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The Elements of Post-Modern Fiction in Paul Auster's Work
Bc. Dominika Hladká

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Zásady pro vypracování

Diplomová práce bude zkoumat vývoj moderního angloamerického románu. Na základě rozboru díla amerického spisovatele Paula Austera (především *The New York Trilogy*) se pokusí určit charakteristické rysy postmoderní fikce.

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Auster, Paul. *Newyorská trilogie*. Praha: Prostor, 2000.
Varvogli, Aliki. *The World That Is the Book*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001.
HIGHET, Gilbert. *The classical tradition: Greek and Roman influences on western literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, [2015].
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BLOOM, Harold. *Novelists and novels*. New York: Checkmark Books, 2007.

Vedoucí diplomové práce: **Mgr. Michal Kleprlík, Ph.D.**
                               Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D. v.r.   **Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D.** v.r.
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V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2021

Prohlašuji:

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V Pardubicích dne 1. 6. 2022

Bc. Dominika Hladká

ANNOTATION

The thesis's topic revolves around postmodern elements in the work of Paul Auster, especially in his most known book: *The New York Trilogy*. Therefore, this paper focuses on definition of postmodernism as well as its manifestation in literature and in the trilogy. A brief summary of the development of a postmodern novel as we know it today is not left behind and it is analyzed in the second chapter since The New York Trilogy often refers to canonical works either in the form of a pastiche or in the form of an allusion. In the rather more practical part of the thesis, the main emphasis is put on identity. Hence, it is analyzed from the sociological point of view based on the division by a prominent contemporary sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and from the view Auster deals with the issue of identity in his work. For instance, he creates doubles or even triples, he often includes a character possessing his own name – Paul Auster, characters also take up a made up or existing identities and lose them at the same time, identities merge or are being mistaken.

KEYWORDS

Postmodernism, fiction, The New York Trilogy, Paul Auster, identity, allusion, pastiche

ANOTACE

Téma práce se točí kolem postmoderních prvků v díle Paula Austera, zejména v jeho nejznámější knize: Newