of view ("The Future of the Past" 200-218). The historical past on film, Rosenstone suggests, is "potentially much more complex than any written text" (*Visions of the Past* 15). Kaes offers an analogous opinion, claiming that cinematic representations have "influenced—indeed shaped—our perspectives on the past; they function for us today as a technological memory bank" (ix).

In this dissertation, I agree with Rosenstone and Kaes in that visual media, and more specifically film, may be the means through which the past is most effectively represented today. However, my purpose is not merely to reinforce this contention to the extent that the verbal is entirely disqualified from creating the kind of self-reflexive history that only film seems capable of generating. The following chapters will discuss novels by contemporary writers Adam Thorpe, Orhan Pamuk, and Paul Auster who all see the potential in film for challenging the idea of "Traditional history," how history is represented, and how the representation of history can be displayed from multiple viewpoints without giving up the faith in their own medium.

H. Martin Puchner, in "Textual Cinema and Cinematic Text: The Ekphrasis of Movement in Adam Thorpe and Samuel Beckett," interprets the use of the documentary film script in Thorpe's debut novel *Ulverton* as "the idea to see cinema not as a

threatening agent of visual culture that seeks to extinguish the written word, but as a cultural phenomenon that can provide the novel with a different form of textuality." Puchner's proposition is also applicable to the novels discussed in this study. However, I take Puchner's claim further by suggesting that this "cultural phenomenon" is not only a useful tool for experimenting with textuality. It is these writers' means of introducing forms of history and memory into the realm of the written word. Thorpe in *Still*, Pamuk in *The Black Book*, Auster in *The Book of Illusions* turn to the ekphrasis of analog film, that is, to the verbal representation of the moving image, as a strategy for countering the tension that has emerged in the twentieth century between the visual and verbal.

In what follows, I look at these authors' use of the moving image in relation to the existing poetics of the ekphrasis of still images and art objects. Film, understood as the *temporalization of space*, informs the way in which I interpret film ekphrasis differently from the ekphrasis of still objects that *spatialize temporality*. In trying to emulate this art form, which returns the static image back into time with words, these authors create a poetics of *film* ekphrasis, which constitutes a representation of the past in the present continuous. Their emphatic use of the medium also reflects a transnational and intermedial nostalgia for and a dedication to the analog film, which is being replaced by the digital image in the twenty-first century.

In my final chapter I concentrate on a number of visual artists and filmmakers in order to offer a comparative perspective on the significance of the analog image for those who work in both verbal and visual media. I discuss the "digital" image and explain how its construction of time differs from the analog image. Understanding their difference reaffirms the construction of historical time I attribute to film and its ekphrastic rendition

in this study. In order to grasp the tension between the analog and digital, and to reveal how visual artists are responding to emerging technologies, I turn to the films of Jean-Luc Godard, Michel Gondry, Wim Wenders, and to JoAnn Verburg's photographs and Sam Taylor Wood's mixed media art. Understanding the current practices in the visual arts, I conclude, confirms the poetics I develop for film ekphrasis and proposes interpretive strategies for a future study on the ekphrasis of digital films.

From Ekphrasis to Film Ekphrasis

Before discussing the ekphrasis of film as a potentially new kind of ekphrasis, the existing poetics of ekphrasis, which date back to the Ancient Greek memory techniques and to the Hellenistic rhetoric of the third and fourth centuries A.D., have to be recalled. The most thorough work that maps the relationship between memory and ekphrasis is Frances Amelia Yates' *The Art of Memory*. In this study, Yates explains that memory, to be understood as artificial and cultivated techniques for the retrieval of information stored in the mind, "belonged to the rhetoric as a technique by which the orator could improve his memory, which would enable him to deliver long speeches from memory with unfailing accuracy" (18). The general principle for this system was to "imprint on the memory series of *loci* or places," which, when visited, would revive for the orator the part of the speech to be delivered. In the method of loci, the images perceived by the sense of sight connected the orator to the words that were to be memorized (Ibid). According to Cicero in *De Oratore* (55 B.C.), to remember "we use places as wax [tablets to write on] and images as letters" (38).

Yates also notes that, it is to the lyric poet Simonides of Ceos Cicero attributes the invention of the art of memory as well as the notion of the Sister Arts. For Simonides

"poetry is a speaking picture, painting a silent poetry," because "the poet and the painter both think in visual images which one expresses in poetry, the other in pictures" (42). Thus Simonides sees "poetry, painting, and mnemonics in terms of intense visualization" (Ibid.). The use of images in mnemonics, according to Yates, is greatly indebted to Aristotle's idea that "it is the image-making part of the soul which makes the work of the higher process of thought possible…the soul never thinks without a mental picture [phantasm (or *imago*/*simulacrum* in Latin)]" (46-47).

The kinship between painting and poetry was later recalled by Horace in *Ars Poetica* (18 B.C.) with the phrase *ut pictura poesis*, "as is painting so is poetry," which once again asserts the likeness of poetry and painting and generates the centuries-long debate in art theory and literary criticism. In film studies, in particular, the dictum frames the specificity of media arguments.[1]

An objection to *ut pictura poesis* came from the German Enlightenment philosopher, writer, and art critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. In his often-quoted *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, published in seventeen sixty-six, Lessing writes:

> I reason thus: if it is true that in its imitations painting uses completely different means or signs than does poetry, namely figures and colors in space rather than articulated sounds in time, and if these signs must indisputably bear suitable relation to the thing signified, then signs existing in space can express only objects whose wholes or parts coexist,

[1] See, for instance, the essays in "Part I: Questioning Media" of Noël Carroll's *Theorizing the Moving Image* and Stanley Cavell's *The World Viewed: Reflections on an Ontology of Film*.

> while signs that follow one another can express only objects whose wholes or parts are consecutive. (78)

For Lessing, the plastic arts are spatial and come into being from the juxtapositon of "figures and colors" that constitute the whole. Poetry, on the other hand, is composed of a succession of words, which unfold in time and culminate in a sequential narrative. Painting belongs to the spatial while poetry belongs to the temporal realm.[2] As Joseph Frank explains, in *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature*, for Lessing the pictorial poet and the allegorical painter were doomed to fail because their aims contradicted the fundamental properties of their respective mediums (6).

It is thus safe to say that much of the literature we find on the relationship between verbal and visual representation in the twentieth century is a response either favoring the distinction Lessing makes in *Laocoön* between these two representational modes or supporting the idea of the likeness of painting and poetry which can be traced back to the Ancient Greeks.

One of the earliest and arguably the most important studies in twentieth-century literary criticism, which revisits Lessing and has triggered a series of debates on the relationship between the temporal and the spatial arts, is Joseph Frank's essay "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," first published in *Sewanee Review* and later incorporated into *The Widening Gyre*. Here, Frank discusses language in the poetry of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, and in the novels of Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Djuna Barnes as moving towards spatial form and thus contradicting Lessing's theory. "All these writers,"

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[2] It must be noted that Lessing's critique is specifically directed towards pictorial poetry and allegorical paintings of his time, which, for him, had failed to convey satisfactory aesthetic merit.

says Frank, "ideally intend the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment in time, rather than as a sequence" (*The Widening Gyre* 9). As Murray Krieger explains, Ezra Pound's definition of the image as "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" and the literary adaptations of the montage technique lead Frank to conclude that modernism "favors spatial juxtaposition over temporal succession, the formalistic over the historical" (223) and it pronounces the "hard-won victory over the inherent transience of verbal sequence" (205).[3]

An interesting moment in Frank's article, in terms of its relevance my argument, is his discussion of the cinematographic elements in modern fiction as examples of spatial form. Focusing on the simultaneity of action in the country fair scene in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*,[4] Frank claims the novel achieves "simultaneity of perception by breaking up temporal sequence" (15):

> For the duration of the scene, at least, the time-flow of the narrative is halted; attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the immobilized time-area. These relationships are juxtaposed independently of the progress of the narrative, and the full significance of the scene is given only by the reflexive relations among the units of meaning. (15)

Frank's interpretation of this cinematographic scene demonstrates how temporal sequences, by way of juxtaposition (i.e., montage) transform into spatial units within the narrative flow.

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[3] Murray Krieger notes that Frank's definition is influenced by Wilhelm Worringer's "groupings of periods by their emphasizing flatness or depth in art," Mircea Eliade's "conception of 'sacred time'," and, of course, Ezra Pound's previously quoted definition of the image.

[4] For Frank, the novel marks the shift from realism to modernism.

Frank himself, in a later essay, "An Answer to Critics," first published in nineteen seventy-seven and re-published in *The Idea of Spatial Form*, admits that by evoking Lessing's distinction between the spatial and the temporal art forms, his earlier work created the *misleading* impression that he was "interested in the old *ut pictora poesis* problem" and was suggesting that "literature could attain the spatial effects of painting" (74). Although Frank distances himself from this discussion, studies on *ut pictora poesis* often refer to his idea of "spatial form," and they either identify ekphrasis as such or point out various examples in ekphrastic poetry to show that a distinction between spatial and temporal forms simply does not exist. In either case, Frank's first essay, published in nineteen forty-five, remains to be a canonical text for scholars who study space, time, and ekphrasis in literature and the arts.

The literary montage technique Frank detects in Flaubert's novel, which precedes the invention of the medium of film, is *the* writing technique Walter Benjamin chooses in *The Arcades Project* for his method of historical materialism. As Benjamin explains,

> The first stage in this undertaking will be to carry over the principle of montage into history. That is, to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. Indeed, to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event. And, therefore, to break with vulgar historical naturalism. To grasp the construction of history as such. (*AP* 460)

For Benjamin, this technique also underlies the way in which the collector gathers remnants from another time and place and brings to the present these objects of the past by re-contextualizing them in his own time and space (206).

The idea of the image is particularly significant and plays an important role in Benjamin's historical materialism, which seeks to overcome "the concept of 'progress'" (460). For Benjamin, the "image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill" (462). In "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin explains that "[t]o articulate the past historically [is] to seize hold the method of a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger" ("Theses" 255). The purpose of historical materialism is "to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history" (Ibid.). This concept of history, which could be interpreted as the spatialization of time, is also the essence of the poetics of traditional ekphrasis whereby the ekphrastic object, in Benjaminian terms, is that "image" which "flashes up" and is "singled out" within narrative flow and serves to illuminate the essence and meaning of the diegetic text.

An important study, which revisits Frank's reading of spatial form in modern poetry and fiction, is Murray Krieger's nineteen sixty-seven article, "*Ekphrasis* and the Still Movement of Poetry; or, *Laocoön* Revisited." Here as well as in his book-length study *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign*, Krieger defines ekphrasis as the "sought-for equivalent in words of any visual image, in and out of art" (9). It is a "literary principle" wherein the words of a literary work shape it "into the verbal equivalent of an art object sensed in space" (Ibid.).[5]

[5] According to James A.W. Heffernan, in "Ekphrasis and Representation," Krieger's theory of ekphrasis gives "this moribund term a new lease on life, but actually Krieger stretches ekphrasis to the breaking point: to the point it no longer serves to contain any particular kind of literature and merely becomes a new name for formalism [especially for critics] who believe that only a hermeneutics of contingent historicity and existential temporality can explain literature to us" (298).

In order to place his own definition within the larger frame of ekphrasis poetics, Krieger turns to Cleanth Brooks, Frank, and Leo Spitzer—all of whom he associates with New Criticism. According to Krieger, rationalizing "modernist poetic practice," these critics' reading of ekphrastic poetry reveals a "desire to transform history into myth" (222). For example, in Brooks' reading of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," history is transcended by the mythopoeic because the urn, which Brooks identifies as "the sylvan historian," displays "a history without footnotes. It has the validity of myth—not myth as a pretty but irrelevant make-belief, an idle fancy, but myth as valid perception into reality" (Brooks qtd. in Krieger 225). In Thorpe's *Still*, the "sylvan historian" re-appears this time as Sylvia who is responsible for continuity in Ricky's epic film project.

In Frank's formalist reading, because of the juxtaposition of the verbal sequences, historical time dissolves into mythical timelessness (Krieger 224). Krieger himself, on the other hand, combines Frank's theory (which suggests that a literary work may be apprehended spatially rather than as a sequence) with Spitzer's definition of ekphrasis as "the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art, which description implies, in the words of Théophile Gautier, 'une transposition d'art,' the reproduction through the medium of words of sensuously perceptible *objets d'art (ut pictura poesis)*" (Spitzer 207). However, contrary to Frank, who claims that the fragmented nature of Eliot's poetry forces the reader to juxtapose time sequences scattered in space, Krieger argues that in poems such as "East Coker" and "Little Gidding" in *Four Quartets*, Eliot appears to alter sequential time with circular time. This, according to Krieger, is created both with

the repetition of lines "In my end is my beginning is my end" in "East Coker" and with the description of circular objects[6] like the wheel in "Little Gidding:"

> Eliot captures the divine-human paradox of time as both still and moving, indeed as still moving, in his figure of the wheel, from the circular movement of its hub to the repetitive cycles of its rim. It is the ever-turning wheel of human history, which is tied to the "still point" of the wheel's hub by God's saints, who, like Christ, share the human and divine worlds and the concept of time appropriate to each. (221)

Krieger concludes that Eliot's poetry does not conform to Frank's spatial form, as it poses a paradoxical insistence on both the temporal and the spatial (228). He also notes that Brooks makes an argument similar to that of his on the multiple meanings of the word "still" as it is appears in the first line ("Thou still unravished bride of quietness") in Keats' ode. The multiple implications of the word "still" persist in literature and the visual arts in the late twentieth century and are discussed in the following chapter on Adam Thorpe's *Still* as well as in Chapter Four.

One of the most persuasive arguments against the rigid distinction set between spatial and temporal forms appears in W.J.T. Mitchell's "Spatial Form in Literature: Toward a General Theory." Indebted to Rudolph Arnheim's ideas in "Space as an Image of Time,"[7] for Mitchell, despite their separate forms, the spatial and the temporal are not

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[6] As Leo Spitzer suggests, "[s]ince already in antiquity the poetic *ekphrasis* was often devoted to circular objects (shields, cups, etc.), it was tempting for poets to imitate verbally this constructive principle in their *ekphrasis.* Mörike's poem on an ancient lamp shows the same formal circularity motivated by the form of the model as does Keats's ode on the urn…." (See 207n).

[7] In *Images of Romanticism :Verbal and Visual Affinities*. eds. Karl Kroeber and William Walling. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978: 1-12.

"antithetical modalities" for they depend on each other in order to exist. Therefore, their relationship should be seen as "one of complex interaction, interdependence, and interpenetration" ("Spatial Form in Literature" 544).[8]

Together with Mitchell, Heffernan also critiques the existing poetics of ekphrasis, which sees the spatial and the temporal as two separate realms. Scrutinizing the quintessential ekphrastic object and the subject of a number of studies on ekphrasis, namely Homer's account of the scenes depicting Achilles' shield, Heffernan argues, "many of the scenes turn into narratives" (299).[9] Contrary to Krieger, who "treats ekphrasis as a way of freezing time" and Wendy Steiner, who interprets ekphrasis "as the verbal equivalent of the 'pregnant moment' in art" which aspires to the atemporality of a painting (301), Heffernan defines ekphrasis as "the verbal representation of graphic representation" (299). More specifically, it is the use of "one medium of representation to represent another" (300). His definition, Heffernan claims, captures all the phases of ekphrasis from Homer to John Ashbery's postmodern ekphrasis, which, in this latter phase "undermines the concept of verisimilitude itself" (301).

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[8] Gerard Genette, in *Figures of Literary Discourse*, also argues against the "academic tradition," which has insisted on the "frontier" between narration and description (133-137). Mitchell himself, in the chapter entitled "Narrative, Memory, and Slavery" in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, notes the similarity between description (as Genette discusses the term) and ekphrasis. This similarity thus leads Mitchell to draw parallels between description and memory: "[m]emory, like description, is a technique which should be subordinate to free temporality: if memory becomes dominant we find ourselves locked in the past: if description takes over, narrative temporality, progress towards an end, is endangered, and we become paralyzed in the endless proliferation of descriptive detail" (194).

[9] Grant F. Scott makes a similar observation. For Lessing, Scott argues, Homer's description of the shield is ideal because this ekphrastic object is never allowed to be static and hence it does not gain the opportunity to dominate the narrative; "[t]he more closely ekphrasis emulates narrative the better it is" (307).

For Heffernan, ekphrasis is not the narrative attempt to imitate in words the static qualities of an art object, but rather a device used for the "assimilation"[10] of spatial form by temporal succession; it moves "well beyond what the picture itself implies" (302). From this perspective, I agree with Heffernan in that numerous examples of ekphrastic literature display the hierarchical relationship between the verbal and the visual whereby the privileged status is granted to the former.[11] (Ekphrastic) description, for Genette and Mitchell, is narrative's suppressed other which gains voice only because and when it yields to narrative temporality. Françoise Meltzer, in *Salome and the Dance of Writing*, pursues a similar argument suggesting "Ecphrasis[12] may in fact be the attempt of writing to overcome the power of the image in a mimetically-oriented culture of images" (102).

What is not addressed in these critics' definition of ekphrasis is what happens when the visual that is to be verbally represented is not a static object to start with. In *Still*, *The Black Book*, and *The Book of Illusions*, the ekphrastic *objet d'art*, which appears within the diegetic narrative, is film: a hybrid art form that is "temporal and 'immaterial' as well as spatial" (Rodowick 13). Film has its basis in the photographic image, i.e., movement captured in a single moment. However, for film to exist, the images have to be subjected to a temporal force.

As a hybrid medium, film resists Lessing's aesthetic categories. It does not occupy "space" in the conventional sense of the word; therefore, the ekphrasis of film

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[10] I am borrowing this word from Scott's previously quoted article "The Rhetoric of Dilation: Ekphrasis and Ideology." Here, Scott discusses how literary criticism has often defined ekphrasis as the narrative element that has to be "suppressed," "dominated," or "assimilated" by the diegetic narrative.

[11] This is despite the fact that ekphrasis can also be interpreted as "self-serving and diabolical" since it attempts to disrupt narrative progression via digression and "amplification." See Scott, pages 302 and 307, for examples of this line of argument.

[12] Meltzer's spelling.

cannot be defined as the verbal rendition of "a pictorial or sculptural work of art" (Spitzer). It should be distinguished from the ekphrasis of static images and objects. Film is sequential and therefore it cannot overcome "the inherent transience of verbal sequence" (Frank), nor can it inspire the literary work to turn itself "into the verbal equivalent of an art object sensed in space" (Krieger). The ekphrasis of film also cannot be viewed as "a narrative response to pictorial stasis" (Heffernan) since what it responds to is images already in movement and not a static object.

As Vivian Sobchack states, it is succession, "the transformation of moment to momentum that constitutes the ontology of the cinematic, and the latent background of every film" (95). The terms with which Sobchack determines the ontology of the cinematic brings to mind Siegfried Kracauer's definition of film as the representation of "reality as it evolves in time" (293) and Erwin Panofsky's observation that film enables the "*dynamization of space*" (281). The sequential nature of film also gives the ekphrasis of film this quality. Because the visual and the verbal are temporal, a hierarchical relationship does not exist. If poetry and painting are the Sister Arts, then, perhaps, the novel and film constitute their own kinship as they both depend on time, which is the essence of their existence.

An opposition to this view is, of course, Henri Bergson's idea of cinema as the artificial creation of movement (306). For Bergson, "movement is reality itself" (91) and film is the product of an apparatus, which captures snapshots in the same way the intellect captures the passing reality. When these snapshots are projected, they do not regain their former temporality and movement. Rather, film is the mechanical re-composition of movement with the fragments of what was once a part of moving reality.

The snapshot the cinematograph captures first spatializes movement (i.e., captures a fragment of reality). In the projection stage, when the snapshots appear in sequence, the apparatus merely generates artificially moving images. As Donato Totaro explains, for Bergson, "The movement is only an illusion generated by the projector. Movement does not exist in the images but is thrown back into them" ("Time, Bergson, and the Cinematographical Mechanism"). Film, in Bergson's formula is thus "a spatialization of time/reality" and time here plays a secondary role (Ibid.).

This formula, according to Totaro, is based on a false logic. Even though it is rooted in the photographic image, cinema comes into being only when the still image is returned to movement (Ibid.). "Film is not a series of individual static frames…film frame is relatively meaningless beyond its mere denotative content, but as they flow through the projector gate they come alive" (Ibid.). In my analysis of the transformation of stills and photographs into moving images, I will subscribe to Totaro's counter argument. Consequently, I will treat film as the temporalization of space and not the spatialization of time as Bergson suggests.[13]

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[13] It is because I diverge from the Bergsonian idea of cinema that this study will not address in depth Gilles Deleuze's Bergson-inspired books on cinema, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. As Ronald Bogue explains, Bergson's "notion of *durée* as the time-space flux of a vibrational whole informs Deleuze's entire conception of cinema...." (3). Totaro also confirms Bogue's observation stating that "the movement-image is a form of spatialized cinema: time determined and measured by movement" ("Gilles Deleuze's Bergsonian Film Project"). *Cinema 2* is similarly concerned with defining European modernist/art films in spatial terms: "In the time-image, rational or measurable links between shots…gives way to 'incommensurable,' non-rational links [wherein] vacant and disconnected spaces begin to appear ('any-space-whatevers')" (Ibid.). In the chapter on *The Black Book*, I do, however, allude to Deleuzian terms "mnemosigns" and "onirosigns" from *Cinema 2* in order to characterize Galip's mental travels back in time and oneiric experiences when recalling, viewing, or acting out scenes from Turkish melodramas.

Historically, ekphrasis has been defined as the description of an image or (spatial) object perceived in space; in modernist aesthetics, it is that which evokes timelessness and/or circularity as opposed to chronological time. Depending on the literary text, it either declares victory over diegesis or accepts being the repressed other in the narrative yet also possessing the potential for storytelling.

The ekphrasis of film, I suggest, urges us to approach these formulas with caution. Where film ekphrasis appears, we need not assume a conflict between ekphrasis/diegesis, description/narration, or memory/history. Film ekphrasis, itself the verbal representation of images in temporal succession, is hardly the narrative's other. It takes its cue from the *ut pictura poesis* tradition; however, time, which underlies both film and its rendition in words, bends the various boundaries the existing literature has set in our imagination for reading and visualizing ekphrasis. I, therefore, approach the ekphrasis of film as a narrative device through which fragments of memory are re-integrated into time and enter the process of becoming a part of history.

Film ekphrasis accomplishes what the ekphrasis of still images or art objects, traditionally associated with the spatial form cannot; it is thus the much desired "open aesthetic exchange" whereby the visual "other" need not be "appropriated" by the verbal in order to fit into the temporal structure of the narrative (Scott 302).[14] It is, in effect, an example of "visual poetics," which, Mieke Bal explains, is "an approach to literature, although also applicable to other arts [that] tries to overcome the word-image opposition implanted into our culture from antiquity on" (178), and which Norman Bryson simply defines as "the move between the domains of the visual and the literary" (186-187).

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[14] As Scott suggests, "Often the goal of ekphrasis seems more in keeping with an appropriation of the visual 'other' than an open aesthetic exchange…." (302).

Consequently, I would argue that film ekphrasis exemplifies what Bal has called the "mutual collaboration" of the visual and the verbal arts. Since I will trace the "mutual collaboration" of film ekphrasis in various contemporary postmodern novels, the dissertation's title "As Film is, so goes the Novel" intends to remind the reader of both Simonides and Horace's famous dictum only to emphasize where this study diverges from the long tradition of art and literary criticism which have evolved from *ut pictora poesis*.

Film Ekphrasis and the Late Twentieth-Century Postmodernism

In his "Intertextuality and Visual Poetics," Bryson draws parallels between the spectatorship of images and reading intertextual texts. This similarity enables a non-hierarchical and collaborative relationship between the visual and the literary realms. Bryson's theory centers on the idea that images, like texts, are perceived temporally. He states,

> …looking at an image is a radically temporal process, which changes from moment to moment….Each act of looking attends to a different area of the image and discloses a partial view, as vision transits through the image in endless stops and starts. Each view finds different perch or purchase on the image, and the successive views are strung together serially, in a flow of time. (184)

An image never achieves "totality" or "saturation" nor does it "stand still;" therefore, "when we look at a painting we are constantly revising our previous apprehensions, erasing or regrouping our findings" (185). Calling this the "interpenetrative structure" of an image, Bryson is reminded of Barthes's idea of "intertextuality" whereby the text,

removed from reference to a real world and disconnected from authorial intention, becomes "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of texts, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes qtd. in Bryson 187). In the realm of images intertextuality "is established by *dissolving the frame around the work* [emphasis mine]. In the case of the text, interpenetration is established by annulling the point of origin of the work, whether this point is the world the text refers to or an author in control of its meaning" (187). Bryson himself does not place the parallels between interpenetration and intertextuality within the context of a particular period or movement in literature and the visual arts.[15] He also does not claim "dissolving the frame around the work" is a postmodern phenomenon as both Mary Ann Caws, in *Reading Frames in Modern Fiction*, and Marianna Torgovnick in *The Visual Arts, Pictorialism, and the Novel: James, Lawrence, Woolf*, suggest. For Caws, visually heightened and verbally stressed frames in pre-modern and modern fiction "hold the essence of the work" (xi), but in postmodernism, which Caws states is outside the framework of her study, we witness "the dissolution of the frame" (11) and lose any border from which to access the essence of a given text. For Torgovnick, whose own study is limited to examples derived from literary modernism, in fiction more recent than modernism there are references "to newer visual arts, like photography, film, and television," whose implications and effects on the text differ from those of the traditional visual arts alluded to in modern novels (14).

Krieger, in the chapters "The Verbal Emblem II" and "A Postmodern Retrospect," also notes that in postmodernism the relationship between the spatial and the temporal enters a new phase whereby for "those who verge on the threshold of the postmodern,"

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[15] He does, however, focus on looking at paintings since the starting point for his argument is the distinction Lessing makes between painting and poetry.

the temporal is favored over the spatial (228).[16] The "outrageous" self-consciousness in postmodernism questions the status of art to the level of destroying it (259). The questioning and ultimately the destruction of spatial form, in effect, is the end of ekphrasis which for centuries has contained within "a reflection of our ontological yearning: our anxiety to find an order or structure objectively, 'naturally,' 'out there'—beyond society as well as ourselves—that would authorize signs and forms that our subjectivity projects and that we then want—nay require—others to respond to and acknowledge as being there" (237).

Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, in *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time,* on the other hand, argues that most studies on postmodernism are too preoccupied with "reflexive spatial and static models without ever revealing the disappearance of history [as in historical time]" and what may have replaced this "humanist construction of time" (7). Ermarth's own alternative to historical time is postmodernism's "rhythmic time," which may be considered a "temporal instance of

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[16] For Krieger, one of the earliest examples demonstrating this shift is Wallace Stevens' "Anecdote of the Jar." Despite the "circular" shape of the jar described in the poem, Krieger identifies the object as "anti-ekphrastic ekphrasis," because contrary to Keats' urn, Stevens' jar has "no representation of life on it, only the emptiness of that form itself"(228-9). Therefore, "the Stevens of this poem [is] trying to beckon what is beyond the circle without being free of that circle himself. The poem, in short, recuperates what it would destroy….Is this, then, a poem by a modernist who beckons the postmodern to destroy the circle of form or by a postmodern who still must surrender to its formal persistence?" Throughout this dissertation, I will often repeat this question in an attempt to reveal the extent the writers discussed here separate themselves from modernism and have embraced the various tenets of postmodernism. The question we must ask is not only whether they are postmodernists or not, but also to which postmodernism they adhere; as Krieger notes, a writer may be "projecting a postmodernism that is continuous with modernism [as is the case with Stevens' poem]" or his/her work may demonstrate "the more severe postmodernism…which would disrupt history by totally deconstructing the totalizations of its predecessors and would permit no remnant of spatial form to stand" (230). The following chapter on Thorpe, who claims his postmodernism is "playing around modernism," will begin to shed light on these questions.

collage, or rather collage in motion" (8) and which has its roots in movements such as surrealism.

Krieger and Ermarth's respective approaches to postmodernism's effects on the ekphrastic object and historical time would be perhaps cause for anxiety if our subject were the ekphrasis of spatial art objects; however, analog film—a temporal and hence historical art form *par excellence*—is free of such concerns. In fact, as I will discuss in the following chapters, the late twentieth-century novelists and visual artists find in the analog image and its ekphrastic rendition a level of satisfaction for the kind of ontological yearning Krieger describes. It also substitutes for the loss of history pointed out by Ermarth.

In *Postmodern Fiction*, Brian Mc Hale examines the role of movies and television in modernist and postmodernist fiction. The allusion to these visual media, he argues, "further destabilizes an already fluid and unstable fictional reality" (128). They create a "world-within-the-world, often one in competition with the primary diegetic world of the text, or a plane interposed between the level of verbal representation and the level of the 'real'" (Ibid). The works I discuss, on the other hand, do not always position the filmic realm in opposition to the novel's diegetic world. In the postmodernism of these particular late twentieth-century novels, the *reel* is often synchronized with the *real* world.

As Linda Hutcheon and Alison Lee, in their respective studies suggest, postmodern novelists often allude to the moving images when they want to project a sense of history and temporality, which diametrically opposes modernist ahistoricity and transcendent timelessness. For Hutcheon, postmodernism is the "problematizing return to

history [which] is no doubt a response to the hermetic ahistoric formalism and aestheticism that characterized much of the art and theory of the so-called modernist period…." (88). In order to reintroduce history to the realm of the written word, Hutcheon claims the postmodern "reinstalls historical contexts as significant and determining, but in so doing, it problematizes the entire notion of historical knowledge (89).

Lee, in *Realism and Power: Postmodern British Fiction*, makes a similar argument. Cinematic allusions in British fiction, which challenge the conventions of the realist novel, work "to give an illusion of continuity and coherence" (99); they evoke the sensual and material aspects of the past that is absent in verbal representations of history. "[Imagining the act of] *seeing* the sequences of, and relationships between, historical events gives them a 'reality' and an authority that merely *reading* about them apparently doesn't have" (116). However, in representing "reality," film itself is not unproblematic either; the camera eye and writing are equally incomplete and selective. There is thus a similarity between Lee's argument and Mitchell's contention that ekphrasis "cites" but cannot "sight" (*Picture Theory* 152) the object it seeks to represent. Just as ekphrasis is always an incomplete attempt to represent the visual (Mitchell), so is the representation of history whether it is visual or verbal (Lee).[17]

It should be apparent from the survey above that film is a visual art form frequently discussed in interdisciplinary studies dealing with postmodern poetics, memory, and history. However, the scholarship dedicated to the relationship between

[17] For a more detailed account of Lee's reading of British postmodern novels such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Alastair Gray's *Lanark* (1981), and John Fowles's *Daniel Martin* (1977), see pages 99-127 of her *Realism and Power: Postmodern British Fiction*.

literature and film has surprisingly neglected what theories of postmodernism have sought to scrutinize. For instance, Alan Spiegel's *Fiction and the Camera Eye: Visual Consciousness in Film and the Modern Novel* looks at the interaction between literature and film, yet the focus is on how the nineteenth-century novel either influenced or anticipated film form, and also how modernist writers adapt to their narratives the dynamics between the seer and the seen. In ways that recall Frank's previously quoted analysis of the visual elements in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Spiegel argues it is with this nineteenth-century novelist that the visual gains importance in writing. In the early twentieth century, the visual manifests itself in modernist novels in two different ways. In the works of Virginia Woolf and Samuel Beckett, the seer rather than the seen is more important. These novelists are more concerned with the psychological impact of the images on the seer. Ernest Hemingway and James Joyce, on the other hand, are concerned with their characters' relationship with the external world; therefore, their narratives are reflections of the objective world as if seen through a camera.

Spiegel is successful in explaining how film grammar functions in the construction of the literary works his study focuses on; he is primarily concerned with the seer and her internal world and her interaction with the external realm of objects. Although film grammar is central to Spiegel's argument, the ekphrasis of this medium remains unmentioned throughout the study.

A more recent interdisciplinary work on film and literature is P. Adams Sitney's *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature*. Sitney's reading focuses on the status of vision in modernist/avant garde literary and cinematic texts. Calling it the "antinomy of vision," Sitney proclaims modernist sensibility considers

vision transparent and thus a privileged mode of perception. However, his theoretical analysis of both literary and visual texts challenges the authority the modernists grant the visual. He concludes that both language and image deliver opaqueness. Since Sitney is predominantly interested in perception and not the representation of the visual in verbal language, (film) ekphrasis is not discussed in this work.

Gavriel Moses' *The Nickel Was For the Movies: Film in the Novel from Pirandello to Puig* concentrates on "film novels" by the authors Luigi Pirandello, Vladimir Nabokov, Christopher Isherwood, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Albert Moravia, Walker Percy, and Manuel Puig. Moses treats film as the novels' center of thematic, formal, psychological, and philosophical concerns. It is the ultimate art form of the twentieth century and determines the way in which these writers depict human experience. Moses mainly focuses on the content these films bring into the text rather than the formal process of this interference. Although he persuasively argues that in some of the earliest "film novels" twentieth-century feminist and psychoanalytic film theories are anticipated, he does not offer any theoretical insight on how film is represented verbally in "film novels" conceived in different eras.

Laura M. Sager Eidt's *Writing and Filming the Painting: Ekphrasis in Literature and Film* is yet another study which chooses not to develop a poetics of film ekphrasis despite its assertion that "the insertion of works of art into a film function as a self-referential comment on film as a 'moving image' and its relationship to the silent, static image"—a phenomenon I discuss in considerable detail in the chapters on Thorpe, Pamuk as well as in the final chapter. The focus of Sager Eidt's work is the comparison between "the ekphrastic use of painting in feature films about art and artists with its

function in literary texts" (22). She also explains when using the term "filmic ekphrasis" the reference is "to particular scenes or sequences" and it does not signify "a filmic genre" (Ibid). This dissertation sees both the allusion to and the use of analog film by visual artists and the verbal representation of this medium by writers as a phenomenon crucial to understanding late twentieth-century texts dealing with memory and history. Therefore, this present study adapts a more holistic approach beyond merely focusing on scenes and sequences, for, as Ricky in *Still* declares, the novel *is* the film.

A study that takes into perspective the theories of ekphrasis together with its role as the verbal representation of history is Page DuBois' *History, Rhetorical Description and the Epic: From Homer to Spenser*. Here, ekphrasis is considered one of the conventions of epic poetry which poets turn to when foregrounding a historical narrative. "More than any other of the epic conventions which represent time for hero and reader," DuBois claims, "the *ekphrasis* clarifies the relationship between individual and community history" (3). For Dubois, interpreted through Murray Krieger's previously quoted definition of ekphrasis, the ekphrastic description of the sculpted image of Diana in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* "has the potential to stand as a metaphor for [the] literary work. In addition, its capacity to stop time makes it the perfect space in which to offer a model of history's progress. It is time fixed into a timeless model" (7).[18]

The ekphrasis of moving images, however, is diametrically opposed to the notions of fixity as well as timelessness. The ekphrastic descriptions of cinematic representation imply progress because words are used in lieu of the *moving* images and are therefore

[18] Dubois's notion of "time fixed into a timeless model" in epic poetry can also be seen as the reiteration of Joseph Frank's "spatial form" in a genre other than the modernist novel and poetry.

meant to evoke movement as opposed to fixity. Different from the examples of ekphrasis we find in epic poetry, film ekphrasis is used for its capacity to progress with the narrative without the need for that metaphorical space wherein the past is represented.

Film ekphrasis, which belongs to the temporal realm, is a metaphor for the way in which contemporary writers suggest we can relate to the past in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The emergence of cinema in the early twentieth century and the advancements in visual technologies throughout this century have altered our relationship with the past. The French historian Pierre Nora, who has written about the plight of history and memory in the face of these technological developments, proclaims today the past is *represented* as opposed to *resurrected*. Ours is "an intensely retinal and powerfully televisual memory" ("Between Memory and History" 17). Memory has been conquered and eradicated by history that "binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things" (8-9).

Thorpe, Pamuk, and Auster as well as Wenders, Gondry, Godard, Verburg, and Taylor-Wood would all agree with Nora in that the century we have left behind and the one we have recently entered are "intensely retinal." However, for these writers and artists, in the face of the rapid digitalization of this retinal and televisual culture, the analog photographic image is perhaps *the* alternative means of connecting the past with the present. As I discuss in Chapter Four, contemporary film scholars and visual artists are as invested in the analog photographic image as are Ricky in *Still*, Galip in *The Black Book*, and David in *The Book of Illusions*. The celluloid strip for them represents, what in Nora's terminology would be considered *lieux de mémoire*, those sites where "societies find their past…where memory crystallizes and secrets itself" (7). However, as Nora

explains, the precondition for these sites is that they are forever open to their deformation and transformation by history; if they were not, they would in fact cease to exist:

> Indeed, it is this very push and pull that produces *lieux de mémoire*—moments of history torn away from the movement of history, then returned; no longer quite life, not yet death, like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded. (12)

This description, which brings to mind the paradoxical concept of time as in "still moving," makes *lieux de memoire* an apt model for this study on the representation of the past via the constant and co-dependent relationship between the ekphrasis of still images, which I associate with memory, and images in movement which I identify as history.

As I showed earlier, literary critics have made an argument for ekphrasis as the description of an image or object perceived in space, and in the case of modernist aesthetics, as that which works to evoke a sense of timelessness. It was thus the counter force and a concrete form in contrast to narrative continuity and transience. It was the narrative's repressed other yet bearing within merely an impulse for storytelling. In the case of the analog film, however, this argument is questionable because, where film, as the quintessential hybrid medium appears, we see not the battle between stasis-movement, description-narration, and memory-history, but rather the overcoming of these conflicts.

As D.N. Rodowick explains, "Throughout the history of film theory, film aesthetics has concerned itself primarily with the analysis of space" and not with "what most powerfully affects us in film [namely] an ethics of time" (73). Similarly, literary criticism has also paid more attention to ekphrasis as the *spatialization of time*. Film and

its ekphrastic rendition, I argue, are the *temporalization of space*. At a point when the digitalization of both the verbal and visual arts is erasing historical time and replacing it with "the time of calculation and computer cycles" (Rodowick 104), my purpose is to document why and how the twentieth century imagination has valued the analog image as a site for the construction of time and the representation of memory and history.

CHAPTER I

"Build Your Film on White, on Silence and on Stillness": Past in the Present Continuous in Adam Thorpe's *Still*

> Family photography can operate at this junction between personal memory and social history, between public myth and personal unconscious. Our memory is never fully "ours," nor are the pictures ever unmediated representations of our past. Looking at them we both construct a fantastic past and set out on a detective trail to find other versions of a "real" one.
>
> Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography*

Old men ought to be explorers
Here and there does not matter
We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,
The wave cry, the wind cry.
The vast waters
Of the petrel and the porpoise.
In my end is my beginning.

T.S. Eliot, "East Coker"

The British author Adam Thorpe published *Still* in nineteen ninety-five, following his critically acclaimed debut novel, *Ulverton*.[19] In his first novel, Thorpe constructs a three centuries-long history of this imaginary English town. The narrative, which unfolds in twelve episodes, is written in different styles and dialects representative of the epoch each episode takes place in. This history begins in 1650 and concludes with "Here. 1988"— a chapter that is composed as a documentary film script intended for television. With this script titled "Clive's Seasons," the narrative re-connects to the opening chapter "Return. 1650" and reveals that this first story's villain, Thomas Waters, is in the novel's present time the opportunist real estate developer, Clive Waters' ancestor. Film, the novel suggests, is the medium through which the secrets of the past can be revealed. In *Ulverton*, history is conceived to be cyclical; the present inevitably returns to the past and the perspective this return to the origins provides assures a deeper understanding of the present.

Different from this first novel, *Still*, in its entirety, aspires to be a film without any images. This "film that doesn't exist" (232), "the most unfinished great unfinished movie ever made" (506) is, in fact, the autobiography of the expatriate Englishman Richard Arthur Thornby a.k.a. Ricky. Written in the stream of consciousness technique, the three layers constituting this narrative are: fragments from Ricky's own life as an unsuccessful film director and an under-appreciated film studies professor at a mediocre liberal arts college in Houston, Texas; the day of his return flight to England for his sixtieth birthday for the screening of his twelve-hour long epic movie about his ancestors; and finally, fragments from this so-called epic film, *Haunting Mrs. Halliday*, which Ricky is planning

[19] Awarded the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize in nineteen ninety-two.

to show on the last day of the twentieth century. Even though Ricky claims the film will be created from thirty-two stills and photographs, and admitting his inspiration is Glenn Gould playing Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (37), by the end of the novel, only seventeen of these still images are set into motion and undergo ekphrastic rendition.

In both of these novels, film appears as an effective means of re-creating the past in the light of the present. In *Ulverton*, secrets about the townspeople are exposed during the making of the documentary film. Rapid gentrification, and hence the loss of the historical heritage is prevented when an ongoing excavation, recorded by the filmmakers, exposes the corrupt ancestral history of those locals involved in marketing the town in the present time as the new rural getaway for the *nouveau riche*. The documentary, recording the excavations in the town, not only, quite literally, brings to the surface Ulverton's past, but it also prevents this past from being erased in the name of development and progress.

In *Still*, for Ricky, film is the medium through which he is able to weave together his own life and that of his ancestors. Embracing Robert Bresson's dictum, "*Make visible what, without you, might never have been seen*" (459), Ricky's ambition is to create from these private memories a truthful account of his own past as well as a history of the twentieth century, which for him has flowered from "meanness" (100) and lacked in "kindness and civility" (124). However, it is also evident that by making this film and bringing back to life the images from stillness, Ricky is, in effect, attempting to interfere with and perhaps alter history in the way that it took its course. As early as in the first still—the basis for the first film sequence featuring the events that lead to Ricky's maternal great-uncle William's dismissal from Randle College for painting nude pictures

of his peers—Ricky expresses his desire to be there, in 1913, to prevent the cruelty and degradation William is soon to be subjected to by Streadnam, the assistant to the school principal. “Streadnam is talking about my great-uncle. I’d like to hit him…. But I’m not there to hit him” (96), says Ricky as he urges the reader to be a spectator of the unfolding events, because, he is convinced, “if you don’t watch you won’t remember” (101).

In an interview conducted by Sabine Hagenauer a year after the publication of *Still*, Thorpe explains, as a writer, he is interested in the acts of remembering and constructing a narrative of the past that has been kept “secret,” “hidden,” and “suppressed” (“Interview”). In *Still*, this interest seems to shift towards how film in particular, as the most popular if not the most powerful medium, brings the past under the scrutiny of the present. This approach also determines the questions central to the novel: How can the visual and the verbal realms be reconciled in order to complement each other in the writer’s attempt to recreate the past in the present? Can the late twentieth-century artist/writer compete with the creative minds of the earlier half of the century and create an original work of art? Ricky often expresses anxiety about these concerns. In anger, he reveals his lack of self-esteem in dealing with his disadvantaged place as an artist in the history of art.

> I want people to think I’m so great they hate me deep down under. I’ll bet everyone hated Andrei Tarkovski deep down under. I’ll bet Alfred Hitchcock got right up their noses. Ford, too. Bresson and Godard and Carl Theodor Dreyer. Gods. All of them. They tower above me, gloating. Great men don’t gloat. They don’t need to. They don’t notice me. That’s it. They don’t even notice me. They think I’m the Second Grip. (18)

When he mentions his idea for a film without images to his son Greg, who is himself a successful conceptual artist, Greg reminds him of Derek Jarman's *Blue*, another film without images, thus suggesting that Ricky is not only "the Second Grip," but also, sadly, not as original as he thinks he is.

In the same interview, Thorpe addresses this very issue he proclaims pertains to the artists and writers in the postmodern era. As an artist he admits feeling "dispirited…and nervous of the future [and] ironic" about aesthetic creation. The dominant mood among contemporary artists and writers is the fear that there is nothing new to be created after the monumental creations of the modernists; what remains are the postmodern strategies of "borrowing, putting models together in a collage of things of the past and contemporary things [and leaving them to] jangle together" ("Interview"). Defining postmodernism as "a kind of playing around with modernism…rather than this huge project to create something really fresh and by doing so being subversive and changing society" ("Interview"), Thorpe shows the helplessness of the last modernists like Ricky confronted by postmodernists such as the popular deconstructionist media professor Todd Lazenby, who appears in *Still* as Ricky's arch-enemy at Houston Center for Visual and Dramatic Arts. To demonstrate this conflict between modernist and postmodernist aesthetics, cinema seems to be the ideal art form, which, as we are told in Don Dellilo's *The Names*, is perhaps the ultimate medium for understanding what the twentieth century is about, because, after all, the "twentieth century is *on film*. It's the filmed century" (200). Thorpe himself agrees with Dellilo in that the century we have left behind is one that is highly retinal. In *Still*, he alludes to the visual to convey the notion

that, perhaps only in the photographic image can be found the means of "truthfully" depicting the history of this century.

I would also add that, Thorpe, together with Pamuk and Auster, does not view the moving images as a threat and an art form inferior to writing. With great conviction, he asserts: "One doesn't have to apologize for cinema, it stands right there, the great artists, the great auteurs stand up there with Lawrence and Joyce" ("Interview"). He recognizes film for its potential to represent the century we have left behind in ways that complement verbal narratives.[20] Without giving up the faith in his own medium, Thorpe integrates still and moving images into his writing by turning to the verbal representation of these images. The verbal representation of the analog images enables the novel to freely move between the modernist era, which arguably established the predominance of the analog photographic image, and the bleak postmodern moment when the advancements in (visual) technology are now a threat to the material shape of both the novel and the analog image.

As it is clear from the rivalry between Todd Lazenby and Ricky, in Ricky's opinion (and perhaps also Thorpe's) not all visual forms possess the same aesthetic integrity as that of film. While Todd Lazenby shows one Pepsi commercial after another and lectures about them (503), Ricky refuses to even show his students the films he discusses in class and expects them to be content with a few stills. This is not because "he is not a visual person" (379) as he, ironically, claims himself to be, but because HCVDA

[20] It is for this reason that Ricky is not content with only the stills, but also wants his grandfather's diary. This document, along with "photographs and Uncle Kenneth's decomposing movies" (450), is in the possession of Ricky's half aunt Mrs. Victoria Halliday whom he repeatedly "haunts." The diary stands as the strongest, and perhaps the only evidence behind what Ricky's epic film eventually reveals: his mother is Giles Trevelyan and the Trevelyans' household maid Millicent (Milly) Stephenson's daughter.

does not "have a facility called a cinema with a standard or even wide format screen" (433). Under these circumstances Ricky feels it is impossible to prove to his students that "*The cinema is truth twenty-four times a second*" (374), as one of his masters, Jean-Luc Godard once proclaimed.

The novel promotes itself as a "film," rather than what, in actuality, it appears to be. As early as the first page it asks the reader to assume the role of a spectator who has just walked into a movie theatre. We are immediately cautioned that what we are about to encounter is an unconventional text. Different from a traditional ekphrastic narrative in which words would be used for describing images, Ricky explains that the novel *is* the film. The words on the page are not words in place of images that are hypothetically projected onto the screen; they *are* the images. Thus the reader is first expected to become a spectator only to immediately re-assume her role as the reader. The novel, abruptly beginning in the middle of a sentence, communicates to its reader her dual role as the spectator/reader: "The bit you missed was vital but I'm not rewinding and this is a unique screening….This is the trailer, by the way" (2-3). With this introduction, the first ekphrastic layer, although an unusual one, is established. We understand that what we are about to read is the verbal rendition of a film which originally was also not made up of images. With this layer, Thorpe challenges the boundary between the verbal and the visual by manipulating the notion that an ekphrastic object is, by definition, the verbal representation of a *visual* art object.

There is, however, a second ekphrastic layer in the novel: the film *Haunting Mrs. Halliday*. This movie, named after Ricky's vain attempts to acquire from Mrs. Halliday

his grandfather Giles' diary, although incomplete,[21] is edited from photographs, fragments from his great great-Uncle Kenneth's home-made movie *The Family Outing* as well as Ricky's own "short VD, *Home with Mrs. Halliday*" (460). Even though these relics integrated into the film create the impression of a traditional ekphrastic process, the fact that their rendition too will become a part of the overarching ekphrastic layer explained above complicates such a conclusion. What is "screened" from *Haunting Mrs. Halliday* is twice removed from its original form. The first removal is when Ricky transcribes these fragments of images and integrates them into his narrative. The second removal is a result of the first ekphrastic layer: these transcribed words projected onto the screen as words represent the ekphrasis of the visual original. Hence, in a process that may be summarized as the ekphrasis of film ekphrasis, the images are first devoured by words and then re-projected onto a screen as words. Thus, the illusion of watching a film is created for the reader; however, if we were to re-transform these words on the screen into images, different from a traditional ekphrastic narrative, we would be returned to their *ekphrastic* rendition and not to the visual text.[22]

It is, therefore, ironic that Ricky, the creator of such a complicated project, mocks Todd Lazenby for praising Malcolm Lowry's unpublished and lost novel *In Ballast to the*

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[21] Since only seventeen of the thirty-two stills are narrativized by the end of the novel.

[22] In order to counter the confusion arising from what he calls "the chiasmus between film and novel in which the novel becomes a film and the film becomes a novel," H. Martin Puchner differentiates "between the two by referring to the actual novel as '*Still*-the-novel' and the novel posing as film as '*Still*-the-text-film'." He adds, "[i]n order to analyze the ways in which *Still* crosses over to film, it is necessary to keep apart its actual, textual form, printed in a book as a novel, and its imaginary form as a film—not a script—that consists of nothing but letters on the screen." As useful as this distinction is, it neglects the third dimension, that is, the so-called film *Haunting Mrs. Halliday* even though it is eventually disseminated into "*Still*-the-text-film."

White Sea.[23] What is particularly disturbing for Ricky is Todd Lazenby's description of Lowry's novel using complicated poststructuralist terminology. He describes it as "a complete not said, it is all intertext, it is a margin of margins, it is an event in metalanguage as the Big Bang is an event on radiowave receivers, it is a whisper of white noise, it eavesdrops on us but not us on it, it remembers nothing, it is what will have been done and does not allow the return of the same, it is ultimate rupture and total non-closure…" (368). What Ricky fails to realize here is that, by mentioning Lowry's text, Todd Lazenby is, actually, not only exposing Ricky's ignorance of the fact that the novel was never published,[24] but he is also describing Ricky his own film, itself a "complete not said" and, I might also add, a complete not shown.

This complicated structure of the novel adds a new dimension to the way in which we might understand the ekphrastic use of film in fiction. Even though the influence of film form on literature is not a recent phenomenon and therefore it is not necessarily "something really fresh," Thorpe himself admits that, with *Still*, he attempted to radicalize the nature of the novel by using film, the very form, he claims, has challenged the popularity of writing. Claiming *Still* to be his "filmproof"[25] yet film-inspired novel,

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[23] An interesting article that traces the story of Lowry's lost manuscript is Lucy Niall and Alec McHoul's "Lowry's Envois." According to this article, the novel was set in Cambridge University, the school Ricky also attended. Niall and McHoul also claim that the novel's subplot was to be unrequited homosexual love between two male students attending Cambridge. This aspect of Lowry's manuscript resembles an episode in Ricky's own film wherein, at Randle College, a student's homosexual desire for Ricky's grandfather Giles similarly remains unrequited.

[24] In this tragic-comic scene, Ricky pretends that he has read Lowry's novel until Todd Lazenby informs him that it was never published and is considered a lost manuscript.

[25] By "filmproof" Thorpe means his novel is too complicated to be adapted to the screen. I would add that the novel is also "film ekphrasis proof" as it playfully challenges the basic notions of what constitutes an ekphrastic text.

Thorpe constructs a narrative that puts film into the service of the novel.[26] I would argue that in his attempt to write a novel, which asks the reader to also be a spectator, Thorpe only begins to defy the hierarchical relationship between the visual and the verbal.[27] In using film as his ekphrastic object, he is, in effect, merging two temporal realms into one. Unlike traditional ekphrastic texts, Thorpe's text is not a surface on which the verbal tries to take on the spatial qualities of a visual object it seeks to describe. On the contrary, since in this case both the visual and the verbal realms are temporal, they therefore demonstrate a non-hierarchical relationship.

Cinema's temporal force is also asserted over the numerous photographs in order to dissolve the spatial quality of this visual form and to awaken the stillness and static nature of the past entrapped within these images. This is a necessary condition for

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[26] Thorpe's remarks on film and the novel in the interview with Hagenauer remind us of the views of another experimental British writer, B.S. Johnson. In his introduction to *Aren't You Rather Young to be Writing Your Memoir?* Johnson talks about how modernist writers like James Joyce felt threatened yet at the same time acknowledged film as a revolutionary medium that would alter the nature of storytelling. For Johnson, however, the novel, rather than imitating film form, should "concentrate on those things it can still do best: the precise use of language, exploitation of the technological fact of the book, the explication of thought"("Aren't You"). He also contends that "[n]ovelists must evolve (by inventing, borrowing, stealing, or cobbling with other media) forms which will more or less satisfactorily contain an ever-changing reality, their own reality and not Dickens' reality or Hardy's reality or even James Joyce's reality"("Aren't You"). Johnson concludes by asserting that the realities of his age can only be grasped by accepting chaos as "the most likely explanation"("Aren't You"). The chaotic structure of Thorpe's novel and his idea of the postmodern as "borrowing, putting together things in a collage" are seamlessly in agreement with Johnson's remarks about being a writer of one's own era.

[27] Puchner interprets the confusion the novel creates between the act of reading and the act of watching as challenging Wolfgang Iser's notion of the "implied reader," which the latter distinguishes from the actual/empirical reader. In Iser's theory, the reader, positioned within the novel, becomes a function of the novel. According to Puchner, *Still* manipulates "the implied reader" for "*Still*-the-novel" addresses the reader not as the reader of *Still*-the-novel, but as the watcher of *Still*-the-text-film."

Ricky's purpose because the only means through which the past can be re-viewed in the light of the present, that is, to be brought back to life from death, is if this past becomes present continuous, i.e., released from stillness and is subjected to continuity inherent in the analog moving images.

The difference between the photograph and cinema Roland Barthes describes is applicable to why Ricky invests so much hope in film. As Barthes states,

> …the cinema has a power which at first glance the Photograph does not have: the screen (as Bazin has remarked) is not a frame but a hideout; the man or the woman who emerges from it continues living: a "blind field' constantly doubles our partial vision. Now confronting millions of photographs, including those which have a good *studium*, I sense no blind field: everything which happens within the frame dies absolutely once this frame is passed beyond. When we define the Photograph as a motionless image, this does not mean only that they do not *emerge*, do not *leave*: they are anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies. (*Camera Lucida* 57)

For Barthes, the way in which the motionless image can connect to the world outside its frame is if it possesses a *punctum*, the anticipation of what might happen next and that detail in the photograph pregnant with movement (57). The photograph also reveals "a genetic feature, the fragment of oneself or of a relative which comes from some ancestor…what it reveals is a certain persistence of the species" (103-105).

Ricky, too, perceives such persistence in his own stills. When he looks at his great-aunt Agatha in Still Number Eight, he notices the similarity between her features and his ex-girlfriend Zelda's in Still Number Seven. Comparing the two stills he says,

"See the grey eyes….See how [Agatha] has the same tumble of hair as Zelda only in all the other photos I have of my great-aunt Agatha it's not allowed to tumble? See how grave the phantoms are and how laughing the living? See how terrible the difference and how terrible the sameness?" (230-1).

To merely observe the photographs and, as Barthes does, to accept them as the "*this-has-been*…the already dead"(*Camera Lucida* 79) and to mourn for the absence those who have died or have abandoned him, are not what Ricky's project entails. Rather, the desire to alter the course of events and, although impossible, to bring back both Agatha, who died at a young age, and also to re-unite with Zelda, who left Ricky for Todd Lazenby, motivates Ricky to re-integrate these photographs back into time by transforming them into moving images.

He recalls telling Zelda that reels show "it's statistically certain, hurts and poisons are laid down in the genes, they wait there and then when you think you're in the clear they shamble up and say hi, stranger" (204). Ricky wants to animate the photographs of his ancestors and weave a story out of each still even though he tells his students that "[t]here is enough poetry in the stills for you to think of them as just that" (45). But, by restoring each still to the narrative it was once a part of yet is now detached from, Ricky hopes to bring back to life what the photograph has immobilized and hence removed from history. The stills may be poetic, yet they do not satisfy Ricky as much as they do Barthes who finds in the film still a "third meaning," that which "cannot be described [nor] be represented…where articulated language is no more than approximate and where another language begins" ("The Third Meaning" 58-59). For Ricky, history needs to be represented and the story of his ancestors has to be told.

As Marianne Hirsch suggests, "photography immobilizes the flow of family life into a series of snapshots; it perpetuates familial myths while seeming merely to record actual moments in family history" (7). Ricky conceives his film project with the intention to penetrate this opaqueness Barthes, Hirsch, as well as Jo Spence and Patricia Holland attribute to family photographs, which, according to Spence and Holland, "operate at [the] junction between personal memory and social history, between public myth and personal unconscious" (13). He is determined to transform all the visual footage in his and Mrs. Halliday's possession into a filmic narrative. "It's not that those things in Mrs. Halliday's place tell me a great deal" (462), he admits to himself. However, if they were to become a part of a reel, they would be more real.

> It's just that they reassure me. They tell me that it was all *reeal*, that these people actually did exist for God's sake, they moved around knocking their legs against *reeal* furniture and went up *reeal* stairs, holding on to *reeal* banisters that didn't shake and wobble along with the walls and opened *reeal* doors that went somewhere other than a ten-foot drop with Joe Gel winding some cables at the bottom. If they were real then so were my grandmother and my mother and me. Because basically there is so little of them, so little that they might all have been a rumour, even my grandmother at the top of the stairs of Oh Christ suddenly and my dear old mother for crying out loud when she was young. (462)

The difference between what the ekphrasis of *still* art objects and the ekphrasis of film can reveal is thus a question that lies at the center of *Still*. The text vividly exposes the ways in which the photograph and moving image differ from each other in their

respective capacities to represent the past. Ricky's desire to release the family stills from their static status and to subject them to stillness (this time to be understood as both *continuity* and, since the film is yet to be made, as that which is *yet to happen*) is a means of erasing, what Hirsch describes as "the space of contradiction [photography installs] between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life" (8). While these numerous photographs and stills of the Trevelyans, Randle College, and figures from Ricky's own lifetime portray their subjects yet lack the narrative that explicates their histories, once they are unleashed from their stillness, they gain a deeper meaning that reach beyond private memories.

To demonstrate this transition I have previously outlined and to bring to the surface Thorpe's agenda to disclose "hidden" histories, I approach film ekphrasis as a narrative device that *enables* the text to display this thematic concern. As a series of images that unfold in time, the temporal nature of the ekphrasis of film makes possible the unfolding of the story behind each image. For this reason, it is plausible to consider the ekphrasis of film akin to history as opposed to memory. I would argue that, with the title of his novel, which clearly alludes to the temporal paradox implied in the word "still," Thorpe establishes a relationship with his literary predecessors who, in their respective ekphrastic texts, have also turned to the ambiguities of the word (although not necessarily through film) in order articulate their own concerns pertaining to the conflict between the spatial and the temporal realms.

One such example is John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn." As Leo Spitzer's reading reveals, most notably in the first stanza, there are "a series of unresolved paradoxical oppositions" (209) concerning the ekphrastic object as both the witness and

the container of the past. Immediately in the first line, "Thou still unravished bride of quietness," this paradox is apparent, as it is unclear whether the word "still" here implies stasis or continuity. The following lines, "Thou foster-child of silence and slow-time/ Sylvan historian, who canst thus express/A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme," according to Spitzer, brings to the foreground the urn's potential to speak out the past and bring it back to life although it is an object that is the container of the dead. It is identified with "silence and slow-time" yet it is also a historian who could tell us about the past more accurately than the lines ("rhyme") of a poet. However, as stated in the last stanza, although "a friend to man," the urn is nevertheless a "silent form," the cold marble whereupon "men and maidens" are "overwrought."

In contrast to Keats, Ricky's preferred ekphrastic object is the moving image, but his assistant Sylvia, who is in charge of continuity in his film might be considered the late twentieth-century equivalent of Keats' "sylvan historian." Film, when compared to the urn, is similarly paradoxical. This paradox emerges when Ricky takes his idol, Bresson's ideas on the medium, quite literally. According to Bresson, filmmaking ("cinematography," as he prefers to call it) is "a writing with images in movement and with sounds" (5); therefore, Ricky's own film is also made up of words. Following Bresson's advice, he builds his film on "white, on silence and on stillness" (126); that is, his film evolves from photographs—those still and silent shadows on white. However, since Bresson also proclaims "[a]n image must be transformed by contact with other images….No art without transformation" (9), Ricky, too, by transforming silence into sound, images into writing, and stillness into movement makes his own film. It is thus

apparent that the postmodernism Ricky feels entrapped within can indeed be a kind of playing around with romanticism and modernism.

Thorpe's title also evokes the works of the leading modernist, T.S. Eliot. Particularly, in *Murder in the Cathedral* and in poems such as "East Coker" from *Four Quartets* the conflict between linear and circular time is implicated in Eliot's use of the word "still." In the play, the re-occurring image of the wheel is a metaphor for this paradox. Once the wheel turns, it is thought to bring change and progress, yet the movement is cyclic; it moves forward only to return to the beginning. Its rim turns, yet its hub remains static; it is thus still yet still moving.[28] In the poem "East Coker," Eliot revisits this paradox with the line "we must be still and still moving," creating a similar sense of oscillation between stasis and movement. The inseparability of life, death, and regeneration is implied in the line "In my end is my beginning" as well as in the lines:

> Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,
>
> Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place
>
> Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.
>
> Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,

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[28] In Part I of the play *Murder in the Cathedral*, the Third Priest proclaims: "For good or ill, let the wheel turn/ The wheel has been still, these seven years, and no good/ For good or ill let the wheel turn" (18). The Chorus (of women), on the other hand, favoring stasis proclaim: "We do not wish anything to happen/ Seven years we have lived quietly/ Succeeded in avoiding notice/Living and partly living" (19). It is the Archbishop Thomas Becket himself who does not fear the wheel's motion for he knows that the circular movement indicates eternity; it will bring death yet also rebirth, and from such order will grow the myth of the martyr. Murray Krieger sees this as "the divine-human paradox of time," and suggests the figure of Thomas Becket is the uniting force that ties this paradoxical motion "to the center, that still, turning (still turning) point. The two worlds, then with their respective concepts of time, are so linked that every moment is doubled—even self-contradictorily doubled—in its meaning" (221). Hence the contradiction in the word "still."

> Old fires to ashes, and ashes to earth
>
> Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,
>
> Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf.

Yet, despite the never-ending and ever-turning cycle, at the end of the poem, "Old men" are urged to be explorers, static yet also constantly moving "Into another intensity/For a further union, a deeper communion…." Ricky, too, is an aging man exploring the possibility of achieving a deeper communion with his past and his ancestors, and he sees the stills as forming the foundation for the intensity the film will eventually provide. When Ricky's great–great Uncle Kenneth gleefully introduces to his niece Agatha and Milly the maid (Ricky's grandmother) the zoetrope as "the Wheel of Life" (173), the reader is inevitably reminded of Ricky's modernist predecessors like Eliot who haunt him as much as the phantoms of his ancestors.[29] Just like Eliot's "Wheel of Life," the zoetrope as the apparatus for animating still images, is confined to repetition. From the point of view of Ricky's great aunt Agatha and Milly what is visible is

> …a slit, moving away slightly. Another slit…. And another, faster, passing now and another and another and something beyond, something flickering, something alive, and not a rabbit, not a rabbit, but a gent, a gent flickering and walking, how can he be walking in a box, he's naked…and there's another gent, it's the same one…walking and gone flick and then there's another, the same…. (177)

Ricky's reel, on the other hand, once it starts turning, animates images into a sequence of events, such as the passage above, which, by the end of this episode, we

[29] In fact, Ricky is not embarrassed to admit that he knows "the whole of *The Wasteland* off by heart" (444).

learn, has in fact evolved from "Still 5: maid looking blank in front of big house" (178). Thus while T.S. Eliot and Uncle Kenneth's respective wheels spin only to connect the end to the beginning and hence oscillate between the stills and animated images, Ricky's own stills unfold and allow a narrative to emerge from stillness. This passage from stills to images in movement, viewed in broader terms, is the transformation of moment into movement, and hence from memory into history, because, ultimately, what comes to life from the static moments is sequential movement, which constitutes the novel's re-presentation of the past in the present continuous.

Such transition can be considered a late twentieth-century approach to the study of the past. For instance, the French historian Pierre Nora proclaims the "end of a tradition of memory" and "the reflexive turning of history upon itself" (11). According to Nora, today memory has disappeared "surviving only as a reconstituted object beneath the gaze of critical history" (12).[30] In *Still* this reconstituted object is Ricky's film, and Ricky himself, as an explorer of his ancestors' and his own past, is the kind of private historian Nora claims has emerged with this transformation of memory into history:

> The passage from memory to history has required every social group to redefine its identity through the revitalization of its own history. The task of remembering makes everyone his own historian. The demand for history has thus largely overflowed the circle of professional historians. Those who have long been marginalized in traditional history are not the only ones haunted by the need to recover their buried pasts. Following the

[30] Museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, monuments, etc., are examples of such sites created in order to compensate for the loss of spontaneous memory.

> example of ethnic groups and social minorities, every established group, intellectual or not, learned or not, has felt the need to go in search of its own origins and identity. Indeed, there is hardly a family today in which some member has not recently sought to document as accurately as possible his or her ancestors' furtive existence….The decomposition of memory-history has multiplied the number of private memories demanding their individual histories. (15)

In his self-acclaimed role as the family historian, it is thus no accident that Ricky should direct his attention to his maternal ancestors in an attempt to expose their "furtive existence" disguised in the stills. How the transformation from private memories to history will occur is implied in Ricky's maternal ancestors' last name identical to, arguably, one of the most famous British family of historians: the Trevelyans. Ricky's own last name "Thornby" also assonates with another family of historians and intellectuals: the Toynbees. Labeled by Ricky as an epic, his film, if ever completed, will perhaps be in the same vein as the multi-volume history books of G.M. Trevelyan and Arnold J. Toynbee.

Early in the narrative, Ricky informs his audience that he grew up in a household wherein the only history book available was his father's copy of *The Percy Anecdotes*; "He still has it. It's his Bible, for crying out loud" (10), he proclaims. John Timbs, in his "Preface" to the 1868 edition suggests that "the PERCY ANECDOTES were specially intended for family circles of readers, the compilers [Mr. Thomas Byerley and Mr. Joseph Clinton Robertson] have sought to invest their narratives with a domestic interest and character, and thus to add to the happiness of home and local attachments" (v). While

the family screening Ricky plans for his film seems to be far from such domestic bliss and harmony,[31] the film, which is Ricky's own historical narrative, suggests a kinship with the anecdote.

Anecdotes, explains Lionel Gossman, "have always stood in a close relation to the longer, more elaborate narratives of history, sometimes in supportive role, as examples and illustrations, sometimes in a challenging role, as the repressed of history—'la petite histoire'" (143). Timbs subscribes to a similar definition, for in the same preface, quoting Dr. Johnson (who himself borrows from Cicero), he reminds the reader that an anecdote is "something yet unpublished; secret history" (iii). Based on these two definitions, it is possible to view Ricky's film as one that stands closer to the anecdote (as a "petite histoire") as opposed to a grand narrative of history. However, such conclusion becomes questionable when we consider Gossman's elaboration on the Oxford English Dictionary definition of anecdote as "the narrative of a detached incident, or of a single event, told as being in itself interesting" (148). Suggesting that this definition is highly reminiscent of Roland Barthes' *fait divers*, which is "a complete piece of information" that has "neither temporal duration nor context," (Barthes qtd. in Gossman 148), Gossman makes it clear that the atemporality of the anecdote will be in conflict with film as a temporal art form.

Ricky's film, however short it may fall of its task, is an ambitious narrative that aspires to be grand in scope and serves as a historical account of both his ancestors' lives as well as that of the twentieth century. Labeled by Ricky himself as an epic (and

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[31] "None of the uncles are coming. They weren't invited. Anyway, most of them are dead" (11) explains Ricky. Also, in a later chapter titled "APPENDIX," Ricky (posing as his son Greg) gives an account of those who attended the screening: "Hilda Brand (my niece), Ossy Cohen, the person on the sofa who turned out to be a homeless vagrant called Jock, the projectionist Joe 'Gel' Parker, Mrs. Victoria 'Indisposed' Halliday (my half-great-aunt) and myself" (454).

certainly not an anecdote), the film, when and if ever completed, would perhaps be catalogued along with the multi-volume history books of G.M. Trevelyan and Arnold J. Toynbee.

David Cannadine, in his biography of G.M. Trevelyan emphasizes the relationship between the Trevelyans and England noting that the family's history "went as far back as the history of their own country" (4). For Trevelyan, "history was something which his forbears *had made*, which his family was still making, and which was thus an integral part of the fabric of his own life. The history of the nation was but the history of the Trevelyans writ large" (5).

C.V. Wedgwood also emphasizes Trevelyan's uniqueness as a historian, arguing that his writing of history combined literariness with sound scholarship and became a model for historians who have succeeded him. Anticipating Hayden White's idea of history as being similar to fiction,[32] Wedgwood argues that, in post-World War II England, history is perceived to be a branch of literature, and English historical writing should be praised for its strength in "narrative, description and practical exposition" (201).

Contrary to Wedgwood, the cultural critic Stefan Collini considers Trevelyan to be an elitist and nostalgic historian (23). "English history as told by Trevelyan," argues Collini, "was rather like a tour of a beautiful country house conducted by one of the last surviving members of the family" (24). The kind of historian Ricky poses to be resembles in some ways the ideal contemporary English social historian characterized by Collini as one who will "opt for forms that are more essayistic, more frankly selective, more *visual*,

[32] See, in particular, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*.

and perhaps in some ways more overtly polemical and *self-reflexive* as well [emphases mine]" (36). Are we then to think of Ricky as the hypothetical last member of the Trevelyans who, different from his predecessors, will approach history visually, self-reflexively, yet well aware of the limitations of the discipline to represent the past truthfully?

While Ricky's critical approach to his own Englishness creates the image of a historian less nostalgic than Trevelyan, his allusions to history on a more macrocosmic level and his philosophical questionings compare to the works of Arnold J. Toynbee. According to Wedgewood, Toynbee's *magnum opus*, the multi-volume *The Study of History* is

> …not a work of strict historical analysis, but the attempt of one man of vast scholarship, retentive memory and a philosophical habit of mind, to subjugate his entire knowledge of the past to a comprehensible pattern….The pattern arises not from history itself but from his organization and interpretation of historical facts….It is a nobly conceived attempt to make history answer the unanswerable questions about the meaning of life itself and the purpose of man's existence on this planet. (201)

In his epic film, Ricky also attempts to construct a narrative to make sense of the world. His history will ideally reveal the untold stories about his ancestors while explaining all the suffering and pain, which characterizes the twentieth century. For instance, "Still One: Streadnam, 1920," which becomes a part of the first reel, features Streadnam, a staff member at Randle College, the school Ricky's great-uncle William

attended. When this still transforms into the moving image, Streadnam's history re-surfaces and the imperial history of Britain is remembered. Prior to his position at Randle College, Streadnam was a cruel military officer in India during the colonial years. In Ricky's film, this past and his later life at Randle College captured in a single photograph are connected in order to prove that out of such brutal figures "flowered our century" (100). Still Number Two, a school photograph taken on the steps of Randle College, in Ricky's film, highlights Mr. Boulter, a product of Sedbergh College, originally an all-boys school, which prides itself as "a stern nurse of men." He is homophobic and champions conservative ethics and aesthetics. He views art, which features nudity, as nothing but "depravity" (181-182). In another segment from the first reel, which emerges from the third still featuring the housemaster Mr. Philips, "the guy who held my great-uncle's arm and helped him down the steps and spat in [the headmaster] Holloway-Purse's eye (125)," Ricky addresses the history of fascist terror in Europe from pre-World War I to post-World War II, and during the final decades of the century.

In this particular fragment, Ricky reveals his father's affiliation with the British Union of Fascists led by Oswald Mosley (117-8) as well as the fascist regime of Streadnam, Mr. Boulter, and the head master, Mr. Holloway-Purse at Randle College. Under their regime, not only is the "degenerate" artist William, punished, but also half-Jews like Mr. Philips are "spinally damaged by bloody Streadnam and whirled away by that creep Jefferies [the school driver]" (125). Zooming in on Mr. Philips' eyes in the photograph taken in 1910, Ricky sees a reflection of the events of the future: the image of Dr. Mengele, the brutal Nazi physician of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the iconic image of the Romany girl Settela (124), and the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina (125).

Ricky's film enables the stills to allow this narrative to unfold, for as he regretfully admits, "[t]hat's our century for Christ's sake. It's not prehistory, it's not the time of the dinosaurs or the Crusades or the invention of the steam-press, I was up and walking. I was arsing about with my mother's pinny as Dr Mengele padded up to her. The Romany girl, I mean. Whoever she was" (124).

The epic film is thus the story the stills fail to tell; it serves as a man's confession of and confrontation with his own past. Furthermore, it is that which gives voice to what may be forgotten if not audio-visually represented. It succeeds in what some of the actual documentaries made in the late twentieth century have captured by adding "a new dimension to memory [and] connecting the speaking subject to both temporality and mortality…." (Elsaesser "One Train"). The novel overcomes the shortcomings of actual media, which use "visual short-hand" that suppresses or constructs the real, or excludes pertinent details (Ibid.).

To take a single image, a still from a film and to turn it into a symbolic representation of an entire event, Thomas Elsaesser claims, "may obscure another reality." One such example is Settela, the European Sinti girl Ricky also remembers, and, who, until the documentary film *Gesicht van het Verleden* by Cherry Duyns, was the face that symbolized the suffering of the Dutch Jews during World War II. Once Duyns' well-researched documentary re-integrated this still into the flow of history, i.e., into the film it was originally taken from, this image "intensified its force as a symbol. Now when we see the image of 'the girl,' we think of Jews and Gypsies, we think of history and its obliteration, we think of both our national and our European identity, hopefully in a new

light" ("One Train"). It is this kind of "new light," I believe Thorpe also captures with the ekphrastic use of film in *Still*.

Such optimism towards and trust in the audio-visual as a means of unveiling history trapped within a single image that may be interpreted in myriad ways yet not always correctly is a concern central to Ricky's project. The desire to make a film from still images and hence to bring back to life and to be able to re-imagine those faces in the images within the flow of history once again is Ricky's dream. This desire is made apparent through a reference to Thomas Lovell Beddoes "Dream-Pedlary" noted in Ricky's film as Agatha's favorite poem, and from which she recites a stanza when her family mistakenly believes her brother William has passed away. By highlighting the poem's central theme, the (impossible) wish to bring back the dead, Ricky reveals his own desire to bring back those who have departed. The poem, however, expresses another idea that also pertains to *Still* and also to the novel that will be discussed in the following chapter.

In the third stanza, the poet likens life to a dream and to wake up from this dream is to confront death. It seems more desirable to live in a dream than to wake up to the reality that implies no alternative, but to die. For this reason, even though the life we have is a dream, and thus perhaps an illusion, a make-believe, it is an alternative to waking up to reality. In the following chapter, in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*, the protagonist Galip is also searching for a "life," embodied by his wife, Rüya (the Turkish word for "dream"). He is obsessed and determined to re-unite with his dream; in her absence, he re-lives the happy times he had spent with her by imagining himself and Rüya as the actors in the melodramatic films he sees. These films create the illusion that the dream,

that Rüya, is still alive and the life and the history they shared persist in films. He prefers being in this oneiric state to returning to reality, for it is in this realm that he is free to imagine his wife is still alive and is accompanying him, that she is not a memory, a thing of the past, but rather partaking in Galip's ongoing history. Persistence, the state of stillness, and life as opposed to death symbolized by "the Wheel of Life" is what intrigued Ricky's great-great Uncle Kenneth, and ultimately becomes the basic premise of Ricky's reels.

CHAPTER II

"We Lost Our Memories in the Movies": Orhan Pamuk's Melodramatic Representation of the Past in *The Black Book*

> W]hat is reading but animating the writer's words inside the mind's silent cinema?
>
> Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*

> Film is more than the twentieth-century art. It's another part of the twentieth-century mind. It's the world seen from inside. We've come to a certain point in the history of film. If a thing can be filmed, the film is implied in the thing itself. This is where we are. The twentieth century is *on film*. It's the filmed century. You have to ask yourself if there's anything about us more important than the fact that we're constantly on film, constantly watching ourselves. The whole world is on film, all the time.
>
> Don Dellilo, *The Names*

In his memoir *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, Orhan Pamuk alludes to the black-and-white Turkish melodramas of the nineteen fifties and sixties when characterizing the melancholic or, as he prefers to call it, the "*hüzün*"[33]-filled Istanbul of

[33] Although Maureen Freely translates *hüzün* as the "Turkish word for *melancholy*" (90), Pamuk himself, in the Turkish original, emphasizes the difference in the meaning of these two words. It is clear from Pamuk's genealogy that *hüzün*, different from the concept of

his childhood and youth. For Pamuk these Yeşilçam[34] melodramas are an important part of the collective memory of those who have lived in Istanbul and experienced the city's rapid transformation, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century. In almost every film, the writer notices the no longer existing silhouette of Istanbul reveal itself despite the seemingly more important story that unfolds before this background. These films have captured not only those streets and neighborhoods Pamuk recalls walking as a young man, but also an imperial city to a great extent washed away by history.

Pamuk's fascination with cinema, however, is revealed more emphatically in his novel *The Black Book*.[35] Here, the author is already exploring the significance of Yeşilçam melodramas. He tries to understand how and why they resonate in the minds of a generation of Turks that grew up watching these movies, first in open-air theatres, and later, on television. In this chapter, I will look at the ekphrasis of film in *The Black Book* as a narrative device that enables Pamuk to represent the conflicted history of Turkey's modernization project without sacrificing the privilege of being a writer of fiction who

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melancholy as westerners understand it, alludes to a state of mind and emotion experienced with a *community* (of fellow believers) and not in isolation. It implies that the suffering is common to a society, and hence, it is not an individual/private experience as is the case with melancholy.

[34] Yeşilçam is the name and the center of the Turkish film industry. Its name comes from a street in Beyoğlu in Istanbul where most of the film production companies are located and those who work for the industry live. The neighborhood was also a scene for on location shooting. In *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, Pamuk provides an accurate description of the so-called "film scene" in Yeşilçam as the neighborhood "full of the 'uncles,' and tired, heavily made-up 'aunties' who played the same character in every film they did. So when children recognized actors they only knew from their hackneyed film personae…they'd heckle them and chase them down the street…on sunny days, a minibus would appear from nowhere, and actors, lighting men, and 'film crews' would pile out; after shooting a love scene in ten minutes flat, they would disappear again" (86-7).

[35] Since the completion of this chapter, Pamuk's most recent novel, *The Museum of Innocence* was published in 2008 in Turkish, and in 2009 in English. In this novel, film is once again at the nexus of his exploration of history and memory.

creates and imagines. I contend that the ekphrastic rendition of Yeşilçam melodramas is the writer's preferred medium for undoing the hierarchical relationship between the visual and the verbal and, in effect, reconciling history with memory as well as reality with fiction.

In Pamuk's memoir, and more so in *The Black Book*, moving images appear as a mnemonic device, which re-create for the protagonist Galip the intimate moments with a loved one and an urban landscape that no longer can be found. Galip imagines himself and his absent wife Rüya in the image of the actors in the melodramas he frequently recalls or gazes at on television. As scenes and stills from actual and imaginary Turkish and western films haunt Galip, he falls into that state where the present is not distinguishable from the past. The often-complicated love stories in these melodramas and the happy ending, rewarded when the various conflicts between the lovers are reconciled, are metaphors for the relationship Galip desires to have had with Rüya. He allows the world of images to enter his life hoping that they provide an answer as to why Rüya disappeared. He identifies with the characters even though the gray and misty silhouette of the city in the background is not the Istanbul he experiences. The city, in these melodramas, like Rüya, has disappeared and is now just a dream. Galip, nevertheless, embraces these films, and the reader is equally drawn to their verbal rendition throughout the narrative, because this particular visual medium enables an experience of time that removes the barrier between the past and the present. It allows Galip to move his narrative back and forth between then and now; for the reader, it creates the illusion of continuity between these two time frames. This is a departure from

the traditional poetics of ekphrasis, which usually installs the boundary between two separate time frames.

The "complex interaction, interdependence, and interpenetration" (Mitchell, "Spatial Time" 544) of the moving images and the diegetic text in *The Black Book* suggest we step outside the traditional boundary between the visual and verbal realms. In the novel, not only are we exposed to ekphrasis of a temporal order, but also realize that there is nothing to separate textual temporality from that of the visual. As a consequence of this dissolution, the oppositions between ekphrasis/diegesis, description/narration, past/present, memory/history become questionable, thus giving rise to an unconventionally hybrid text. We are left with a complicated narrative that is a mixture of what would have been framed, that is, what the films alluded to tell us in relation to and independent from the rest of the text; a self-reflexive narrative that comments on its own textuality; and an un-framed and vebalized visuality.

Such multi-layering is evident throughout *The Black Book* and is particularly prevalent in the passage wherein Galip is searching for Rüya in the back streets of Beyoğlu and a pimp approaches him with an album full of photographs of famous movie-star look-alikes. This passage, which can be identified as a *framed* ekphrasis, describes the photographs Galip is looking at:

> Pasted on each movie star was the star's name in bold print cut out of newspaper headlines and a color picture of her clipped from a magazine, and arranged all around it were many "attractive" poses of the impersonator striving to look like the original…. Galip carefully studied "Türkan Şoray" dancing in a gypsy outfit that swirled out into infinity or

> wearily lighting a cigarette, "Müjde Ar" peeling a banana, staring wantonly into the camera or laughing recklessly, and "Hülya Koçyiğit" wearing glasses to mend the bra she'd taken off, leaning into the dishes, then weeping, troubled and disconsolate. (123)

Looking through the album, Galip is attracted to the "Türkan Şoray" prostitute and decides to spend the night with her. He is introduced to her as "İzzet," presumably an allusion to İzzet Günay, the famous male star who has appeared with Türkan Şoray in numerous Turkish melodramas. Before meeting his "Türkan," through the eyes of Galip, who has now become "İzzet," we encounter another ekphrastic frame in Galip's description of the *mise en scène* in the brothel. In this perfect verbal rendition of the interior of a brothel scene found in many Turkish melodramas, "İzzet" a.k.a. Galip walks into what appears to him like "an old, dilapidated stage set" (124). On this "stage" one of the prostitutes assumes a pose, which reminds Galip of Rüya who was fond of reading "detective novels (one leg on the back of the sofa)…." (Ibid.) Finally, Galip's eyes rest on the woman who is supposed to be "Türkan Şoray." In Galip's perception, "she was the one who most looked like the original…." (Ibid.).

This is where the description of the *mise en scène* ends and Galip's dialogue with "Türkan" begins. The frame dissolves and the two representational worlds merge, manipulating the "space" of ekphrasis as we know it. The line that separates ekphrasis from the diegetic narrative no longer exists. The prostitute and Galip simultaneously impersonate both the film stars they are pretending to be and their actual personalities in the diegetic world of the novel as the prostitute and her client, a lawyer whose wife has disappeared from the scene. However, although all this takes place in the diegetic realm,

the narrative reads like a film script with additional embedded ekphrastic sentences describing "Türkan." The effect is thus the oscillation between emphatic framing and, simultaneously, the dissolution of these frames:

> The lobby photos stuck into her round vanity mirror reminded Galip that Türkan Şoray had worn the leopard print dress…when she played the nightclub doxy in the movie called *My Disorderly Babe* in which she shared the lead with İzzet Günay some twenty years ago; then he heard the woman say other lines that also came out of the Türkan Şoray movie: (*Hanging her head like a wistful, spoiled child, her hands suddenly flying out from where they clasped under her chin*) "But I can't go to sleep now! When I drink, I want to have fun!"; (*With the air of a kindly aunt worrying over a neighbor's child*) "Stay with me, İzzet, stay until the bridge opens!"; (*With sudden exuberance*) "It was kismet that it happened to you, and today!"; (*In a ladylike manner*) "I am pleased to meet you, I am pleased to meet you, I am pleased to meet you…. Stuck in the mirror, there was also a photo of this particular scene. (125)

For Galip, who is convinced his life is temporarily replicating a Yeşilçam melodrama, they *have* met before. While envisioning himself in a film, in his mind, he replaces the image of "Türkan Şoray" with memories of Rüya. These memories pave their way into Galip's personal melodrama in the present because film ekphrasis here erases the boundary between diegesis and ekphrasis, and enables this present to entangle with the past. The image of "Türkan" transforms in Galip's mind's eye into images of Rüya when they were both kids, and when they were in high school together, and into a recollection

of the reclining posture Rüya used to have when she was watching a movie. "Türkan," on the other hand, wants Galip to remember the images of the actual Türkan Şoray in other melodramas. In other words, while in Galip's mind, the (cinematic) frame constantly dissolves and the "real" merges with the "reel," "Türkan" prefers to maintain this frame. This is because the frame separates the visual (to which she thinks she belongs as a movie star—"an artist," as she calls herself) from the verbal world, that realm where she leads the banal life of a prostitute. This battle between the real and reel thus produces the following dialogue where both Galip and the prostitute playfully recite parts as if they are in and out of their characters in melodramas:

> "You used to love the sensuous way I went down the stairs in *Maşallah Beach*, the way I lit my cigarette in *My Disorderly Babe*, and the way I smoked through a cigarette holder in *Hell of a Girl*. Didn't you?"
>
> "I did."
>
> "Then, come to me, my darling."
>
> (…)
>
> "What's your name? What do you do for a living?"
>
> "I'm a lawyer."
>
> "I used to love a lawyer," the woman said. He took all my money but he could not get this car that was registered to me out of my husband's mitts. It's my car, understand? Mine.… Can you get my husband to give me back my car?
>
> (…)
>
> "Will you marry me?" the woman said exuberantly.

> "I will marry you."
>
> "No, no, you ask me.… Ask me if I will marry you."
>
> "Türkan, will you marry me?"
>
> "Not like that! Ask sincerely, with feeling, like in the movies!
>
> (…)
>
> Galip got on his feet as if he were going to sing the national anthem.
>
> "Türkan, will you, will you marry me?"
>
> "But I am not a virgin," said the woman. "I had an accident."
>
> "What, riding a horse? Or sliding down the banister?"
>
> "No, doing the ironing. You laugh, but only yesterday I heard that the Sultan wants your head. You married?
>
> "I am."
>
> "I always get stuck with the married guys anyway," said the woman, her manner lifted out of *My Disorderly Babe*.
>
> (…)
>
> "We have both become other people." She asked, "Who am I, who am I, who am I?" but Galip didn't manage to give her the answer she wanted to hear.
>
> (…)
>
> From what film did this segment come, from what game? Galip was not certain. Perhaps this was what the woman wanted. (125-9)

This curious dialogue, a collage of cliché lines from Turkish melodramas, demonstrates the oscillation between ekphrastic framing—the photographic frame of "Türkan" in the

movies and "Türkan" and Galip framed together in the mirror—and a hybrid narrative, whereby the characters' diegetic lines merge with ekphrastic ones that describe their movie personas and the lines from the imaginary script they are reenacting. The reader is forced to accept the absence of a frame since what could have been inside the frame is entangled with what would have been left outside.[36] Thus, not only has the boundary between the visual (what is framed) and the verbal (that which surrounds the frame, and that which substitutes for what was supposed to be inside the frame) disappeared, but also the traditional definition of ekphrasis, that is, the verbal representation of *still* art objects, is challenged.

Here spatial form is challenged by temporal succession. Along with the perceptual frame (i.e., the dialogue between "Türkan" and "İzzet") and the actual frames (i.e., the literally bracketed descriptions of "Türkan's" gestures, the lovers' image in the mirror, and the still image from an actual Türkan Şoray movie), the above passage from *The Black Book* is a hybridization (if not complete narration); the text and the textualized scene of a semi-actual film starring İzzet Günay and Türkan Şoray have merged. The

[36] We encounter similar scenes in the contemporary Turkish filmmaker Kutluğ Ataman's *Never My Soul* (2001). In the documentary, we enter the world of Ceyhan, a transsexual who delivers her autobiography through an impersonation of her idol Türkan Şoray. The story of her life as a young man and later as a woman is full of tragic elements resembling a melodrama delivered in the form of a dialogue with the director who remains behind the camera, the co-stars, namely Ceyhan's French lover Jessie, and a close friend, a fellow transsexual. What makes Ceyhan's narrative fascinating is not only her ability to enrich her (hi)story by evoking frequently the familiar Türkan Şoray gestures and lines from various melodramas such as *My Disorderly Babe*, but also how, like the prostitute in *The Black Book*, she poses as the director giving commands to Ataman and her co-stars, and integrates them to the film script she simultaneously (and spontaneously) invents and in which she stars. Ceyhan thus embeds within Ataman's film her own Şorayesque film fragments, creating an effect similar to the one in Pamuk's novel, i.e., the oscillation between the diegetic and the ekphrastic worlds. I would like to thank Fatih Özgüven for alerting me to this documentary.

text's temporal flow is interrupted. By simultaneously impersonating their movie personas and their "real" life selves, and going back and forth between these identities,[37] the dialogue between Galip and the prostitute suggests that the boundary between description and narration hardly exists. It is for this reason that we must perceive film ekphrasis—the verbal narration of images in continuity—as diverging from the realm of memories (associated with description) and moving towards the realm of history (associated with narration). And it is this shift from memory to history through film ekphrasis that enables Pamuk to historicize creatively.

Because movies have become so much a part of Galip's daily existence and the recollection of the past has overlapped with the present to such an extent that the narrative, in effect, reads like a script Galip himself has written. When he receives a call from his Aunt Suzan, he is ready to enact a blissful marriage while simultaneously hiding from his aunt Rüya's disappearance. He pretends to call his absent wife to the phone and imagines her slowly getting out bed. He is then described as putting

> …a different reel in his mind's projector: solicitous husband Galip goes down the hallway to call his wife to the phone, only to find her in bed sleeping like a baby. He even faked "effects" walking up and down the hallway to flesh out the second film and produce a believable ambiance for Aunt Suzan. (50)

[37] The prostitute as herself, as Türkan Şoray, and also Rüya (for Galip also sees his wife in her image). Galip's identity, on the other hand, oscillates between the "İzzet" character and the distressed husband.

The question at this point is then not simply "why film," but why particularly the melodramatic film appeals to Galip, the bourgeois, middle-aged lawyer living in Istanbul and desperately seeking his wife who has left him for no apparent reason?[38]

A quick glance at the development of the melodrama and the novel reveals that historically they address similar concerns. According to Christine Gledhill, like the novel, melodrama is frequently associated with the bourgeoisie (14). Ian Watt argues in *The Rise of the Novel* that the emergence of the novel as a genre in the eighteenth century coincides with the rising middle class values against the socio-economic, political, and cultural hegemony of the aristocracy. And as eighteenth-century novels such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* and Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and *Pamela* demonstrate, the underlying ideology of this new genre was to promote and favor bourgeois values against those of the aristocracy. Between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, theatrical entertainment had an agenda similar to that of the novel: the "high" aesthetic values of the aristocracy were threatened by various, more "popular" aesthetics of the melodrama.[39] Ultimately, both the form and content of the melodramatic

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[38] One could also argue that *The Black Book* is essentially a postmodern detective story that asks more questions than the few answers it offers. Pamuk's use and abuse of this genre is certainly interesting from a formal perspective; however, the allusion to melodramatic films gives more depth to the complex plot as it raises questions about the genre's unceasing popularity in Turkey and what the socio-cultural implications of this phenomenon are.

[39] As Gledhill explains, "theatres were a combination of classics and popular melodramas. This 'heterogeneous' programming prepared the audiences for 'aesthetic transmutation' between genres and modes—for a welding of fantasy, spectacle, and realism- which would be crucial to the melodramatic aesthetic as a cross-class and cross-cultural form.… Literary and dramatic classics—including Shakespearean tragedies, popular fiction, Romantic poetry and operatic libretti, newspapers, and topical events, police journals and penny dreadfuls, paintings and etchings, popular songs and street ballads all provided material for melodrama" (18).

theatre and the novel (emerging as new genres) were counter-aristocracy, and they stood for the values of the bourgeoisie.

Quoting David Grimstead, Gledhill conveys that the Hollywood melodramas of the first half of the twentieth century, when compared to the eighteenth-century melodramas, work with different oppositions. European class oppositions are replaced with city/country oppositions, and the villain was often a wealthy businessman from the city threatening the integrity of the poor country folk (24). The arrogance of the rich was often made evident with the "European airs" they often supported (Ibid.). The country, on the other hand, "was invested with America's founding ideology, egalitarianism, and regeneration which was found in its rural past…." (Ibid.).

The Yeşilçam melodramas of the late fifties and sixties alluded to in *The Black Book* are mostly the Turkish adaptations of the American melodramas with added local elements. Nevertheless, the Yeşilçam melodramas too evolve around certain oppositions. Instead of the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, they generally depict the oppositions that have emerged in the Turkish society as a consequence of the country's westernization and hence industrialization that began after the establishment of the Republic in nineteen twenty-three. These changes continued with increasing effect into the fifties and sixties. Industrialization in Turkey began with the adaptation of the laws of capitalism and radical socio-cultural changes were introduced with the new economic system.

The arguably effective modernization project of the country began in the twenties and the major influence came from Europe. However, after the Second World War, the codes that would westernize the country were imported from the United States of

America. The U.S. cultural products bonded the two countries economically and politically.[40] Turks viewed, often with admiration, the lifestyles that were promoted by the Hollywood melodramas. As stunning Hollywood actors became the standard for beauty, the bourgeois life-style of an average white American family was to become a role model for the modern Turkish family. The images reflected in these films were to inspire the Turks to become cultivated and modern westerners. However, for passionate conservatives and extreme nationalists, such as Rüya's ex-husband,[41] these American films were neither eye openers nor gateways to modernity and western "sophistication." Instead, they represented the cause of misery in society. It is while watching these movies in pitch-dark movie theaters that Turks lost a sense of their past, and thus, their identity. It is due to this loss and the anger it breeds that young boys "put futile bullets through a movie poster a couple of districts away" (110). Others also express their fury and threaten to burn down movie theatres demanding, in vain, to have back their former eyes "which had seen the old images" (Ibid.). The newspapers also report unusual events such as a "shepherd boy from Malatya who'd been induced to develop such an addiction to movies within one week that he lost his memory, everything he knew including his way back

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[40] The fifties and sixties were two very important decades in Turkish–American relations. President Celal Bayar was the first Turkish president to visit the U.S.A during this era. Adnan Menderes, the Prime Minister then, is still remembered for his notorious remark that their goal as the Democrat Party was to make Turkey "little America." There were, of course, political and military reasons behind the developing relations between the two countries. In order to protect the country from a possible Russian threat, Turkey turned toward the U.S. The goal was to gain support to become a NATO member. The U.S. was especially supportive of Turkey's membership to the NATO since the latter would then be the only NATO member that would have a border with the U.S.S.R. It was also for this reason that Turkey sent her troops to Korea to support the American troops during America's abortive war with North Korea. During this war, the Turkish army suffered heavy casualties.

[41] It is ironic (and not an uncommon pattern for political extremists in Turkey even today) that the same character was formerly an extreme leftist when he was married to Rüya.

home" (Ibid). For Rüya's ex-husband, the government should notice that there is a "parallel between the rise of the movie theaters and the fall of Istanbul….Was it mere chance that whorehouses and the movie theatres operated on the same streets. He further wanted to know: Why were movie theatres so dark, so thoroughly and cruelly black?" (Ibid.).

The ex-husband's frustration emanates from the fact that these Hollywood melodramas depicted lives that did not reflect back to Turks their own image. This encounter in the darkness with the images of a lifestyle that modern Turkey was supposed to be aspiring to had a different impact on each social class. For the less educated and more conservative families who had migrated to the cities from the rural areas, the social and cultural relationships in these films (captured from television screens in modest living rooms) could neither be fully understood nor re-enacted.[42] Therefore, when Yeşilçam adapted the Hollywood melodrama, certain patterns were repeated but they were also localized. The rich in Yeşilçam melodramas were also urban; they were better educated, and successfully westernized. The poor, on the other hand, were depicted as nobler, possessing moral values not marked by western sophistication and education; they were the "others" in society. Although their virtue would be rewarded in the end, the rich, the urban, and the westernized would cause them suffering until, in the end, both sides compromised in order to reconcile their differences. Even though these melodramas

[42] This *mise en scene* depicting a lower middle class family engrossed in the different lifestyles they see on the television every night is repeated throughout Pamuk's most recent novel *The Museum of Innocence*. The novel's protagonist Kemal, the wealthy businessman spends thousands of evenings in the modest living room of Füsun's parents' apartment staring at the television together with the entire family just to be close to Füsun he obsessively falls in love with.

mostly had happy endings, such polarization between east and west continues to plague relationships in contemporary Turkey.

It is perhaps for this reason that the melodrama is escapist. Although it overtly or covertly holds a mirror up to the problems in society, ultimately it attempts to reconcile opposites that are far from being reconciled in real life. Thus we can understand the popularity of these films in Turkey and their appeal for Pamuk with Arus Yumul's explanation that "melodramatic representation is, in a certain sense, the denial of the monotonousness of daily life" (53). It also intends to critique materialism and "to re-sanctify values that have lost their sanctity" (Ibid). Perhaps most importantly, Yeşilçam melodramas also glamorized "pure and sacred love," and against the hardships of modern life, "they offered utopian solutions to every day problems" (Ibid.).

Gledhill, on the other hand, persuasively argues that, in both the form and content of melodrama there lies a covert critique of the ideology upon which this genre is founded.[43] Gledhill's argument is also relevant for certain melodramas produced by the Turkish film industry and the way in which this genre is rendered through ekphrastic representation in *The Black Book*.

For instance, in the classic Turkish melodrama *Sevmek Zamanı* [Time to Love], filmed in nineteen sixty-five and directed by Metin Erksan, the love between Meral and Halil (the former, the daughter of a wealthy Istanbul businessman, and the latter, the poor yet virtuous artist from a rural background) seemingly develops according to the conventions of the genre. Meral is forced by her father to marry Başar, her equal in social

[43] Gledhill focuses on Douglas Sirk and referring to the scholarship on Sirk produced during the early 1970s, she argues that "Sirk made use of [the melodrama] to disclose the distortions and contradictions of the bourgeois—petit bourgeois—ideology" (7).

status, but in the end, though briefly, she re-unites with Halil. Their happiness is short-lived because Başar, Meral's rich and powerful husband and the symbolic representation of the ruling ideology, kills the lovers who are trying to flee from the world that would not permit them to consume their love untainted by materialistic concerns. The powerful *mise en scène*, depicting the lovers united in a boat that would take them away from their hostile environment, is an underlying critique of the dominant ideology that prepares the lovers for their tragic end. Surrounded by water, they are in fact trapped and have nowhere to go. It is also during this boat scene that Halil finally throws into the lake the portrait of Meral he has admired for so long. Ali Murat Akser reads this gesture as indicative of the fact that it was the reflection of Meral and not Meral herself that Halil was in love with all along (95-111). When he embraces the "real" Meral, he is naively led to think that the opposite poles they each stand for are also reconciled. But in fact, to repeat a cliché line from Yeşilçam melodramas, "they are from different worlds." Therefore, the "real" Meral can never be with Halil. In a broader context then, as Akser argues, the impossible love between Halil and Meral is a metaphor for the conflict in Turkey between the values of the east (Halil) and the values of the west (Meral), and Erksan's melodrama *Sevmek Zamanı*, subtly yet powerfully highlights this problem with which modern Turkey is faced.

Halil's struggle to reconcile the "real" Meral with her "image" and hence to attribute to the visual one's desires that may not be realized in "real" life are gestures also implicated in Galip's actions in *The Black Book*, thus bringing the novel closer to the particular kind of postmodern writing Linda Hutcheon discusses in *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. Hutcheon describes what she coins as

"historiographic metafiction," a post-modernist text that "paradoxically uses and abuses the conventions of realism and modernism" and in doing so effectively critiques "the transparency of historical referentiality [and] self-consciously reminds us that, while events did occur in the real empirical past, we name and constitute those events as historical facts by selection and narrative positioning" (5). In other words, the (re)constitution of the past in the narratives we create also reflects what we subjectively attribute to these past events.

The historiographic (re)constitution of the past in the present, in this sense, is similar to Halil's reasons for preferring the representation (painting) of Meral to the "real" Meral. As a reaction to the socially and ideologically determined "real" Meral, Halil is relatively free to attribute what he wishes to the painting. Hutcheon envisions the writer of history as highly subjective when she says "[t]here is no pretense of simplistic mimesis in historiographic metafiction. Instead, fiction is offered as another of the discourses by which we construct our versions of reality…." (40). This leads to "generic blurring" whereby the line that separates history from fiction becomes vague.[44]

The Black Book exists within the parameters of historiographic metafiction for, instead of deeming oppositions invalid, the novel aspires to blur boundaries without asserting that history and fiction are one and the same. Instead, film ekphrasis functions

[44] Hutcheon poses the idea of "generic blurring" she sees in historiographic metafiction against Paul de Man's views on binary constructs. Hutcheon disagrees with de Man, who deems binary constructs invalid claiming that it is the "space" in between that matters. For Hutcheon, this kind of opposition is still relevant; the only difference is that history and fiction distinctions are blurred though the separation between them is also installed (113). I find Hutcheon's argument useful for the kind of fiction she discusses in her book, and also for my reading of *The Black Book*, but I am also aware that not all postmodern novels are also historiographic metafiction. In this sense, de Man's idea of reading the "space" in between opposite constructs is also extremely valuable for reading different kinds of postmodern texts.

as that main narrative device that creates the blur. While this device is the means through which the past is re-constituted in the present (the act of remembering as also the re-writing of the past), the frequent intertextual references to Yeşilçam melodramas, and the scenes re-enacted, further erase the boundaries between what is "real" and what is a figment of the characters' imagination.

Another similarity between *Sevmek Zamanı* and *The Black Book* is the Halil-Meral-Başar love triangle in the film, and Galip-Rüya-Jelal in the novel. In the film, the lovers part, re-unite, but are killed in the end by the jealous husband, Başar. In the novel, the third person that interferes between Rüya and Galip is her half brother and Galip's cousin, Jelal. As the narrative seems to suggest, the betrayed husband Galip, like Başar in *Sevmek Zamanı*, is the person who presumably kills Rüya and Jelal outside Alaaddin's store. However, because of the opaque and dream (Rüya)-like nature of Galip's narrative, it is quite impossible for the reader (and Galip himself for that matter) to determine the true course of events. Frequently, Galip's narrative reads like the transcription of dream-images of what had or what could have happened:

> "The house is scarier when the drapes are closed," said Rüya. "Want to go to the movies tonight," Galip said, "at the Palace? We could stop by at Jelal's on the way back." Rüya yawned. "I'm sleepy." "Go to sleep," said Galip. They both fell silent. Galip heard Rüya yawn faintly once more before he hung up.
>
> In the days that followed, when Galip had to remember this phone conversation again and again, he couldn't decide how much of their verbal exchange he had actually heard…Seeing how he remembered with

> suspicion the revised versions of what Rüya had said, "It was as if it weren't Rüya I was speaking to but someone else," he thought and imagined that this someone had duped him. (21)

The confusion Galip experiences, we can suspect, is because he is translating his dream into words. To use Mitchell's vocabulary,[45] Galip is the "ekphrastic speaker" for Rüya who, in effect, is the "ekphrastic object" spoken for. The reader, on the other hand, is the interpreter of Galip's narrative. The more Galip translates the ekphrastic object into words, the more impossible it is for the reader to reconstruct meaning. Rüya, as the image in Galip's mind, is further distanced from the exact rendition when she is spoken for and then interpreted.

This segment also strengthens the reader's suspicion that Rüya is a heroine in a Hollywood/Turkish melodrama Galip simply imagines, and hence she merely exemplifies, what, in Gilles Deleuze's cinematic vocabulary, is called "onirosigns of dream landscapes," which, together with "mnemosigns of flashback memories" are "unorthodox forms of time" (Bogue 5). In the latter, we see "a bifurcating time flashback" and in the former "a floating time in a dream sequence" often found in "the oneiric dance world of Hollywood musicals" (5-6). For Galip, Rüya, perceived as both a mnemosign and onirosign, is thus a typical Deleuzian "time-image," which is found in the realm of cinema, but not necessarily in the "real" world.

Galip's previously mentioned translation of Rüya into words is also another reminder of the traditional hierarchical relationship between the visual and the verbal

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[45] Mitchell likens the ekphrastic process to the psychoanalytic process of dream interpretation whereby the "visual content of the dream is the ekphrastic object, the analysand is the ekphrastic speaker, and the analyst is the reader/interpreter" (*Picture Theory* 164).

ready to be shattered. Rüya is the not "sighted" but only "cited" visual representation, yet it is upon the hope to overcome this impossibility of representation the entire narrative is founded.[46] As the narrator (presumably Galip) himself admits in the last pages of the novel, he feels like "someone who barely recalls a movie he's seen years ago" (396). Does everything we have read constitute the fragments of a vaguely remembered movie transcribed into words?

If this is the case, once again we must direct our attention to this "movie" in order to redeem our (ekphrastic) hope. For I would argue that the verbal rendition of this film is the means through which the novel succeeds in overcoming ekphrastic indifference, and eliminates the opposition between the visual and the verbal realms. To succeed in this is also to succeed in what Pamuk's novel sets out to do: to construct a narrative of the conflicted history of Turkey's modernization project, while at the same time, acknowledge the creative dimension of this task as a writer of fiction.

In a passage such as "I remember Rüya and, getting up from the desk, I gaze at the city's darkness. We remember Rüya and gaze at Istanbul's darkness" (400), the shift in pronouns indicates how the individual's longing for what one recalls unfolds into a communal longing, perhaps to that feeling of *hüzün* that Pamuk talks about years later in his memoir *Istanbul*. The city's darkness is similar to the darkness of the movie theatres in which Galip and his fellow countryman watch their past and present as well as the

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[46] In theorizing ekphrasis, Mitchell claims that the term simultaneously indicates impossibility and possibility. "Ekphrastic indifference" is the idea that, in essence, ekphrasis is impossible; verbal representation cannot represent–that is, make present–its object in the same way a visual representation can. Words "cite," but never "sight" their objects. "Ekphrastic hope," on the other hand, is the means through which the "indifference" is overcome in imagination or metaphor, when we discover a "sense" in which language can do what so many writers wanted it to do: "to make us see" (152-156).

somewhat bleak future unfold. The only means to counter the weight of the *hüzün* for dreams which cannot be re-dreamed and the past, which cannot be re-lived, is to have the hope that storytelling and imagination that flows freely will re-create that which is to be remembered.

It is for this reason that Samuel T. Coleridge is alluded to towards the end of the narrative, thereby revealing the inspiration for the kind of storytelling to which the novel aspires. Galip finally understands that it is the inability to remember, a so-called disease discovered by the "famous English physician Dr. Cole Ridge" that caused Jelal's downfall when he no longer could tell stories and had to depend on Rüya and Galip to help him remember (389). The ultimate problem was then not the inability to write, but to not remember what to write. As Jelal himself explains earlier in the novel, "what is reading but animating the writer's words inside the mind's silent cinema? (234)" Reading is thus not necessarily limited to the verbal realm. In fact, it is more like a visual exercise carried out in the imagination, that is, what Coleridge calls the "synthetic" power capable of balancing or reconciling "opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference" (Coleridge qtd. in Abrams 60). For the poet, imagination is the creative power capable of dissolving "fixities and definites—the mental pictures and images, received from the senses—and [unifying] them in to a new whole" (Ibid.). In *The Black Book*, film ekphrasis may be thought of as the metaphorical equivalent of Coleridge's above-stated theory of imagination with its capacity to dissolve frames, static pictures, and images. I would also add that, not only Coleridge, but also his contemporary John Keats, with his conceptualization of art and the imagination, reinforces my reading of the ekphrasis of

films as that which enables the realization of the imaginary dimension absent in "real" life.

Speaking of Keats, Wendy Steiner, in *Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in 20th Century Art* argues,

> …the value of the imagination and art for Keats lies in its capacity to 'come true.' Art is dream realized, and this is why we value it—as an earnest hope that our dreams might be realized in life. The experience of art is thus a profoundly 'interested' mental state; we are not indifferent to the possibility that what it depicts may be real. (14)

For the same reason, Galip hopes that the art of moving images (both the mind's cinema and the actual movies) will enable him to realize his dream. Rüya's merely ekphrastic presence and Galip's obsessive desire to capture her once again in his imagination is, in effect, similar to Keats' search for beauty, that is, "the realization of the ideal on earth" (Ibid). Such an attempt to attain a deeper meaning that lies beyond letters and words further reinforces the notion that, in his quest to find Rüya in a world of images, Galip is in fact searching for a mystical sense of love and beauty that the absent figure of Rüya represents.

While Keats and Coleridge's respective views on art and imagination offer a western perspective, the allusion to Hurufism in the novel adds an eastern dimension to Galip's quest for spiritual fulfillment. Hurufism, a sect that emerged in the fourteenth century as a variant of Sufism, believes that God reveals himself in the letters of the Arabic alphabet. In addition, the visage of God manifests itself in the human face and the lines on a person's face also reveals his true self (Schimmel 90). While the question of

identity—of being oneself or imitating the other—is a major theme in *The Black Book*, another aspect of Hurufism that pertains to my argument here is that the face, like a canvas on which "identity revealing" letters are projected, contains within a hidden meaning that lies beyond this face. This act of interpreting the "canvas" suggests the empowerment of the visual over the written word. However, as in the chapter, "Love Tales in a Snowy Night,"[47] even though photographs are central to one of the "love tales" told, the female protagonist's persistent attempts to decipher "the vague meanings she could hardly *read* (she used the word insistently)" (147) indicate the danger of transcribing the image into text. Although she finally reads the word "LOVE" in only one of the many photographed faces, the revelation causes her to lose interest in both the photographs and the photographer who admits to have fallen in love with her. The events lead to an even more disastrous conclusion when we learn that some years later "She Doused His Face [presumably, the same face that featured "LOVE"] with Nitric Acid" (148). What has lead to this violent act? Was it because of the discontentment that arises from having too much faith in the meaning that words convey? Should the lines on the face remain abstract and create meaning in the imagination rather than be attached to a concrete meaning in the objective world? In Galip's mind, this would be the ideal world. As the narrator explains:

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[47] This is also the story Pamuk turned into the film script *Gizli Yüz* [The Secret Face]. The film was directed by Ömer Kavur in nineteen ninety-one.

> None of the letters, texts, faces, streetlights, Jelal's desk, Uncle Melih's erstwhile cabinet, the scissors or the ballpoint pen with Rüya's fingerprints [would] be the suspect sign of something other than itself.… Like a kid who imagines himself living in a distant country in the movie he's watching, Galip studied the maps on the desk, wishing to convince himself that he lived in this other realm; for a moment he could almost see the wrinkled forehead of an old man; then a composite of all the sultans' faces appeared before his eyes, to be followed by the face of an acquaintance—or was it a prince?—but before he could make it our clearly, it also vanished. (246)

Through constant transformations—an appearing and disappearing visual world created in the mind's cinema—Galip is able to reconcile his personal memories with that of the history of his nation. From an image of himself as a child in a movie sequence to the portraits of the Ottoman sultans of the past, it is Galip's capacity to have faith in the visual that protects him from the disease that ended Jelal's career as a writer. Galip purposefully avoids "getting involved in the faces' stories, he wouldn't read even the inscriptions under them or the letters Jelal had put on and around the photographs" (247). Consequently by the end of the novel, Rüya of the objective world, who chose to be with Jelal instead of Galip, dies together with the former and only the "rüya" ("dream") lives on with the one that survives to tell the tale, that is, Galip, whose name in Turkish means, "the one who is victorious."

CHAPTER III

"Double or Nothing":[48] Re(e)alizing History in Paul Auster's *The Book of Illusions*

> In order to soothe Georgiana, and, as it were, to release her mind from the burden of actual things, Aylmer now put in practice some of the light and playful secrets which science had taught him among its profounder lore. Airy figures, absolutely bodiless ideas, and forms of unsubstantial beauty came and danced before her, imprinting their momentary footsteps on beams of light. Though she had some indistinct idea of the method of these optical phenomena, still the illusion was almost perfect enough to warrant the belief that her husband possessed sway over the spiritual world….The scenery and the figures of actual life were perfectly represented, but with that bewitching, yet indescribable difference which always makes a picture, an image, or a shadow so much more attractive than the original.
>
> Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark"

> Only the story gave credibility to each image; it furnished a moral, so to speak, to my profession as an image-maker.
>
> Wim Wenders, *On Film*

[48] The title of Hector Mann's last silent comedy.

In Paul Auster's *The Book of Illusions* (*BI*), as in the two novels discussed thus far, film enters the life of the protagonist at a time when the past weighs too much on the present, and he needs to confront and reconcile with his traumatic memories. For David Zimmer, film becomes a part of his life when he is caught in a state of self-destruction after his wife and two sons die in a plane crash. The film he is drawn to is a segment from a two-reel comedy starring the enigmatic actor, Hector Mann. What David sees makes him laugh for the first time in months; he confesses that "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 bottom yet, that there was still some piece of me that wanted to go on living" (*BI* 9). He, then, admits feeling "there was something inside me I had not previously imagined, something other than just pure death" (Ibid).

In David's reaction, the emphasis is on how film enabled him to re-engage with life and give him the desire to return to the flow of time. In this sense, his experience attests to Andrei Tarkovsky's theory in *Sculpting in Time: Reflections in the Cinema* as to why a person goes to see films: it is "for time lost or spent or not yet had. He goes there for living experience; for cinema, like no other art, widens, enhances, and concentrates a person's experience—and not only enhances it but makes it longer, significantly longer" (63).

In *The Book of Illusions*, film ekphrasis, that is, the films of Hector Mann immortalized by David Zimmer in his memoir, takes on a similar guise. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin contrasts the work of a painter with that of a cameraman, and contends that while "[t]he painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web"

(234). To illustrate how film "has enriched our field of perception," Benjamin compares the medium to Freud's theory of psychoanalysis wherein the focus is on the exploration of what thoughts and feelings lie beneath "a slip of a tongue passed more or less unnoticed" (235). The film, according to Benjamin, deepens "apperception" (Ibid) and introduces man "to unconscious optics" in the same way that psychoanalysis reveals man's "unconscious impulses" (236-7). Hence Tarkovsky agrees with Benjamin in that cinema, different from other art forms, deepens our knowledge of reality and existence by giving time a "visible, real form" (Tarkovsky 118). For Tarkovsky, time—"a condition for the existence of our 'I' (57)"—is that which enables a person to know "himself as a moral being, engaged in the search for the truth" (58).

In the novel, film ekphrasis, as the verbal equivalent of film, is the narrative device that deepens David's apperception, and enables him to introspectively correlate his past experiences with the present. In this manner it helps him to understand the present by reflecting back on his past and aids him in the composition of his memoir/biography wherein he seeks to attain the "truth" about himself and the mysterious actor, Hector Mann. In this quest, David relies on what Tarkovsky asserts is the most important characteristic of the analog cinema image, that it is an "observation of life's facts within time, organized according to the pattern of life itself, and observing its time laws" (Tarkovsky 68). However, Tarkovsky also adds that not all forms of cinema follow the laws of time. For example, "poetic cinema," he observes, "boldly moves away, in its images, from what is factual and concrete, as pictured by real life [and it] gives birth to symbols, allegories and other such figures—that is, to things that have nothing to do with the imagery natural to cinema" (66).

In Tarkovsky's opinion, "[t]he cinema image is essentially the observation of a phenomenon passing through time" (67). He "uses time as space" (Wenders 319) and sees cinema as a chronicler of life, which captures "the very *movement* of reality" (Tarkovsky 94) and reproduces life like no other form of art.[49] On the contrary, images in poetic cinema are "constructed…appealing all the time to the [audiences'] intellect," preventing "the audience from letting their feelings be influenced by their own reaction to what they see" (118).

Although, when discussing the aesthetics of "poetic cinema," Tarkovsky has in mind the Soviet experimental films of the nineteen twenties, and, in particular, Sergei Eisenstein's montage techniques which he found "totalitarian and suffocating" (Stam 41), he is also reacting to the theories of cinema articulated by the medium's earliest critics like Hugo Münsterberg, who was interested in film's distance from physical reality. David's relationship to cinema oscillates between these two contradicting approaches to the medium. On the one hand, on a personal level, he finds in film a reproduction of life and the temporal to which the medium gives visible form. On the other, as his formal analyses of silent era films show, he is intrigued by their poetic nature wherein the images are relieved of "the burden of representation" (*BI* 15).[50]

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[49] Tarkovsky's description brings to mind Deleuze's characterization of classical cinema wherein "the image and thought are in mutual accord, the sensori-motor schema [which provides the commonsense temporal and spatial coordinates of our everyday world (Bogue 5)] common to film and viewer allowing a ready passage between the screen world and the world of the spectator" (Bogue 7).

[50] While, for David, silent cinema relieves images of the burden of conveying physical reality, for Stanley Cavell, in *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, photography and film in general, by "automating" images, relieve the modern subject of "the burden of perception" (20). As D.N. Rodowick explains, for Cavell, these two mediums "'overcome' subjectivity not only in removing the human agent from the task

Prior to his lengthy segment on Hector's two-reel comedies, David explains why he is drawn to the black-and-white world of silent films. He talks about the unique language the silent filmmakers had created without the need for storytelling:

> …they had understood the language they were speaking. They had invented a syntax of the eye, a grammar of pure kinesis….It was thought translated into action, human will expressing itself through the human body, and therefore it was for all time. (Ibid)

For David, these silent images without color, and "speeded-up rhythms…stood between us and the film" (Ibid). They distance us from the idea that we are looking at the real world. Instead, "The flat screen was the world, and it existed in two dimensions. The third dimension was in our head" (Ibid).

These ideas summed up in less than two pages in the novel are, in fact, a summation of film theories by Münsterberg, as well as Béla Balàsz and Sergei Eisenstein.

According to Robert Stam, in *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*, considered to be the first comprehensive study of the medium, Münsterberg combines neo-Kantian philosophy with perceptual psychology arguing that film is an "'art of subjectivity', which mimics the ways that consciousness shapes the phenomenal world" (30). "The photoplay," Münsterberg claims, "tells us a human story by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely space, time and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely attention, memory, imagination and emotion" (Braudy and Cohen 402). Contrary to Tarkovsky who, decades later, claims that film is the art form that reproduces "factual and concrete" reality (Tarkovsky 66), for Münsterberg what is

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of reproduction, but also in relieving it from the task or responsibility for perceiving in giving it a series of automated views" (*The Virtual Life of Film* 65).

appealing about the medium is, as Stam explains, its "distance from physical reality" and the space it gives to the "free play of mental experiences" (30-31):

> Working out the tradition of philosophical idealism, where thought shapes reality, Münsterberg argues that film reconfigures three-dimensional reality according to the "laws of thought." Unlike the theatre, the cinema creates pleasure by triumphing over the material principle, freeing the palpable world from the heaviness of space, time, and causality, decking it out instead in the forms of our own consciousness. (31)

"Triumphing over the material principle" is that which fascinates David about the silent films of Hector Mann. Later in the book, philosophical idealism is brought to the foreground yet again with a direct quote from Kant in one of Hector's later films, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*. This film plays a significant role in that it reminds David of what he originally admired about the medium. It also forces him to be less empirical—"Like it or not, I can only write about what I saw and heard—not about what I didn't" (*BI* 221)— so that there is room for his imagination to dictate the content of his memoir, which also becomes the biography of Hector Mann.

Balàsz is another film theorist whose ideas can be traced in David's meditation on the black-and-white films of the silent era. In his writings from the nineteen twenties through the forties, Balàsz emphasizes the "language-like nature of film" (Stam 32) and argues that film spectators "have to learn the 'grammar' of the new art, its conjugations and declensions of close-up and editing" (Ibid). Echoing Benjamin, Balàsz considers the close-up, in particular, as cinema's unique gift to mankind for "it reveals the most hidden parts in our polyphonous life, and teaches us to see the intricate visual details of life"

(Braudy and Cohen 305). We see David's application of this idea to Hector's film persona when he describes a close-up of the actor's moustache in his films, which, the description implies, is as important as Charlie Chaplin's:[51]

> Before the body, there is the face, and before the face there is the thin black line between Hector's nose and upper lip…the mustache 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 thoughts. Other elements are involved—the eyes, the mouth, the finely calibrated lurches and stumbles—but the mustache 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. None of this would be possible without the intervention of the camera. The intimacy of the talking mustache is a creation of the lens. (29)

Perhaps, the most important theorist who informs David's approach to Hector's films, both formally and contextually, is Eisenstein and his notion of "intellectual montage." According to Stam,

> Eisenstein saw the cinema as potentially stimulating thought and ideological interrogation through constructivist techniques. Rather than *tell* stories through images, Eisensteinian cinema *thinks* through images, using the clash of shots to set off ideational sparks in the mind of the

[51] As André Bazin in his essay titled "Charlie Chaplin" suggests, the comedian's "trapezoidal moustache and his duck-like waddle" are the ultimate physical "markings" by which the public immediately remembers Chaplin.

> spectator, product of a dialectic of precept and concept, idea and emotion. (41)

When David proclaims that the spectator creates the absent third dimension in the mind, it is Eisenstein's intellectual montage we are reminded of.

Intellectual montage, considered to be Eisenstein's visual rendition of Marx's dialectical materialism, is thus in the service of Soviet socialist ideology. David himself does not outwardly express that Hector's silent films propagated this ideology. Yet, his ekphrastic rendition of the actor's films reveals that Hector was implicitly alluding to his struggles with the capitalist establishment in Hollywood. In fact, similar to the Soviet filmmakers of the twenties, who sought to construct "a socialist film industry which reconciled authorial creativity, political efficacy, and mass popularity" (Stam 37), Hector, too, tried arguably to reconcile these three goals in his films.

As David explains, in almost all his films "Hector finds himself at the bottom of the social ladder" (*BI* 34). In *The Jockey Club*, as a waiter trying to stop a jewel thief, "he displays all the striving ambitiousness of a hardworking immigrant, a man bent on overcoming the odds and winning a place for himself in the American jungle" (35). In *The Prop Man*, he is the stage manager of a theatre troupe in financial decline. Feeling that he is responsible for the continuity of the troupe, Hector realizes that the only way to provide the props for the performance is to steal them. David interprets the scene where Hector's character traverses the entire town stealing the necessary props from different places and people as "an illustration of Proudhon's well-known anarchist dictum: *all property is theft*" (36). The film, David argues, was a parable of Hector's own life, at a time when the production company he was working for was going though financial strife.

Another film that is ideologically akin to the aesthetics of montage cinema and testifies to Hector's clash with Hollywood capitalism is *Mr. Nobody*. In David's opinion, the film is an expression of Hector's "mounting frustration" with Seymour Hunt (Hector's boss and the owner of Kaleidoscope Pictures) and the film industry's transition to the talkies—a transition that would assure more commercial success. In his translation of the film into words, David unveils the character of C. Lester Chase as a metaphor for Seymour Hunt. Like Hunt, Chase is a business partner of Hector's character in the film. His goal is to eliminate Hector and take over the business. Similarly, in real life, Hunt is destroying Hector's future in the industry by refusing to continue investing in silent comedies. Hector's character is tricked into drinking a potion, which renders him invisible. Standing in front of a mirror, Hector sees that "his face isn't there. He has no reflection. He touches himself to make sure that he's real, to confirm the tangibility of his body, but when he looks in the mirror, he still can't see himself" (43).

This scene alludes to Hector's plight in real life as a silent comedian with a foreign accent: with the arrival of sound, he would be erased from the film industry. As an artist, he is no longer able to compete with capitalism. As David describes:

> Hector is looking for a way to say good-bye to us, to bid farewell to the world…. We are looking at him as he looks at himself, and in this eerie doubling of perspectives, we watch him confront the fact of his annihilation. (53)

David's interpretation of the mirror scene shows that Hector predicts his bleak future. Although *Mr. Nobody* has a happy ending, it is ultimately "a meditation on [Hector's] own disappearance, and for all its ambiguity and furtive suggestiveness, for all the moral

questions it asks and then refuses to answer, it is a film about the anguish of self-hood" (Ibid).

Mr. Nobody represents the annihilating battle in the real world where, in the end, capitalism wins and the likes of Hector Mann lose.[52] It is a tragi-comic rendition of film's transformation from an art form into a profit-seeking industry. It is also self-referential in that it is a meditation on the ontology of the filmic image. In the mirror scene, the question is also whether film ought to be in the service of realism and like a realist film aspire "to give a direct and 'truthful' view of the 'real world' through the presentation it provides of the characters and their environment" (Hayward 311).

In creating a vocabulary for David's ruminations on cinema, the ontology of the filmic image, and the medium's relationship to other forms of narrative, Auster relies on the works of important film theorists of the twentieth century. His own experience as a filmmaker[53] and working with the acclaimed director Wayne Wang must have also shaped his thoughts about film and, more importantly, exposed him to the art and craft of filmmaking. However, I would argue that, Auster acquires the tools David uses to philosophize about the art of cinema and, in particular, the medium's relationship to writing from Wim Wenders.[54]

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[52] It is no wonder that the first name Hector Mann chooses for himself after fleeing Hollywood and becoming a man of many hats is "Herman Loesser," a name he sees written inside an abandoned cap.

[53] Auster's most recent film project is an adaptation of one of Hector's later films, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*. In the mid-nineties, Auster worked with Wayne Wang on the films *Smoke* and *Blue in the Face*. He also wrote and directed his 1998 film, *Lulu on the Bridge*.

[54] Auster's interest in the German director extends even to the latter's choice of particular films and directors. For instance, in his latest novel *Man in the Dark*, in a lengthy ekphrastic passage, Auster's narrator expresses his admiration for the Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu's *Tokyo Ga* in ways that echo Wenders' sentiments about the director in his

One of the first visible signs of Wenders' inspiration is the name of the major characters in *The Book of Illusions*. The amalgam of David and Hector's last names—Zimmer and Mann—corresponds to Bruno Ganz's enigmatic character, the artisan frame maker, "Jonathan Zimmermann," in Wenders' *The American Friend*.[55] Auster also seems to have created the name of "Claire Martin," the female protagonist in Hector Mann's *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, by combining the name of one of Wenders' favorite actors, Solveig Dommartin with her character's name "Claire" in *Until the End of the World*. As I will discuss in more depth in the following pages, this combination of the "real" name with that of the "reel" name is a theme central to Auster's novel wherein film ekphrasis becomes an attempt to disentangle this confusion which arises when reality and fiction combined blurs cognition.

In nineteen ninety, when both Wenders and Auster were at the height of their careers, it was Wenders who first proposed that they work together on a film inspired by the parabolic story of Flitcraft in Dashiel Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*. As Auster explains, if they had been able to find the necessary funding, he would have written the script inspired by this character who, like Hector, decides to disappear one day and start a new life as someone else after, miraculously, surviving death. According to Auster, even

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documentary, *Tokyo Story*. For Wenders, as it is for the protagonist in *Man in the Dark*, "the films of Ozu…always asserted a relationship with life" (Wenders 331). This, according to Wenders is admirable because "cinema gets its ethics and its purpose by offering people help with their—real—lives, which means that it should have at least the possibility of relevance to life" (Ibid). It is, however, arguable that *Man in the Dark* ends with similar impressions of cinema. When the novel's protagonist watches a film documenting the slaying of his granddaughter's boyfriend, the images transform this human being merely to "an idea of a person, a person and not a person, a dead bleeding thing: *une nature morte*" (176).

[55] It must also be noted that Zimmer appears as a character in the author's *Moon Palace* and David's son, Marco, who dies in a plane crash in *The Book of Illusions*, is named after another character that appears in this earlier novel.

though the project fell through, he was never able to let go of this idea and over the years formed a biography for this peculiar character, who found a role in his *Oracle Night* (*ON*), published in two thousand and four.[56] This novel, which was published after *The Book of Illusions*, is also interesting for its allusion to the various forms of visual media for the reconstruction of the past in the present. In fact, the novel's protagonist, the writer Sidney Orr, attempts to re-write H.G. Wells' *Time Machine* as a screenplay wherein the characters prefer to travel to the past rather than the future because "we're hungry to know the dead before they were dead, to acquaint ourselves with the dead as living beings" (*ON* 121). However, Orr also reasons that time travel is not all that desirable for "in the end all times would be tainted, thronged with interlopers and tourists from other ages, and once people from the future began to influence events in the past and people from the past began to influence the events in the future, the nature of time would change" (122). Thus, Orr contends that disrupting the linear flow of time, the destruction of "time as we know it" would create "synchronistic blur" (Ibid). And to prove this point, in *Oracle Night*, photographs cause such "blur" when several characters indulge in 3-D still images of their dead relatives and hence lose their ability to relate to those who live in the present, in the same way Ricky does in Adam Thorpe's *Still*. In this sense, similar to *The Book of Illusions*, this later novel also suggests that film may be the only form wherein images are capable of recreating an illusion of the past in the present without creating "synchronistic blur" by altering the continuous progression of time.

The second project the director and the writer would have worked on together was the film *Lulu on the Bridge*. However, after reading the script, Wenders changed his mind

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[56] Interview on NPR's *Fresh Air from WHYYY*. January 20, 2004. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1606880

because, according to the film's producer Peter Newman, "[a]fter taking a close look at the project, Wim realized that this would have been his fourth or fifth consecutive movie with a film within a film" (Auster *Lulu on the Bridge* 210).[57] Although to this date, Auster and Wenders have not collaborated, their respect for each other's work is evident. In the case of Auster, his interest in Wenders' ideas about cinema is most clearly revealed in *The Book of Illusions* and very often channeled through the characters David Zimmer, Hector Mann, and Claire Martin. Likewise, Wenders acknowledges Auster as one of his favorite contemporary American authors whose novels, like Wenders' own films, are not merely driven by a "story," but also by "a sense of space" or an idea that gradually unfolds into a narrative.[58]

In his films of the nineteen eighties and nineties as well as in his writings on film and in interviews, Wenders reveals that he is primarily concerned with reconciling, in theory and in practice, what he calls "the impossible paradox" for a director, that is, the relationship between images and words. In an interview in nineteen eighty-two, Wenders claims that stories create the illusion that there is a coherence in the universe "where there is none" (218). "Stories," he argues, "give people the feeling that there is meaning, that there is ultimately an order lurking behind the incredible confusion of appearances and phenomena that surrounds them…. Stories are substitutes for God" (213). Wenders admits that he himself cannot escape the impulse to turn to stories in films. He claims that "[w]ithout stories the images that interest me would threaten to lose themselves and seem purely arbitrary" (213). And in fact, seven years later, Claire, the protagonist in Wenders'

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[57] Some of these "film within a film" movies are *Paris, Texas*, *Until the End of World*, *The End of Violence*.
[58] http://www.wim-wenders.com/news_reel/2001/0103princeton.htm

futuristic movie *Until the End of the World*, who suffers from the addiction to images, is "healed by a much older and simpler art-form, by the art of storytelling, the art of the word" (340).

This film, which may be considered a turning point in Wenders' career as a filmmaker,[59] also bears an interesting resemblance to *The Book of Illusions* for the way in which the visual and the verbal realms are contrasted. Contrary to his earlier films such as *Alice in the Cities*, where Rüdiger Vogler's character turns to photojournalism because he has lost faith in the capacity of words to represent his impressions of the American landscape, in *Until the End of the World*, Wenders questions the dangerous power images have gained in the late twentieth century. In this road movie set in multiple apocalyptic rural and urban landscapes, Wenders admits that, unlike his previous films where "there was always this delicacy and tenderness towards images," he wanted "to take a hard realistic look at what's coming" (337). As a film about the act of seeing, the fatal addiction to images after years of symbolic blindness, and the obsession with one's own dream images instead of the images from "real" life the naked eye perceives, *Until the End of the World* meditates on the detrimental effects of over-indulging in images. However, equally interesting is the solution the film offers to this "sickness" (340).

As Peter W. Jansen observes, Claire "is healed when her estranged boyfriend Eugene, who is a writer, gives her his manuscript to read, a manuscript that tells her story, the story of the film" (Ibid). Describing the character of Eugene "as a writer really

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[59] *Until the End of the World* is the first film in which Wenders employs High Definition Video, a new technology at that time. During the production phase and after the release of the film, Wenders often talks about both the positive and negative impact of using such technologies for creating images and their capacity to manipulate our sense of space and time. In Chapter IV, this issue is discussed in more detail.

engaging with life" (341), and by giving to his art the power and the capacity to bring Claire back to life from her deadly addiction to images, Wenders enters a new phase in his view of the relationship between the visual and the verbal. He now puts his faith in words in order to counter the chaos created by images.

As a novel with a host of characters equally over-exposed to images, *The Book of Illusions* appears as Auster's own response through literature to the "impossible paradox"—the subject of Wenders' numerous films. Like Eugene, David is the much-needed storyteller whose words rescue the story of Hector Mann, his films, and most importantly, Alma's manuscript of the biography of the actor, which is never published under her name. As David proclaims at the end of his narrative: "Alma had died because of a book, and justice demanded that she be remembered as the author of that book" (*BI* 313). Yet instead she is merely acknowledged in David's memoir, which includes parts of Hector's life derived from Alma's narrative.

The two academic books David has written prior to his work on Hector Mann also indicate his interest in words and the different writers' complex relationship to their medium. In his first book of literary criticism, titled *Voices in the War Zone*, David had examined how the works of Knut Hamsun, Céline, and Ezra Pound during World War II reveal these authors' pro-fascist activities. And in his second book, *The Road to Abyssinia,* which evokes Rimbaud's abandonment of poetry and venture in Abyssinia, David had focused on writers Dashiell Hammett, Laura Riding, and J. D. Salinger, who all gave up writing.

Laura (Riding) Jackson is a particularly interesting choice not only because she renounced poetry, which, she decided, was "too sensuous and self-absorbed" (McGann

458) and hence "incapable of communicating even simple expository truth" (456). (Riding) Jackson also wrote extensively on cinema as an art form that offers "the possibility of re-presenting [the ineffable present]" (Armstrong 130). In a piece she wrote together with the filmmaker Len Lye, called "Film-making" published in nineteen thirty-five, (Riding) Jackson echoes "the Surrealist stress on film as defamiliarisation, as a re-seeing of the world" (Ibid). For (Riding) Jackson, "[t]he language of cinema is movement" (quoted in Armstrong 131); it frees "movement from the static finalities and shapes which the mind imposes on living experience" (Ibid). Hence, film translates "the memory of time back into time again" (Ibid)—an experience David, no doubt, greatly appreciates.

In light of these two books, it seems plausible that David should find interesting the "dead art" of silent films wherein images appear to be self-sufficient (15). However, in his book on Hector's silent films David translates the images into words, and in a sense, undercuts his own philosophy concerning the uniquely self-sufficient visual grammar of these films. Even though David's words seem to damage the essence of these films, his narrative makes these absent images present, and hence accessible to the readers. In this crucial role as the communicator of meaning, David's character brings to mind the figure of the lecturer who, particularly between eighteen ninety-five and nineteen ten, acted as narrator or storyteller in film theatres (Gaudreault 276). The lecturer's function was to counter "the narrative 'weakness' of still images" (Ibid) by providing verbal narration. Gaudreault explains:

> As there was no dialogue to help the spectator grasp what was happening in the diegetic universe [of the film], the need for a *narrator* began to be

> felt when films became longer and more complex. And—until the narrative faculties of *editing* had been further developed—the narrator would carry out the work of narration through the use of words, of articulated language, either in written form (intertitles) or oral form (speaker). (277)

An important study, which informs Gaudreault's argument, is Tom Gunning's *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film: The Early Years at Biograph*. Gunning argues that in the films he made between nineteen eight and nineteen nine, Griffith attended the three categories of, what the former calls "filmic discourse": the pro-filmic, the enframed image, and the process of editing,[60] and, in doing so, achieved the "narrator system," which interiorized the film lecturer:

> [T]his narrator was not located off-screen, but was absorbed into the images themselves and the way they are joined. The *narrator-system* seems to 'read' the images to the audience in the very act of presenting them. The narrator is invisible, revealing his presence only in the way he reveals the images on the screen. (Gunning qtd. in Gaudreault 279)

Neither Hector as a filmmaker nor David as the conveyor of these films to the reader appears to subscribe to the conventions of Gunning's narrator-system. Even in the

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[60] The pro-filmic, according to Gunning, "refers to everything placed before the camera to be filmed. It includes such things as the actors…lighting, set design, selection of locations, and selection of props." The enframed image refers to the transformation of the pro-filmic "from preexistent events and objects into images on celluloid." And finally, editing "involves the cutting and selection of shots as well as their assembly into syntagmas" (466-467). Gunning contends that "[t]hese three aspects of filmic discourse…are how films 'tell' stories. Taken together, they constitute the filmic narrator" (469).

films Hector produces from the late nineteen thirties to the second half of the century, he continues to rely on the idea of the lecturer, in the same way that the reader relies on David's narrative to learn about Hector's films. He uses voice-over narration[61] to deliver the story.[62] In what could be considered his *auteur*[63] phase—writing, directing, and editing all the films he produces at his ranch—, Hector gives more importance to the narrative as opposed to relying on the self-sufficiency of images. According to Alma, these films suggest that Hector no longer considers narration "a weakness in movies, a sign that the images aren't working" (208-9). On the contrary, in a manner that brings to mind Wenders' claim that "the story brings credibility to the image" (Wenders 379), Hector allows the story to dominate his images. This notion is reinforced by the fact that the most recent novel the writer character in Hector's *The Inner Life of Martin Frost* has published is titled *Travels in the Scriptorium*. In two thousand and six, Auster uses this title for, arguably his most self-referential novel, which is an ekphrastic narrative composed from the translation into words a film documenting a writer's daily actions recorded by a camera twenty-four hours a day. To use cinematic vocabulary, the narrator

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[61] In the same article, Gaudreault points out that the voice-over narrator's "intrusion into the kingdom of diegesis" (280) brought the medium even closer to written narrative.

[62] According to Alma's account, *The History of Light*, which David never has the opportunity to see, is one such film dominated by "wall-to-wall narration from start to finish" (209). There is no information pertaining to the subject matter of the film, but its title, which alludes to one of the earliest German names for cinema, "lichtspiel" (play of light), suggests that it may be Hector's self-reflexive work on the development of the medium throughout the twentieth century.

[63] Since, according to Alma's account, these films were made mostly in the nineteen forties and fifties, my use of "*auteur* phase" refers to the idea of *auteur* cinema as it was understood by the *Cahiers du Cinema* group, led by Bazin in the nineteen fifties. The term *auteur*, for the film critics and filmmakers of the *Cahiers* group, referred "either to a director's discernable style through mise-en-scène or to film-making practices where the director's signature was as much in evidence on the script/scenario as it was on the film product itself" (Hayward 21).

in Auster's (and presumably, in Martin Frost's) *Travels in the Scriptorium* is a voice-over narrator constructing a narrative from a series of images implied yet invisible to the readers. David himself also functions like a voice-over narrator in his memoir when he is narrating Hector's films.

The way in which the novel constantly erases the lines that separate the ekphrastic from the diegetic, and the diegetic from the extra-diegetic realms suggest that there are, in fact, no frames which separate Hector, David, and Martin's stories from each other, and Auster's novel from his other novels before or after *The Book of Illusions.* Contrary to Jim Peacock's claim that throughout the novel "Auster draws the reader into the imagined arena (into the *frame*)" (65) that separates the "supposedly 'real' life" from lives on "reel," I would argue that there is no such distinction between "the imagined arena" and "the real" in *The Book of Illusions*. As a matter of fact, Hector Mann's name, which rhymes with the words "actor" and "man," is the first sign that indicates the dissolution of a frame separating the actor from the "real" man.

As the verbal takes on the qualities of the visual and vice versa, the characters in each of these realms also take on the elements of each other's lives. Furthermore, these characters move out of their designated frames to such an extent that, in the end, they all come to represent aspects of Paul Auster himself as a filmmaker, writer, memoirist, biographer, translator, writer writing about films, filmmaker making films about writers, and hence sealing the notion that there is no distinction between an "imagined arena" and "real life." Consequently, *The Book of Illusions* is a postmodernist novel because,"in postmodernism we see the dissolution of the frame" (Caws 11). This *de*framing is not

only a precondition for Auster's novel to take the form of a self-reflexive narrative, but a means for the text to freely oscillate between a memoir and a history of Hector Mann.

The idea that immersing oneself in images can assist the memoirist in the task of remembering the past is a subject Auster has scrutinized earlier in his career.
In "The Book of Memory," the second part of his memoir, *The Invention of Solitude*, Auster defines memory (in terms similar to that of Cicero's memory techniques) "as a place, as a building, as a sequence of columns, cornices, porticoes. The body inside the mind, as if we were moving around in there, going from one place to the next, and the sound of our footsteps as we walk, moving from one place to the next" (82). Auster also quotes Cicero's idea that places are "very much like wax tablets or papyrus, the images like letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, the speaking like the reading" (Ibid). In the pages that follow, referring to himself in the third person, as "A.," Auster gives an example from his own life that conforms to this remembering technique.

He recalls the van Gogh paintings that had inspired him to write his first poems as "an attempt to recapture the memory of the day" (142) he had seen those paintings with his girlfriend at age sixteen. He realizes that for him, not what he had written, but the act of writing itself had served as the image of himself when he was looking at those paintings: "other than the poems themselves, he has not forgotten any of it" (Ibid). He admits that, "Van Gogh's paintings stand in his mind as an image of his adolescence, a translation of his deepest feelings of that period…pinpointing events and his reactions to events by place and time (exact locations, exact moments: year, month, day, even hour and minute)" (141).

To Cicero's memory techniques Auster adds another layer by claiming that in the act of memory he observes a dual movement. He explains that, "[a]s he writes, he feels that he is moving inward (through himself) and at the same time moving outward (towards the world)" (139). In this dual process, memory becomes not only "the resurrection of one's private past, but an immersion in the past of others, which is to say: history—which one participates in and is a witness to" (Ibid)—an idea shared by Pierre Nora, whom I have discussed earlier. This realization enthralls A., but he also fears that his pen "will never be able to move fast enough to write down every word discovered in the space of memory" (Ibid.) In *The Book of Illusions*, published a decade after *The Invention of Solitude*, this fear intensifies because, in addition to the words that are fleeing, so are the images.

The entanglement of David's memoir with that of the actor's history begins with David's *The Silent World of Hector Mann*. However, when David learns that Hector is still alive at the end of the twentieth century, that he lives as a recluse with his wife Frieda Spelling, and that he has produced a number of never-to-be-screened films, his scholarly interest transforms into a closer relationship with the actor.

He receives an in-person invitation from Alma Grund, the daughter of the couple's close family friends, who is also the authorized Hector Mann biographer. Alma invites David to Hector's ranch to join her in her efforts to immortalize the later films of Hector Mann that will be destroyed immediately after the actor's death. According to David, Alma "was the court historian, so to speak, and after the last member of her parents' generation was dead, the only memories to survive of them would be the ones recorded in her book." He, on the other, "was supposed to have been the witness of the

witness, the independent observer brought in to confirm the accuracy of the witness's statements" (*BI* 280). Yet, in the end, Hector's wife, Frieda Spelling, contrary to what her name suggests, destroys Alma's manuscript rather than freeing the words Alma has written and spelled. Frieda also eliminates David's role as the primary "witness." As a result, David's memoir takes on the task of documenting the history of Hector Mann.

For Auster, the act of memory is the resurrection of both private and public histories. We can see this idea reflected in David's memoir, for it is about Hector Mann as much as it is about David himself. David's first person narrative is the story of his own life after the death of his loved ones and his scholarly pursuits. It includes an in-depth analysis of his first book on Hector's silent era comedies and excerpts from his translation of François-René de Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*,[64] after which he, ultimately, models his own memoir.[65] However, with Alma's influence, David is slowly drawn into Hector's private life. From her, David learns that Hector disappeared from the face of the earth feeling responsible for the death of his girlfriend, Brigid O'Fallon. He gains information about the places Hector lived and the people he interacted with under different guises, and about the films he made later in life in hiding with his wife and Alma's parents. While an argument can be made that David usurps Hector's history from Alma, "the court historian" and the authorized biographer, based on Auster's definition of memory, it is possible to read David's narrative as another example of a "book of memory" wherein the history of others "which one participates in and is a

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[64] David's description of Chateaubriand's *Mémoires* as "the most celebrated unfinished, unpublished, unread book in history," inevitably brings to mind Ricky Thornby's own, almost identical, labeling of his so-called autobiographical epic film in *Still*.

[65] Towards the end of his narrative, David openly acknowledges Chateaubriand's influence: "Following Chateaubriand's model, I will make no attempt to publish what I have written now" (318).

witness to" (*IS* 139) is also recorded. David himself, in the closing of the novel, covertly suggests that his memories are inseparable from Hector's history when he reasons that

> [Hector's films are] only missing, and sooner or later a person will come along who accidentally opens the door of the room where Alma hid them, and the story will start all over again.
>
> I live with that hope. (321)

David's last name, "Zimmer," which in German means "room,"[66] reinforces the bridge I am trying to build between *The Book of Illusions* and Auster's nineteen eighty-two memoir wherein he describes "[m]emory as a room, as a body, as a skull, as a skull that encloses the room in which a body sits. As in the image: 'a man sat alone in his room'" (*IS* 88).[67] In fact, this particular image is evoked numerous times in *The Book of Illusions* when David describes his experience of sitting alone in screening rooms watching Hector Mann's films. Yet, different from A. in "The Book of Memory," who constantly reminds himself that memory is that which "was" and "will never be again" (75), David hopes that, granted Hector Mann's films exist, and his words, functioning like a camera, records them, "the story will start all over again" (*BI* 321).

Consistent with the argument I have carried out thus far, David knows that film is not made up of a single and still image Cicero claims has "the power of speedily

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[66] Given the playful nature of the novel and David's role, which is similar to that of a cameraman recording the entire content of the book we hold in our hands, we can suspect that Auster also had in mind the word "camera," what the protagonist's last name would be in Italian.

[67] An essay, which discusses "'the room of the book,' a place where life and writing meet in an unstable, creative, and sometimes dangerous encounter" in *The Invention of Solitude* is Stephen Fredman's "'How to Get out of the Room that is the Book?': Paul Auster and the Consequences of Confinement." http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v006/6.3fredman.html (Retrieved 8/4/2008)

encountering and penetrating the psyche" (*IS* 82). Instead, David's hope is to capture in his words, in the room of the book, his own "space of memory," a series of images in movement that are an imitation of life in continuity. The only means for him to evoke the movement of life as well as Hector's films is through the ekphrastic representation of these moving images, which, in turn, help him to keep the past alive in his mind for many years until the completion of his memoir. David's account of the only film Alma insists he sees at Hector's Blue Stone Ranch, *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, is one such example. As David explains,

> There wasn't enough time to watch another, and given that I sat through *Martin Frost* only once, it was a good thing Alma thought to provide me with the notebook and the pen. There is no contradiction in that statement. I might wish that I had never seen the film, but the fact was that I did see it, and now that the words and images had insinuated themselves inside me, I was thankful that there was a way to hold on to them. The notes I took that morning have helped me to remember details that otherwise would have slipped away from me, to keep the film alive in my head after so many years. (*BI* 271)

The Inner Life of Martin Frost is also a significant choice in that it is an allegory of David Zimmer's own "inner life" and his attempt to use his book to immortalize himself along with Hector Mann and his entourage. When David transcribes his recollection of this film, his narrative reveals the philosophical questions that arise from the merging of Hector Mann's "real" life with that of his films. With this film, which "would never be shown to audiences" (207), Hector channels through the philosophy

student, Claire Martin, the basic tenet of philosophical idealism, that thought shapes reality, in the same way that film does according to Münsterberg.

The film opens with "Martin Frost," a well-known writer enjoying his solitude at his friends, the Spelling's home, where he is house-sitting for the couple and working on a new story. His routine is interrupted when, one morning he wakes up and finds Claire sleeping in the same bed with him. Claire claims that she is also a friend of the Spellings and pleads Martin to allow her to share the house with him. As expected, soon after this awkward introduction, the writer and the attractive student of philosophy fall in love and engage in a passionate as well as an intellectually stimulating relationship.

As David describes, the film shows Martin busy writing a new story while Claire studies the works of George Berkeley and Immanuel Kant, quoting passages to Martin that are representative of the former's aphorism *esse es percipi* ("to be is to be perceived") and the latter's doctrine "that all our theoretical knowledge is restricted to the systematization of what are mere spatiotemporal appearances" (Ameriks 399).[68] As the film progresses, the reference to these philosophers becomes significant when Martin realizes that Claire is someone unbeknown to the Spellings. This twist in the narrative leads to the question of whether Claire is "real" or simply a product of Martin's imagination. When Martin confronts Claire with her lie about who she is or isn't, the

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[68] On page 250, Claire quotes the following from Berkeley's *The Principles of Human Knowledge*: "*And it seems no less evident that the various sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together, cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them…. Secondly, it will be objected that there is a great difference betwixt real fire and the idea of fire, between dreaming or imagining oneself burnt, and actually being so.*"
On page 264, Claire quotes Kant: "*things which we see are not what we see…so that, if we drop our subject or the subjective form of our senses, all qualities, all relations of objects in space and time, nay space and time themselves, would vanish.*"

irrelevancy of trying to differentiate reality from the imagined underlies Claire's argument (*BI* 257).

Somewhat persuaded, Martin decides to "*make a leap of faith*" (262) and give up questioning Claire, and their blissful affair is temporarily restored until Claire becomes fatally ill. During her illness, in a state of frenzy, Martin tries to maintain Claire's declining body temperature by throwing pages from his manuscript into the fireplace. While this gesture brings Claire back to life leaving both Martin and Claire (and David) questioning the strange dependence of Claire's life on Martin's art,[69] it reinforces my contention that art and "real" life are co-dependant in the ekphrastic world Auster imagines in this novel. This allegorical film is, of course, also a re-writing of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"—a story with a similar theme and brought into focus because of Alma's own birthmark.

In Hawthorne's story, Georgiana's birthmark is described as the symbolic "bond by which an angelic spirit kept itself in union with a mortal frame" ("The Birthmark"). The "hateful mark" which makes Georgiana "the object of [her husband, Aylmer's] horror and disgust" is also a "stain as deep as life itself" (Ibid.). For Alma, the birthmark and Georgiana are inseparable: "Make it vanish, and she vanishes along with it" (*BI* 121). In his aforementioned essay "Carrying the Burden of Representation: Paul Auster's *The Book of Illusions*" Peacock illustrates the parallels between Alma and Georgiana arguing that, like Hawthorne's tragic heroine, "Alma is intrinsically framed by the birthmark,

[69] This scene, as David himself also notes, replicates the scene wherein Frieda Spelling throws Alma's manuscript into the fire along with all the other relics that could prove Hector's existence.

such that in a sense she becomes a piece of art which attests to the inescapability of representation" (58).

The notion of representation taking over reality indeed re-occurs throughout the novel. Hector's films can be considered his birthmark, and hence inseparable from his "mortal frame;" when he dies, he demands that his films die with him. Likewise, when Frieda destroys Alma's manuscript, the latter sees no reason to continue living. Towards the end of the novel, David, too, realizes that the story of his own life has merged with Hector's life and his films as well as with those who have accompanied the actor throughout the years. In fact, when they converse for the first and last time in Hector's Blue Stone Ranch, Hector emphasizes that the writer and his subject are a joint entity. In his critique of David's first book *The Silent World of Hector Mann*, the actor complains that the book honors his old work with the moustache, "but you do not talk about yourself" (*BI* 224).

By bringing to consciousness both Hawthorne's story as well Hector's *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, Alma, in fact, familiarizes David with hermeneutic difficulties bound to occur when "real" life merges with representation. Hawthorne's story, in particular, conveys a striking "hermeneutic disjunction" (Weinstein 55). For instance, Georgiana's birthmark "guarantees the presence of meaning for Aylmer, but precisely what that meaning is remains in flux" (Ibid.). In this sense, he is as confused as Georgiana, who tries in vain to interpret the meaning of the optical illusions Aylmer stages for her.

David's perception is also blurred as soon as he enters Hector's filmic world. He explains that as early as the first scene in *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, he recognized

that the film takes place in Hector Mann and Frieda Spelling's Blue Stone Ranch, yet "in the black-and-white images of Charlie Grund's [Alma's father] camera, they had been turned into the elements of a fictional world" (*BI* 243). In much the same way as Galip in *The Black Book*, who could not draw the line between the reel and the real in the brothel scene, David is utterly confused as soon as he enters the world of the film: "I was supposed to see them as shadows, but my mind was slow to make the adjustment. Again and again, I saw them as they were, not as they were meant to be" (Ibid).

The confusion reoccurs with the appearance of the actors and the roles they play. Even though "Martin Frost," played by an actor unknown to David looks unfamiliar enough to be believable as a fictional character, "Claire Martin" played by Alma Grund's mother, Faye Morrison, is uncannily similar to her daughter whom David has fallen in love with. In David's own words, Faye Morrison adds to "the dislocation and confusion" (244) he has been experiencing from the beginning. He describes Faye Morrison as having "enough parallels, enough genetic echoes for me to imagine that I was watching Alma without the birthmark, Alma before I had met her…living through her mother in some alternate version of her own life" (Ibid). Yet, he fails to realize that the allegorical story of Martin and Claire is not only a re-writing of Hawthorne's story but also a reflection of his own relationship with Alma.

David considers himself an empiricist who can "only write about what I saw or heard—not about what I didn't. This is not an admission of failure so much as a declaration of methodology, a statement of principles. If I never saw the moon, then the moon was never there" (221). Yet, his conflicting descriptions of Alma indicate that his methods are far from granting him success in his endeavor. He describes Alma as a

"woman with the strange double face" (108) who first reminds him "a little of Helen" (101)— his wife. He, then, claims that she is "the only person I've ever met who looks only like herself" (119). And finally, Alma becomes her mother, Faye Morrison, albeit without the birthmark (244). After pages of utter confusion, his perception of Alma changes once he understands that the character of Claire was not a real woman, but "a spirit, a figure born out of the man's imagination, an ephemeral being sent to become his muse" (243) or simply put, a figure that is likely to appear in a *lichtspiel*, resembling the one that Aylmer stages for Georgiana to soothe her anxiety.

In the closing of his narrative, similar to Galip who is never sure whether Rüya ever existed, David finally admits that "Alma had walked in and out of my life so quickly, I sometimes felt that I had only imagined her" (315). Consequently, everything David witnesses, in both "real" life and on the screen, becomes for him identical to the experience of cinema in Münsterbergian terms whereby "the forms of the outer world" are overcome and events are adjusted to "the forms of the inner world" (Braudy and Cohen 402). In other words, his mind begins to shape reality and no longer does it matter whether Hector's films are "sighted" or "cited," and whether they really exist. What is significant for David is that his memoir-biography comes to fruition as "we are also closing in on the last weeks of the century—Hector's century, the century that began eighteen days before he was born and which no one in their right mind will be sorry to see end" (*BI* 318).

Film ekphrasis, in *The Book of Illusions*, enables the writing of the history of filmmaking throughout the twentieth century. The story of the art form emerges when David's memoir takes on the task of delivering the biography of Hector Mann. Hector's

career, which spans from the beginning of cinema to the pre-digital film era, is a glance at the history of the medium reflected in the story of an actor's life. Yet, perhaps, more importantly, his relationship to the medium is also a meditation on subjectivity, that is, the plight of "Man(n)" in the face of (visual) technologies that have emerged over the course of the twentieth century.

According to Peacock, Auster's emphatic use of film in *The Book of Illusions* is the author's pessimistic take on the postmodern era—an apocalyptic phase in western civilization. He proclaims that Hector Mann, "in a Baudrilliardian sense, is at least as real (or as simulated) in his movies as he is in real life, that the latter is just another text to be interpreted in the same way a critic interprets films" (65). For Peacock, based on Auster's own confession in nineteen ninety-four that his work has "come out of a position of despair, a very deep nihilism and hopelessness about the world, the fact of our own transience and mortality" (Mark Irwin qtd. in Peacock 69), *The Book of Illusions* presents "a profoundly bleak postmodern portrait of human subjectivity as fractured, contingent, powerless, forever within the frame and informed by the inevitability of death" (65).

By framing Auster's novel, published in two thousand and two, within a postmodernist discourse of the nineteen eighties and nineties, Peacock fails to see that in *The Book of Illusions* Auster is, in fact, creating a different, perhaps a more *contemporary* postmodern decentered subjectivity. Fredric Jameson, in an interview in two thousand and one, expresses the need to re-define "decentered subjectivity" in contemporary postmodernism vis-à-vis technologies such as the internet whereby the "lonely subject" finds the opportunity to connect with global networks and "isn't dissolved exactly, but

spreads itself out into innumerable networks which are precisely those of other subjectivities" ("Technology as an Allegory").

In *The Book of Illusions*, the disappearance of the frame, which was supposed to separate "real" lives from the "reel," as well as the merging of (David's) private memories with the histories of others (Hector and Alma's) are all symptoms of the current phase of post-modernity wherein the notion of decentered subjectivity is replaced by collective subjectivity—or, as Hector himself would say, a "double or nothing" subjectivity, which spreads itself out as opposed to being dissolved. Therefore, rather than reading *The Book of Illusions* as "a profoundly bleak postmodern portrait of human subjectivity," I have read the novel as a prophesy on subjectivity and human relationships in the twenty-first century mediated by visual technologies more advanced yet rooted in traditional film.

CHAPTER IV

The Analog Image in the Age of Digital Technologies and the Future of Film and Film Ekphrasis

> Indeed nothing *moves*, nothing endures in a digitally composed world. The impression is really just an impression—the numerical rotation and transformation of geometrical elements. Here the sense of time as *la durée* gives way to simple duration or to the "real time" of a continuous present.
>
> D.N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*

Cinema studies today is confronted with the challenges the digital image poses for the future life of film. The impact digital technology has had on the still and the moving image naturally also raises questions about how this technology may affect the ways in which we approach the ekphrastic use of film in literature. However, before we can make claims about how digital film ekphrasis may differ from the ekphrasis of analog film, it is important to understand the ontological changes digital composition brings to what we will call "film" in the twenty-first century.

In the year two thousand, Anne Friedberg, in an essay titled "The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change," posed a question, which visual culture scholars to this day are still trying to answer: "how have the material differences between cinematic, televisual, and computer media been altered as *digital* technologies transform them?" (439). One such study, which offers lucid insight into this inquiry is D.N. Rodowick's recently published *The Virtual Life of Film*. The questions central to

Rodowick's study include: the state of visual arts in the face of the rapid digitization of the image and the future of the field of cinema studies at a moment when we are witnessing the end of analog film and its replacement by the digital image and its production and distribution processes. In Rodowick's account one senses his nostalgia for that which is fading away:

> The celluloid strip with its reassuring physical passage of visible images, the noisy and cumbersome cranking of the mechanical film projector or the Steenbeck editing table, the imposing bulk of the film canister are all disappearing one by one into virtual space, along with the images they so beautifully recorded and presented. (8)

In this passage we can almost hear Adam Thorpe's Ricky Thornby reminiscing about his childhood when he used to stare at film stills outside the theatre imagining the entire film. We are also reminded of Ricky as the film professor he later becomes and his complaints about the students who would rather deconstruct Pepsi commercials than immerse themselves in art films. For both Rodowick and Thorpe's fictional film scholar, for the analog image the end is near in the beginning of the twentieth-first century.[70]

The history of film is a history of the photographic moving image continuously challenged by emerging technologies. First, it was the technology of sound. This was followed by television and video, and most recently, it is digital systems of production,

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[70] In fact, in the chapter aptly titled "An Elegy for Film," Rodowick confesses the following: "I once thought that one of the most rewarding tasks of a film teacher was to restore for students the historical and phenomenological experience of watching silent films. But I have recently come to realize, with some personal alarm, that during the past twenty years we have all lost in some degree the capacity to involve ourselves deeply and sensually in the 35mm image, well projected in a movie theater. Film is no longer a modern medium; it is completely historical" (91-93).

distribution, and projection that threaten the medium. In addition to film scholars and creative writers for whom the photographic still and moving images are of primary importance for understanding the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, contemporary photographers and filmmakers are also contemplating the technological transformation their chosen medium has undergone since its emergence in the late nineteenth century.

One of these filmmakers, as I have already discussed in the previous chapter, is Wim Wenders, who both saw the potential yet also the threat the digital poses for the future of images. Another filmmaker whose work engages in the ways in which technology impacts the creation and distribution of films is the French film and music videos director and installation artist Michel Gondry. His most recent film *Be Kind Rewind*, in particular, is similar to *Still* in that it offers a tragi-comic twenty-first century infatuation with the bygone days of filmmaking and film spectatorship.

The film deals with the plight of a VHS-only video rental store in Passaic, New Jersey, which is also said to be the building in which the legendary jazz musician, Fats Waller was born. The store's existence is threatened not only by the real estate developers, but also corporate DVD rental places such as the neighborhood Blockbuster.[71] As the owner Mr. Fletcher prepares to close down his "out of date" business, an unusual technological catastrophe alters the course of events and the store gains immense popularity in the neighborhood.

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[71] A recent article in the press about Blockbuster closing down 960 of its stores across the nation due to its inability to compete with online DVD rental companies such as Netflix Inc. and Redbox is further evidence that the speed in which the film industry is changing is almost impossible to grasp with words. See "Blockbuster Closings: Up to 960 Stores May Be Closed" in http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/09/16/blockbuster-closings-up-t_n_288595.html

Jerry, the store employee Mike's friend, whose brain is magnetized by the power plant, tries to disable in order to protest the environmental harm it causes, accidentally erases the contents of all the video cassettes when he visits his friend in the store. As a result, the two friends, using the most primitive technological means and acting in the films themselves, begin "sweding"—the term they invent for re-filming popular films such as *Ghostbusters*, *King Kong*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, and *Rush Hour 2*. The "sweded" films—unedited and each scene a single take— become more desirable than the originals. Gradually, the neighbors and the patrons also become extras in these re-makes where homemade objects and props put together from junk suffice to evoke the original film.

While the imminent demolition of the store looms on the horizon, Mike and Jerry persuade Mr. Fletcher to make one last "original" film to be shown on the last day of the store before it closes down. Their movie—a tribute to Fats Waller's life and music— is once again low budget and is created using the simplest technology. It is shot in black-and-white; their handmade technology creates jerky images in fast-speed intended to evoke the films made in the early decades of the century. However, just before the screening of the film, yet another catastrophe strikes the amateur filmmakers when the only TV in the store to show the film becomes dysfunctional. Unexpectedly, Mr. Fletcher's competitor, the owner of the DVD store, brings his own video projector. At once, a white curtain is put up on the wall and the store turns into a makeshift movie theatre where the history of the store, the building, and the residents of the neighborhood who become actors in the film are celebrated vicariously through the film depicting the life and times, and the music of Fats Waller. This amateurish yet highly ambitious production does not only celebrate a vanishing place, a bygone era, and the people who

give meaning to this place. It also commemorates a seemingly disappearing medium, which, throughout history, has enabled the preservation and re-presentation of history and the collective memory of a place and its people. The video store, much like Ricky's hotel room overseeing the Thames River, becomes a space in which to bring together a collective who will re-memorize and re-live history projected onto a makeshift screen.

To bring forth what he himself considers the underlying message of the film, "people creating their own entertainment" ("Sundance Interview"), Gondry also implemented *Be Kind Rewind* into a gallery space wherein the visitors, provided with basic props, were invited to shoot their own short films. They then placed the taped films on shelves resembling the ones in the video store in the film for the other visitors to pick up and watch in the screening spaces created in the gallery. The Deitch Projects statement issued for the exhibition, which took place between February 16- March 22 2008, quotes Gondry claiming that with this project he aspires to circumvent corporate control over cultural production. He explains his ultimate goal as being the conception of "a network of creativity and communication that is guaranteed to be free and independent from any commercial institution" ("Press Release").

The New York Times critic Ken Johnson questions Gondry's sincerity, rightfully accusing him of "trying to have it both ways"—advocating low brow filmmaking and the distribution of these films while he is himself a high brow, high budget, and big studio filmmaker ("Shoot it Yourself"). With the advertisements he has made for corporate giants such as Levi's Jeans, he also partakes in the capitalist system criticized in his film and, in its extension, in the art gallery. The disparity Johnson highlights certainly reflects an element of truth. However, Gondry's perhaps rather naïve attempt to encourage

independent and amateur filmmaking, no doubt, promotes film as a simple and accessible form of visual arts that can be created and disseminated with relative ease thanks to the opportunities today's production and distribution technologies grant filmmakers.

While the *Be Kind Rewind* installation focuses on the making and distribution of film, the film itself also concentrates on the medium's relationship to memory and history. In the first phase of their creative process, Mike and Jerry merely imitate in their "sweded" productions existing popular films. Like Galip in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*, they rely on their own memories to recall the originals in order to create re-makes, and we, the spectators, also inevitably fall back on our memories as we create parallels between the original and the "sweded" scenes from these familiar films. Assuming that we have seen the original version prior to re-encountering them in Gondry's film, it is our memory that aids us in the process of appreciating the awkwardness of the scenes Mike and Jerry clumsily replicate. Just as the Turkish melodramas persist in both Galip and the reader's mind, so too these popular Hollywood blockbusters enable the viewers to relate to Mike and Jerry's re-makes composed from what they themselves recollect from their own memories of the originals.

Their only original film, the Fats Waller story, on the other hand, is a biopic also chronicling the era in which Waller grew up. His life is the story of a talented African-American jazz pianist rising to fame in spite of economic hardship and blatant racism prevalent in America of the first half of the twentieth century. When asked about what he intended to achieve by alluding to the question of race using relatively inoffensive humor in several scenes within the Fats Waller film, Gondry explains that his purpose was to point to the fact that the history of the medium is essentially constructed around viciously

racist films: “[I]f you look at the history of films, they were all paved by super-racist movies. I was talking (about D.W.) Griffith before; his movie (*Birth of a Nation*) is advocating the Klu Klux Clan; the first talking (picture) is *The Jazz Singer*, and it's a guy (in) blackface” (“Sundance Interview”).

The “sweded” films together with the film within the film about the story of an actual African-American jazz musician bring together a racially diverse community. It is also a statement on how film production, which always entails the cooperation of a diverse group of people (such as the residents of Passaic, New Jersey in the case of *Be Kind Rewind*), can be a model for the productive co-existence of racially and ethnically diverse communities. What is particularly interesting in Gondry’s conception of cinema is the inseparability of the medium’s history from History. Whether *Be Kind Rewind* in the years to come will be considered a film carrying such historical significance will perhaps be the subject of another study.

According to Gondry himself, however, his film is not specifically concerned with racial politics in present-day America. Emphasizing his “foreigner” status, Gondry confesses that he would not “dare” to say too much about “delicate” American issues such as race (“Sundance Interview”). Nevertheless, the film is in some ways a history; it may not be a social history but it does document the history of the technologies of filmmaking.

The film begins with the present Digital Versatile/Video Disc (DVD) era in which we also hear the last gasps of traditional filmmaking and viewing as well as the once popular Video Home System (VHS). The film ends with homage paid to the pre-home viewing years with the screening of the Fats Waller film in the video rental store, albeit

by way of a video projector. It is significant that a film, which begins with the erasure of all films in a video rental store[72] should end by alluding to the glorious years of cinema when, first in makeshift movie theaters in coffee shops and later in cinema halls, masses gathered to watch the mesmerizing silent moving images.

The Virtual Life of Film traces this same history of film, which Rodowick categorizes as "the Silver Age of film"; "the Iron Age of video tape"; and, the current, "Silicon Age of computers" (133). Concerns insinuated in Gondry's lighthearted film are *the* questions central to Rodowick's study: "What is left, then, of cinema as it is replaced, part by part, by digitization? Is this the end of film, and therefore, the end of cinema studies? Does cinema studies have a future in the twenty-first century?" (8).

The developments in film, and the ways in which these developments influence the study of film, inevitably will have to be taken into consideration when reading films in novels written in the twenty-first century. The digital process erases the basic traits of the photographic image, that is, "its causal force as a literal spatial and temporal molding of the originating event, preserved in a physical material" (Rodowick 11). If the physical material that embodies the event disappears, so does the capturing of time. We are, at this point in the history of film, experiencing the displacement of the photographic image with that of electronic signals and digital information.

In the previous chapters, it is the verbal representation of film in its pre-digital

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[72] It is significant that films on videocassettes are erased in Gondry's story, because the invention and the widespread use of the video cassette recorder marks an important moment in visual culture. As scholars have argued, the VCR introduced "a new temporality" (Friedberg 444) which brought "challenges to time and memory"(445). Inspired by Paul Virilio's description that the device enables "man to organize a time which is not his own, *a deferred time*, a time which is somewhere else" (Virilio qtd. in Friedberg 445), Friedberg calls the VCR "the time-shift machine" (443).

phase that I discuss specific ekphrastic novels and move towards a poetics of film ekphrasis. I try to distinguish the ekphrasis of moving images from the ekphrasis of still art objects and argue that the former is akin to history and the latter to memory. I focus on the ways in which film temporality appears compatible with the linear structure of the diegetic narrative. In the digital era, however, when every aspect of film—from its production to its distribution and consumption— has changed along with "concepts of representation, space, and development of time" (Rodowick 125), it would be wrong to insist on the values I have attributed to film ekphrasis.

The medium I have relied on as the expression of time and history is now subjected to computational manipulation in the twenty-first century. Just as Rodowick's *The Virtual Life of Film* tries to assess "what the moving image is becoming, and indeed, has (un)become in the era of digital capture and synthesis" (98), I too, am left to ruminate on what it means for the "film" component of "film ekphrasis" to be discussed in terms of "numerical codes" as opposed to film strips. "Can digital cinema express duration and past-relatedness with the same force as film,[73] or does it even want to" (Rodowick 100) is an issue that will have to be addressed in a study this time dedicated to the close reading of novels alluding to the ekphrasis of digital films.

In the remaining part of this dissertation, however, I will draw arguments from a

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[73] Because my study is more concerned with the impact the digital has on film form, and, in particular, on the constitution of time, how this technology affects the business side of cinema will not be addressed thoroughly. On this issue, Thomas Elsaesser offers an interesting perspective. For Elsaesser, there is barely evidence that there have been drastic changes in the industry as the digital takes over. In "The New New Hollywood: Cinema Beyond Distance and Proximity," Elsaesser does agree that digital cinema has indeed "altered the relation between production and post-production, input and output" (189). However, despite the development in technology, Hollywood's business strategy continues to reinforce "traditional ways of making films" whereby the "narrative," "live action," "star-casting" are of primary importance (Ibid.).

number of visual culture and cinema studies scholars to reveal how the analog is compared to the digital image. I will then focus on several filmmakers and visual artists to see how they reconcile their art with the digital era while also finding in the various modes of the analog image what novelists of the late twentieth century have valued: an expression of time unavailable to the digital image. I believe it is important to broaden the scope of this dissertation with an inquiry into the world of visual arts so as to better appreciate *Still*, *The Black Book*, and *The Book of Illusions* as *the* novels of the late twentieth century which capture the final phase of the analog image as it is supplanted with digital practices. How visual artists negotiate the analog and digital image in their work while continuing to aspire to the kind of temporality only available to the former image can aid the reader in developing strategies to understand the role digital images will play in novels to be written in the twenty-first century. An awareness of the discourse in contemporary visual culture on time in relation to the digital future of photography and cinema is necessary for any study whose subject is image-text relations in literature.

The Analog Image versus The Digital Image

Stephen Prince, in an article published in nineteen ninety-six, re-visits the concept of realism in film in order to introduce a thought provoking approach to reconciling the analog and the digital image. Film realism in traditional film theory, Prince reminds us, "is rooted in the view that the photographic images…are indexical signs: they are causally and existentially connected to their referents" (28). The digital image, on the other hand, either tries to emulate real characters, places, and things as closely as possible or imagines "fictional" referents, such as "The Terminator" character in *The Terminator*

series or the dinosaurs in *Jurrasic Park* (31). In other words, the first aspect of the digital image is that it is not indexical.

From his interviews with a number of digital image artists who have contributed to these digitally enhanced blockbuster movies of the nineteen nineties, Prince concludes that major traits of the analog image such as "light, texture, and movement are among the most important cues to be manipulated in order to create a synthetic reality that looks as real as possible" (33). For the integration of the study of computer generated images into cinema studies and for the reconciliation of this imminent technology with the dominant two trends in film theory (namely, the realism of André Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer, Stanley Cavell, Roland Barthes and the formalism of Rudolf Arnheim, Dziga Vertov, and Sergei Eisentein), Prince suggests restoring interest in what he calls "perceptual realism." He proposes to replace the "indexically based notions of film realism" with a "correspondence-based model of cinematic representation" (31).

Prince's correspondence-based model is derived from the observation that "film spectatorship builds on correspondence between selected features of the cinematic display and a viewer's real-world visual and social experience" (Ibid.). By focusing on how the spectator quite naturally negotiates between her "world" and the world within the cinematic frame, Prince is able to highlight the role *perception* plays in the appreciation of an image, which, in effect, downplays the production and projection stages.

In Prince's theory, "even unreal images [i.e., "referentially fictional" ones] can be perceptually realistic" (32). Hence, a perceptually realistic image, as opposed to the referentially realistic (i.e., indexical) image,

> …[is] one which structurally corresponds to the viewer's audio-visual experience of three-dimensional space [and] therefore designates a relationship between the image or film and the spectator, and can encompass both unreal images and those which are referentially realistic. Because of this, unreal images maybe referentially fictional but perceptually realistic. (Ibid.)

Prince's essay characterizes the digital image as *perceptually* real and therefore as resonating in the viewer's mind's eye in the same way as the analog image.

Although it is tempting to yield to this idea of considering the analog and the digital as being *perceptually* alike, Rodowick's critique of Prince's model highlights the concerns pertaining to temporality in film, and, in effect, the ekphrasis of film. Rodowick argues that Prince's "perceptual realism refers, first, to a set of criteria in reference to which computational algorithms attempt to replicate the spatial information that cinematography automatically creates through analogical transcription, especially as movement in and through space" (102). In the analog image, spatial representation is achieved through the *movement* of the camera; in digital recording movement is eliminated from the process and numerical calculations assure spatial correspondence.

While this may not pose a problem for the perceiver who will be satisfied with an image that contains spatial information perhaps even more enhanced than the spatial accuracy the analog photograph displays, it is an important distinction that may have an impact on how we interpret film ekphrasis. As I have discussed throughout this dissertation, the defining characteristic of film ekphrasis is its correspondence to film temporality—the unfolding of words paralleling the images in motion. In digital capture,

this temporality seems less important than "a space that can be represented or constructed according to mathematical notation" (Rodowick 103). In other words, in digital capture, the emphasis shifts towards the prioritization of spatial accuracy over temporal precision.

W.J.T. Mitchell is another critic who expresses enthusiasm for what the image gains rather than what it loses in the digital process. He observes that digital technology has been instrumental in enhancing rather than tarnishing the image: "Instead of making photography less credible, less legitimate, digitization has produced a general 'optimization' of photographic culture, one in which better and better simulations of the best effects of realism and informational richness in traditional photography have become possible" (Mitchell 15). For Mitchell, concerns about the distinction between "genuine" and "manipulated" images is merely a "paranoiac fantasy" simply because traditional photography itself has always been "a product of manipulation in the sense of technical, material standards, and decisions about what to shoot, at what settings and how to develop and print it" (16).

As I have mentioned previously, Wim Wenders, as a filmmaker, had also expressed analogous sentiments when he first began to integrate high definition technology into his narrative films.[74] For Wenders, if used correctly by visual artists, with HD technology "reality" and our "trust in the truth of images" may be regained (48). For Wenders, digital technology offers hope and the promise of an image culture cleared of the harm done to it by the unceasing popularity of television in the second half of the twentieth century (47).

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[74] *Until the End of the World* is *the* quintessential film in which the director expresses his enthusiasm and anxiety over digital technology.

The reconciliatory tone of filmmakers and scholars makes it less complicated to approach the verbal representation of films in textual narratives. In some ways, the acceptance of the digital image as perceptually identical to the analog image (as in Prince's correspondence-based model) and/or as the more refined image (i.e., as an improvement on the qualities of the photographic image) legitimizes the temptation to downplay the possible differences between the ekphrastic rendition of analog and digital films. As far as capturing "reality" is concerned, there seems to be a tendency among film scholars and filmmakers to appreciate the digital image for its potential to reveal "realities that are inaccessible to the naked eye" (Mitchell 16). Yet, as Rodowick points out, digital imaging expresses a willingness to annihilate "past duration with respect to space in order to replace it with another conception of time, that is, the time of calculation or computer cycles" (104). No doubt this bears upon how we might (mis)read the concept of time in digital film ekphrasis.

Lev Manovich's description of digital cinema as a "graphic mode" rather than a "post-photographic" stage in image production is another reason to suspect theories that too easily synchronize analog and digital cinema. As Thomas Elsaesser explains, for Manovich cinema was born from animation yet "the rise of photographic cinema appeared to marginalize graphic cinema, relegating animation to a minor genre" (Elsaesser 192). Digital cinema restores the medium back to its "pre"-photographic, i.e., painterly phase for "it requires a new kind of individual input…manual application of craft and skill, which is to say, it marks the return of the 'artist' as source and origin of the image" (Ibid.). This leads Elsaesser to conclude that the digital image is "an expressive, rather than a reproductive medium" (Ibid.).

From the viewpoint of ekphrasis, however, the similarity between digital filmmaking and spatial artists, such as the work of painters and sculptors,[75] takes us back to the traditional poetics of ekphrasis from which I have carefully sought to distinguish the ekphrasis of film. In fact, my anxiety, which emanates from the above analogy, is further deepened by Rodowick's following assertion:

> But the reconstitution of an image from digital information is something like making a very detailed painting from the information given in a very precise description. In short, digital capture produces similarity, but not isomorphism or homomorphism in the ordinary sense of those terms; one cannot restore the historical force of analogism once the spatial and temporal continuity of indexical tracing are [sic] broken. (123)

Evoking theorists such as Stanley Cavell and Roland Barthes, Rodowick emphasizes how photographs "inspire ontological questions about our relationship to the world and to the past" (124). Contrary to this rich philosophical depth and particular relationship to time attributed to the analog photograph, for Rodowick "digital photographs have become for most of us more utilitarian, more like simple records than historical documents of family events and histories (124). From a technical point of view, their difference is also obvious. While digital capture quantizes, i.e., converts light into code (117), analogical transcription captures duration (116).[76] Their ontological and technological difference, no doubt, puts into question the notion that *all* film ekphrases create a relationship to history

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[75] The famous filmmaker and producer George Lucas compares digital filmmaking to "the process of a painter or sculptor." In describing the method of creation, he says "You work on it for a bit, than you stand back and look at it and add some more onto it and add some more onto it, then stand back and look at it and add some more. You basically end up layering the whole thing" (qtd. in Elsaesser 193).

[76] See Rodowick pp.110-131 for a more thorough technical explanation.

and are a literary device for contemplating the past and the passing of time. As Rodowick makes clear, "Through the waning of indexicality, new ethical stances in relation to time and to history emerge in our encounters with digital imaging" (145).[77]

As my brief survey of the recent scholarship on the analog and the non-analog image confrontation reveals, contemporary visual culture is still in search of ways of adjusting to the inevitable and irreversible movement towards digital image production and consumption. In the chapters dedicated to the novels by authors who are infatuated with moving images, I tried to show that for these writers traditional film formats promised a sense of kinship between narration in their respective medium and the narrative temporality of the moving images. Their closeness in form enabled the authors to project a sense of history onto the verbal culmination of actual or imaginary films. Film, as a time-based medium, promised what still images and art objects failed to offer: a sense of history (as opposed to stagnant memory); duration; a manifestation of the past re-viewed in the light of the present; and, the possibility of another linear (ekphrastic) narrative that either reinforces an existing perspective or introduces a new one on the overarching diegetic narrative. Nostalgia, melancholy, and *hüzün* as well as the burden of unfulfilled desires, hope and despair, and the need to connect the present with the past in

[77] In must be noted that the visual artist Hollis Frampton makes a similar distinction between film and video in the early nineteen seventies. In his essay, "The Withering Away of the State of the Art," Frampton states that "film builds upon the straight cut, and the direct collision of images, or 'shots,' extending a perception domain whose most noticeable trait we might call successiveness. (In this respect film resembles history.) But video does not seem to take kindly to the cut. Rather, those inconclusions of video art during which I have come closest to moments of real discovery and *peripeteia*, seem oftenest to exhibit a tropism toward a kind (or many kinds) of metamorphic simultaneity. (In this respect video resembles Ovidian myth.)" (166-167).

order to confront "truth" were among the themes these authors of the late twentieth century reflected on through the analog image, and particularly, through film.

The representation of past and present time Thorpe, Pamuk, and Auster mediated via the photographic image and film is also manifest in the works of various visual artists and filmmakers in the late twentieth and the first decade of the twenty-first century. At a time when more and more image-based artists are utilizing more than one medium to capture and/or create both digital and analog images, film as an idea or an actual medium persists as that which creates a sense of time and a relationship to the past in the present available only to this form of art.

Jean-Luc Godard

"I am an essayist…Film is a system that allows Godard to be a novelist, [Armand] Gatti to make theatre and me to make essays" (Alter 16) declares Chris Marker. To think of the medium of film as Godard's means of becoming a novelist encourages me to discuss this filmmaker in this dissertation, which tries to bridge together the aesthetics of the two mediums. In his highly complex video project *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, produced between nineteen eighty-eight and nineteen ninety-eight, in a relatively more somber tone than Gondry's film, Godard explores the impact of technology on the meaning of cinema in the twentieth century while also meditating on the century itself. Gondry's *Be Kind Rewind* juxtaposes the different phases of the technology of making films. Godard, on the other hand, utilizes the different arts to convey his narrative. As Godard's use of the word "histoire" together with the plural "s" in parenthesis suggests, the film is not only a history/story, but it is also meant to invoke the possibility of multiple histories and stories that can be conceived for both cinema and the twentieth century. In fact, Godard is

careful to distinguish his cinematic history from the methods of a conventional historian whose "work is essentially spoken [while his film] *isn't said, it's written, it's composed, it's painted, it's recorded*" (Godard and Ishaghpour 25). In order to actualize this broad inquiry into cinema and the twentieth century, Godard constructs an interdisciplinary narrative which "appears as a series of appropriations of other arts…an interlacing of words, sentences and texts, metamorphosed paintings, of cinematic shots mixed up with news photographs or strips, sometimes connected by musical citations" (Rancière 41).

According to Godard such hybridization is a precondition for "the work of works," that is, for "History" to come into being: "History is the family name, there are parents and children, literature, painting, philosophy…let's say History is the whole lot. So a work of art, if well made, is a part of History, if intended as such and if this is artistically apparent" (Godard and Ishagpour 28). In this project, Godard's idea of the image "emerges as that of a metamorphic operativeness, crossing the boundaries between the arts and denying the specificity of materials" (Rancière 42).[78] Interdisciplinarity, as the culmination of the absence of or of the disregard for media specificity, is inevitable and in many ways necessary for the representation of History.[79] It is out of the interaction of different forms of art that History itself becomes a work of art (Godard and Ishaghpour 28). According to Ishaghpour, Godard's notion of history in this film is Benjaminian in

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[78] In this sense, Godard's project is in accord with Noël Carroll's insistence that the call for medium specificity is not necessarily a useful strategy. For Carroll, as long as the art that is created is interesting, the question about its "impurity" is simply superfluous. See, in particular, the essays "Medium Specificity Arguments and the Self-Consciously Invented Arts: Film, Video, and Photography" and "The Specificity of Media in the Arts" in *Theorizing the Moving Image*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

[79] Different from my interpretation, Richard Dienst suggests that the interplay of different media indicates that for Godard "the history of cinema can be told, it seems, everywhere but cinema" (127).

that it isn't "the sort of history that deals with wood and ashes, it's the living memory of the flames" (24); it persists in the present. It is also a "resurrection" and "redemption" (Ibid.), and a "re-memorization" (23) as Ishaghpour suggests. The terminology Ishaghpour evokes here is also clearly intended to associate Godard's sense of history with that of Pierre Nora's conception of history in the twentieth century. As I have discussed at some length in the introduction and in the chapter on *Still*, for Nora history and memory have blended and today re-memorization is the process through which we relate the past to the present.

In *Éloge de l'amour* [released in the English-speaking world as *In Praise of Love*], Godard continues to investigate the themes that dominate *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* while also allegorizing film as "an art form undergoing a stark historical mutation" (Rodowick 90). Deconstructing the film's title, Rodowick argues that, in"[c]ombining the senses of 'elegy' and 'eulogy,' this cinematic song of praise addresses an object that is either gone or presently passing out of existence" (90).

In the film, the past and the present and their relationship to each other are represented both formally and contextually. Godard uses black-and-white 35mm film to depict the present time, which the novel's protagonist, Edgar, inhabits. In a temporally unstable state of mind, Edgar oscillates between the present and the past in search of "a woman" whom he hopes will give voice to the past he wishes to re-conceive in the present as a work of art for which the medium is yet to be determined. The past, which Edgar recalls, is visualized on video and depicts an opportunistic Hollywood ("Spielberg Associates") trying to get its (digital ?) hands on the memories of the "woman" whose grandparents were resistance leaders during the Occupation. The alternate use of film and

video throughout the narrative—the present depicted through the black-and-white images and the past appearing in images generated by video technology—goes against our tendency to associate the past with black-and-white and the present with color-saturated images captured on video cameras. I would argue that, in countering our expectations, Godard forces the viewer to analyze this aesthetic choice, and hence his film achieves a more profound effect.

In Edgar's black-and-white present, depicted in 35mm film, we sense his melancholy and longing for the past and, from a formal perspective, a struggle "to preserve an aesthetic memory of what film was" (Rodowick 91). These images reflect Edgar's agonizing quest to find the "woman" who will give voice to a narrative that will deliver French history during the Occupation years and the story of her grandparents who took part in the resistance. In the present, Edgar is in a black-and-white, that is, in a historical state of mind. He is depicted as contemplating the past through a medium, which itself, as Rodowick claims, has become "completely historical" (93). It is no wonder, therefore, that the bitter flashback images of "Hollywood" trying to usurp this particular history buried in a memoir should come back to Edgar in the form of color-saturated images captured on video. Rodowick is correct in suggesting that "[t]he video section presents something like the search for a form or forms for memory" (91), yet these memories, we have to acknowledge, are memories Edgar would rather forget. The past he wishes his memory to sustain are in the black-and-white segments of the film, for instance, when the "woman," albeit hardly visible and often out of focus, re-appears in the "present." Perhaps the most optimistic aspect of the film lies once again in the black-and-white realm when the "woman" presents Edgar with the book, *Le voyage d'Edgar—*

a narrative journey, which may help Edgar to successfully complete his work of art. It is significant that it is in black-and-white, the realm of the traditional film form, that the diegetic narrative of the film converges with the embedded narrative of Edgar's journey. The kinship I have tried to establish in this dissertation is thus also celebrated in Godard's self-reflexive film, which may indeed be an exercise in crafting a novel.

Joann Verburg

Joann Verburg's career thus far, most recently surveyed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, can be interpreted as a persistent attempt to find a sense of continuum within the stillness of photography. Taken with a large format camera, Verburg's life-size photographs explore the potential for movement in the still image; they become a means of articulating a sense of time not in the past tense, but rather in the "present tense" as the title of the exhibition at MOMA also asserts. Using photography to intensify the experience of the moment, and to provide, as Philip Gefter suggests, "a real life present tense experience that adds to whatever the viewer is experiencing" ("Moments in Time") gives a filmic quality to Verburg's still images that also imply continuity— the meaning to which the title of Adam Thorpe's novel also alludes. For this reason, I see Verburg as a quintessential late twentieth-century photographer whose analog images aspire to the kind of movement and temporality that underlies the ontology of the pre-digital film. Verburg is among a number of visual artists for whom the analog image in the digital age creates a persisting historical sense of time, which begins in the past yet unfolds into the present while moving forward to the future in the viewer's imagination.

During her graduate studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Verburg interned at the George Eastman House and had access to its rich collection of photographs. This experience culminated in a master's thesis entitled "Locations in Time." Verburg's project was an exhibition she put together from a selection of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century photographs at Eastman House. The rationale was to address "photography's ability to articulate issues of time through serial frames and time-motion studies, ideas that would inform her own work" (Kismaric 18).

In the following years, her preoccupation with temporality also found expression in the "Rephotographic Survey Project." Describing the project as an attempt to "provide some raw material for an investigation into the nature of photographic information" (Verburg qtd. in Kismaric 19), Verburg, the photographer Mark Klett, and photography historian Ellen Manchester conceptualized the re-photographing of one hundred and twenty nineteenth-century landscape photographs taken by William Henry Jackson, Timothy O'Sullivan, Andre J. Russell, John K. Hillers. As Kismaric explains, "A comparison of the two sets show how the landscape changed over the intervening century and provides the viewers with a familiar elliptical 'before and after' narrative" (19). Mark Klett's own commentary adds another important dimension to this investigation into the nature of landscape photography. He explains that "The individual pictures are like single frames picked from a time-lapsed film; when they are viewed in succession they give the appearance of time in motion, of continuous change…they are perhaps the first two frames in a monumental film, one which will span thousands of years" (Klett 37).

"The appearance of time in motion, of continuous change," in photography, which, in effect, evokes filmic temporality, persists in Verburg's later work. As she

herself admits, “A lot of the work I have done as an artist…is absolutely related to the survey” (Verburg qtd. in Kismaric 23). Commenting on her multi-frame work—the diptych and triptych portraits of her performance artist friends mostly photographed in the early nineteen eighties and of her husband in nineteen eighty-nine—Verburg explains that she tries to overcome the “monocular way of looking at the world” and thereby reinforcing the idea of “seeing the world in its layered complexities” (23). Verburg also expects a level of engagement from the viewers who move from one life-size image to another, not only to experience a passage of time, but also to imagine and to actively seek to solve “what might have happened between [the two frames]” (Verburg qtd. in Kismaric 24). The serial portrait of a single subject “implies alternate meaning or ways of understanding the subject” (Kismaric 25). Contradicting the conventions of traditional portraiture photography, which stabilizes and hence objectifies the subject, Verburg’s serial portraits challenge the opinion that “a photo is an object, and its relationship with the subject is lost” (Boltanski qtd. in Semin 25).

Verburg’s serial portraits are the photographer’s attempt to bridge the disjunction between the object and the subject, and to re-establish a relationship with life each time the photographs are viewed. Verburg’s photographs therefore contradict the distinction Roland Barthes makes between the photograph and cinema in his *Camera Lucida*. For Barthes, the essential difference between the two arts is that the temporality the photograph conveys is one which is “entrapped in a moment ineluctably past, beyond, and ‘without future’” while cinema captures the “continuous, present-tense flow” (Ma 99). What cinema stands for Barthes is what photographs are capable of for Verburg. For, as Philip Gefter suggests, Verburg “uses the photographic images themselves in pairings

and alternating vantage points to simulate the experience of live performance" ("Moments in Time"). In this sense, Verburg is far from associating death with photography—an approach to the medium shared not only by theorists Roland Barthes, Siegfried Kracauer, André Bazin, but also, more recently, by the contemporary installation artist Christian Boltanski, who often uses found photographs or re-photographs still images he finds in newspapers and magazines in order to photograph "the past" (Assmann 89) and to explore death in his conceptual pieces.[80]

In the last decade of the twentieth century Verburg begins to work with color film and creates a series of un-staged still life photographs, which also integrate verbal texts into her until then exclusively visual narratives. These still life photographs, depicting the static atmosphere of domestic life (wherein objects typically pictured in *nature morte* paintings are captured), are simultaneously infused with temporality and a sense of history by way of a daily newspaper that appears within the frame. In *Secrets: Iraq* from nineteen ninety-one the newspaper visible in the photograph reports on the war in Iraq. In *Still Life with Serial Killers* from the same year, the photos of serial killers Charles Manson and Jeffrey Dahmer appear in a rolled up newspaper placed in a vase and positioned next to postcard images of women from paintings by Renoir, Gauguin, Seurat, and Manet. In a photograph taken in two thousand and one, Verburg's husband, the poet Jim Moore, is reading *The New York Times,* which features an article on the World Trade

[80] Werner Spies argues that for Boltanski, his found objects as well as the medium of photography are intended to evoke "things dead and forgotten" (26). To reinforce this notion, rather than photographing, he either re-uses or re-photographs the photographs he has collected. As Aleida Assmann suggests, the people in the photographs Boltanski uses in his conceptual pieces remain anonymous and convey none of the primary functions of the photographic image as a form of autobiography and as a fragment of family memory. On the contrary, they convey the loss of the mnemonic value of photographs (89-97).

Center attack several days after the event occurred. According to Verburg, "The newspaper helps in these pictures to suggest a world outside the frame—invisible and simultaneous" (Verburg qtd. in Kismaric 28). The viewer inevitably attends to these verbal texts and establishes a link between the domestic still life and the ("invisible and simultaneous") external world subjected to the forces of time. The newspaper creates a stark contrast between the stillness of the room and the objects it contains and the movement of history documented chronologically on the pages of the daily newspaper.

Perhaps the project that most clearly creates the effect of images in movement is Verburg's series of photographs of the olive groves outside the town of Spoleto in Italy. In a routine that brings to mind Claude Monet's Rouen Cathedral series, which depicts the structure from a single viewpoint yet in different times of the day and under different weather conditions, Verburg captures in multiple frames a section of the groves at both dawn and twilight. By identically aligning the horizon in all of the frames with each other, Verburg explains that she tried to create the experience of "walking off the road and into the orchard" (Verburg qtd. in Kismaric 29). This sensation of movement towards a horizon that remains constant and static is supplemented with additional artistic choices, such as a "focus that moves from the front to deep space in an image, and making something in each piece life-size—in both cases connecting the subject matter in an image with the real world" (Verburg qtd. in Kismaric 30).

In Verburg's photographs the viewers are exposed to the articulation of time and movement as opposed to the spatialization and hence the stilling of time. Her images resist the stabilization and spatialization of time and reinforce the function of the analog image as the bearer of sequential and continuous time. Mark Klett's likening of re-

photography to creating the "first two frames of a monumental film," I find, is an interpretation applicable to Verburg's entire career. Verburg constantly aspires to dissolve the frames around her photographs and encourages the viewers to imagine a narrative that links the separate images with each other and with the "real" world and its unfolding history. The experience of viewing her photographs gives the sensation of a slowly unfolding film the viewer is encouraged to imagine with the cues provided by Verburg's choreography. She, therefore, has much in common with the authors I have discussed here in how she creates filmic temporality out of stillness. Her art offers narratives of human experience inseparable from the flow of time despite being framed within the photographic image.

Sam Taylor-Wood

In the contemporary art world wherein a large number of visual artists are experimenting with ways to reconcile the analog with digital technologies through the combined use of different mediums, Rodowick notices a new approach to photography, which, I would argue, has consistently been the defining characteristic of Joann Verburg's art: the downplaying of "the spatial unity of the photograph" and recalling its roots as a "time-based" medium (Rodowick 152).

The visual artist who stands out in this arena in the late twentieth century and twenty-first century is Sam Taylor-Wood. In Taylor-Wood's art, one captures the "will to restore duration to acts of viewing" during an era when "in a consumer or amateur context, digital capture was beginning to transform our quotidian encounters with the image" (153). Both in her photography and in her short film pieces, Taylor-Wood stages the tension between the still and moving image. In her still images, Taylor-Wood

conveys her desire to subject stillness to cinematic duration in order to grant depth to her characters and to create a temporal context for their existence. Her short films and video projects are equally provocative in that they are often a play on the double meaning of "stillness," and raise formal questions concerning spatio-temporal relations in different visual mediums. Because her work combines both the analog and the digital, her art also becomes a surface on which these two technologies can be viewed comparatively.

Taylor-Wood's most recent project is her first feature film *Nowhere Boy* planned to be released towards the end of two thousand and nine. Based on Julia Baird's memoir *Imagine This: Growing Up with My Brother John Lennon*, this debut film appears as a natural next step for Taylor-Wood, whose work in the past has continually alluded to the narrative power of film. After she gave birth to her two daughters and twice-surviving cancer in recent years, it seems significant that in the aftermath of her close encounters with life and death, Taylor-Wood commits to a biopic in order to explore in its full extent film as *the* visual medium appropriate for the expression of life in duration and the telling of the story of individual lives embedded within the flow of history. This film brings Taylor-Wood's art even closer to what the authors I have discussed thus far have created in their writing. By translating Baird's memoir—which is itself a form of ekphrasis in that it is a transcription of the author's memories (i.e., images of the past) into words—into a film narrative about the story of John Lennon's youth and, in effect, about a particular era in the twentieth century, Taylor-Wood finally embraces film as the medium through which the story of the subject and history may be combined in a work of art.

Although *Nowhere Boy* appears to be a new phase in Taylor-Wood's career as a visual artist, her previous work anticipates this feature film, which finally presents a full-

fledged narrative missing from her photographs as well as her video and film installations. As Rodowick observes, Taylor-Wood's still images are "emblematic of a contemporary approach that makes photography a new kind of movie" (Rodowick 155).[81] Her video and film art are discussed in relation to the contemporary digital era artists such as Stan Douglas, Diana Thater, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, and Aernout Mik "who quote narrative strategies in their video and film installations in order to deconstruct them, calling into question their potency at representing reality" (Dinkla). As Taylor-Wood herself explains, her analog and digital moving images deliver a narrative, albeit a "dysfunctional" (Taylor-Wood) one. They are merely "narrative fragments, or rather narrative bits, which only suggest the possibility of telling a story—a story that must remain a virtual one" (Dinkla).

Identifying "dysfunctional narration" (i.e., narratives that the viewer tries to piece together yet constantly fails to do) a phenomenon commonly seen in the media art of the nineteen eighties and nineties, Söke Dinkla explains it as the culmination of "our longing to decipher codes and create coherence" in the absence of "an iconography equally valid for all societal layers" (Dinkla). To substitute for this absence, artists either allude to or

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[81] An artist whose work quite literally reverses this tendency is the Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto. Sugimoto's *Theatres* series, which he began in mid nineteen seventies, shows the interiors of a number of art deco American movie theatres and drive-ins captured during film screenings. For each still image in the series Sugimoto correlated the exposure time for the photograph with the duration of the film. The effect was an entire film captured within a single shot conveying an abstract, bright light. As David Green suggests, in this series, "Life is given to the photograph through the death of film" (10) thus privileging the former over the latter. Sugimoto's definition of photography (influenced by Marcel Duchamp) also reinforces this formula: "Photography is a system of saving memories. It's a time machine, in a way to preserve the memory, to preserve time" ("Marcel Duchamp's Influence"). Describing himself as a "postmodern experienced pre-modern modernist," Sugimoto prints his own photographs and refuses to use artificial elements in taking and printing his images ("Tradition").

blatantly revert to storytelling and traditional narrative motifs (Dinkla). In this climate, Taylor-Wood's *Nowhere Boy* may be considered as an attempt to construct a *functional* narrative by using traditional film form as *the* aesthetic medium for imagining and re-imagining private lives as well as history.

There are a number of works by Taylor-Wood that justify both Rodowick and Dinkla's interpretation of her pre-full-length film career as a conceptual artist searching to find narration in still images. In her *Soliloquy* series (1998-2001), for instance, a sequence of 360-degree panoramic still images supplements a large-format C-print photograph of a solitary figure. Arranged in a manner that brings to mind Renaissance altarpieces with a central image accompanied by predellas, Taylor-Wood's series, in some cases, references well-known classical paintings while manipulating the viewer to re-imagine the familiar image, this time as if it is a part of a narrative sequence, perhaps taken from a film. From a narratological viewpoint, the larger images in the *Soliloquy* series can be identified as the overarching diegetic realm while the accompanying panoramic sequence becomes an ekphrastic narrative unfolding from this diegetic narrative. A careful viewing of the larger photograph in relation to the predellas in a number of the photographs that constitute the *Soliloquy* series reveals an even more significant detail which affirms Taylor-Wood's relevance to this dissertation: the dissolution of the line that separates the larger image from the sequence of smaller images. This is achieved through digital manipulation whereby a body part or a piece of the garment the solitary figure is wearing overflows into the predella section. The manipulation of "reality" in this manner not only enables Taylor-Wood to instill in the still image a sense of duration and hence a narrative through hybridization, but it also

makes us wonder whether digital manipulation, used in a manner that produces such effects, could in fact be something more positive than the analog image's much feared nemesis.

Still Life (2001) is another work by Taylor-Wood that brings together the twofold meaning of "still" often evoked in visual culture, particularly when today the 35mm film is confronted with digital technology. Shot on analog film and projected in DVD format (a process the artist applies in most of her video and film installations), Taylor-Wood's less than four minutes-long film is a powerful *memento mori* that is not content with merely *reminding* us of mortality.

Instead, the film exposes, in accelerated pace, a beautiful bowl of fruit in its gradual movement toward rotting and decay over time. At first, what appears to be a traditional still life painting unfolds into a film depicting life's transformation into disintegration and death. Within this short duration, the film dramatically depicts the history of a delectable bowl of fruit advancing towards its annihilation. The only element in this accelerated 35mm film that resists the historical process the object undergoes is a mundane plastic pen, which remains intact throughout. Resisting the forces of time, this machine-made object remains still and unaffected by duration; similar to objects in a *nature morte* painting whose spatial form never falters, the pen becomes the mere remnant of the spatial in an exclusively time-based narrative. By juxtaposing nature (the fruit) and culture (pen) within a film sequence, Taylor-Wood constructs a narrative on the organic relationship between life and film and contrasts their affinity with the plasticity and artificiality of the pen resisting temporality.

In two thousand and eight, Taylor-Wood, collaborating with the British pop duo the Pet Shop Boys, released a cover of the post-punk band The Passions' nineteen eighty-one hit single "I'm in Love with a German Film Star." The black-and-white video for the song directed by Baillie Walsh features Taylor-Wood replicating the iconic Marlene Dietrich's black-and-white image captured by Eugene Robert Richee. The photographer's famous still depicts an androgynous Dietrich in a man's tuxedo, one hand in her pocket and the other on her knee holding a cigarette. This pose, immortalizing Dietrich's character as Amy Jolly, the seductive nightclub performer in the film *Morocco*, is one of the first images that come to mind when we think of this famous German film star.

In Walsh's video, however, our memory of this image is subtly manipulated. The slowly rising smoke from the cigarette in Taylor-Wood's hand alerts the viewer to the fact that this still image is set into motion and the distance between ourselves and this enchanting image of Dietrich is to be surpassed by way of its filmic rendition. Just as the song performed by Pet Shop Boys is a cover, i.e., a reproduction of the original by The Passions, so is Walsh's video as the mechanical reproduction of the iconic image.[82] What is at stake is the loss of the "original" image's aura and its cult value—the plight of art in the twentieth century best described in Walter Benjamin's often-cited "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Benjamin describes this phenomenon affecting the work of art as being related to "the desire of the masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly" (223). As the culmination of this desire, the "inapproachability" (243) of an art object is subjected to reproducibility. Mechanical reproduction enables the

[82] Not to mention the fact that the "original" is itself mechanically reproduced since it is a photograph of Marlene Dietrich.

questioning of the ultimate status of "reality" and brings forth the notion that that which is "real" is also reproducible and hence no longer unique.

The re-rendition of the unforgettable still image of Marlene Dietrich does not only add a self-reflexive dimension to Walsh's video. It also returns the still to its original medium: the film. The viewer of the music video is inclined to focus on the only moving component, the cigarette smoke dissolving as it rises into air. This delicate display of movement exposes the dissolution of the frame (and hence the aura) surrounding this image and transports us into a cinematic experience. The simple lyrics of the song,[83] with the repetition of "it really moved me," which could be interpreted as both an emotion and an action, also suggests that the Walsh/Taylor-Wood collaboration intends to blur certain boundaries, including those that stand between still images and images in movement.

This self-reflexive music video also brings into focus Sam Taylor-Wood's own career as a visual artist who frequently uses celebrity in her photography and films.[84] Claiming that art history has always depicted cultural and iconic figures of the time, Taylor-Wood explains that her purpose is to take "these people who represent power, who represent masculinity, or represent this whole big dominating media of our life and break it down and make them vulnerable…more real" (Taylor-Wood).

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[83] I'm in love with a German film star/ I once saw in a bar/ Sitting in a corner in imperfect clothes/ Trying not to pose/ For the cameras and the girls/ It's a glamorous world/ I'm in love with a German film star/ I once saw in a movie/ Playing the part of a real troublemaker/ But I didn't care/ It really moved me, it really moved me.

[84] Some of these pieces are *Third Party* (1999) featuring Marianne Faithful, *Pieta* (2001) with Robert Downey, Jr., *Crying Men* (2004)—a series of portraits depicting Tim Roth, Laurence Fishburne, Ed Harris, Forrest Whittaker, Willem Dafoe, and etc., and *David* (2006), a short film showing the famous soccer player David Beckham sleeping.

Taylor-Wood's use of Hollywood actors only to shatter their glamorous façade reveals her approach to cinema as *the* medium to turn to in order to investigate questions of authenticity; similar to Auster's David Zimmer, she is on a mission to find the "real person" disguised under fabricated identities and stories. Rodowick renders the allusions to and the actual use of 35mm film format by contemporary visual artists, including Taylor-Wood, as reflecting "the yearning for duration and uninterrupted time, for perceptual depth, and for a sensuous connection to physical reality in a universe dominated by simulation and information saturation" (158). Seeing Taylor-Wood's work in this light, whether she is alluding to cinematic time or using traditional film formats, also marks *Nowhere Boy* as a work that will hold a significant place in her career.

The feature film is dedicated to re-contextualizing John Lennon in the twenty-first century. He is depicted as the once-fragile and troubled youth he was and as a "real" human being as opposed to the pop icon he later became. One wonders whether the film is also an implicit reaction to the various other contemporary representations of The Beatles as the theme for the Las Vegas-based Cirque du Soleil spectacle titled "The Beatles: Love" and as virtual performers in the video game "The Beatles: Rock Band" released in September two thousand and nine.

EPILOGUE

The arrival of the twenty-first century marks the publication of a number of books that reconsider the relationship between the still and the moving image haunted by the manufacturing of digital images. Besides D.N. Rodowick's *The Virtual Life of Film*, which argues that film will persist albeit "virtually" in our current digital age, other scholars have also sought to re-trace the history and theories of the photographic image in order to advance towards understanding the impact digital technologies are having on the production, distribution, and consumption of images.

The digital image, first and foremost, alters the spatial and temporal aspects of the analog image. It is the realization of this phenomenon, which frames the articles included in recently published scholarship such as *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image* edited by David Green and Joanna Lowry and *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography* edited by Karen Beckman and Jean Ma.

These studies, similar to the visual artists I have discussed in this chapter, re-explore and re-visit theories, which scrutinize the dynamics between the still image and the moving image, so that it is possible to fully grasp what is at stake when image becomes a product of information technologies. A quick look at the list of contents of these volumes suffices to show that so much about who we are as human beings and our relationship to the past, the present, and the future have been captured in the photographic image, which also constitutes the basis of film.[85]

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[85] Another significant publication in this respect is *Moving Picture: Photography and Film in Contemporary Art*, which features artists like Sam Taylor-Wood, Cindy Sherman, Matthew Barney who all explore in their work the relationship between photography and film as film, in the face of the Internet and other developing technologies, approaches its end in the twenty-first century.

Cindy Sherman's the *Untitled Film Stills* series (sixty-nine in total), which the artist began in nineteen seventy-seven, indulges in the ambiguity of the word "still," which scholars in the twenty-first century are also embracing as they anticipate the hegemony of the atemporal digital image. According to Peter Galassi, the curator of the nineteen ninety-seven Cindy Sherman exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Sherman's "solitary heroines map a particular constellation of fictional femininity that took hold in postwar America" (Galassi). Sherman's tendentious survey of various modes of womanhood give the impression of stills from imaginary films while capturing in each photographic frame a different type of woman recognizable from the second half of the twentieth century. However, in choosing to call these photographs film "stills," Sherman de-emphasizes the historical context the constructed images potentially allude to and seems more concerned with what Barthes has called "the third (obtuse) meaning" captured in film stills.

For Barthes, the third meaning is found in what he calls the filmic: "what in the film, cannot be described, it is the representation that cannot be represented…where articulated language is no more than approximate and where another language begins" (58-59). Barthes locates the filmic, not in the projected moving images but instead in the still.

> [The still] gives us the *inside* of the fragment [and] the trace of a superior *distribution* of features of which the film, experienced in its animated flow, would really be no more than one text among others. The still, then, is the fragment of a second text *whose existence never exceeds the fragment*; film and still meet in a palimpsest relation, without our being

> able to say that one is *above* the other or that one is *extracted* from the other. (62)

In attributing these features to the film still, Barthes makes a case for this filmic element as constituting "*this other text*" enabling the "scrutiny" and the "study" of the film (Ibid.). In choosing to call her unusual photographic survey *Untitled Film Stills*, Sherman seems to create a parallel between her idea of the woman as the marginalized "other" and the film still as the film's other. In Barthes' terms, the film still is that which "flouts logical time" and is "this other text" not benefitting from a recognition often granted to film.

The male authors and their male protagonists discussed in the previous chapters are different from Sherman in what they invest in film as opposed to the film still and various other forms of still images. Their purpose is to fuse the layers of time in order to establish continuity and a sense of history. Re-memorizing the past as opposed to the memory of the past frames their relationship to film. Their task is not to write "this other text" but to re-integrate the fragments of the past into time to counter forgetting.

In the twenty-first century memory and history complement each other: they are not antithetical. The medium, which assures this relationship, is film; it is truly the only hybrid art form rooted in stillness yet emblematic of movement and continuity. It is significant that not only writers but also visual artists of the contemporary moment are re-discovering in the analog image a sense of history and historicity. With the widespread use of the digital image anxieties about the waning of historical time and of the loss of historicity in forms of cognition and consciousness have bubbled to the surface. It is at this point that visual artists turn to film and writers to film ekphrasis as a way of re-integrating into the narrative of the present a historical dimension.

As a generation for whom the Internet is the primary source of information and interaction, the computer screen emerges as our very own "digital" ekphrastic frame. Arguably, we are given the freedom to determine the contents of this "frame" by logging on to various networks, which relate us to other users and to the events around the world. The permanency of the history accumulated within this digital frame is contingent on the capacity of the computer and our fingertip, which can delete history by simply clicking on the command "clear history." The indexical and material based substance of the analog image and its verbal representation, on the other hand, takes away from us (the technologically conditioned generation of the twenty-first century) the power to do away with memory and history so easily. Whatever the outcome of a study dedicated to the digital still and moving image ekphrases may be, it is reassuring that the printed novel like the analog image, compared to the digital, guarantees some level of permanency as long as it resists purely digitized mutability.

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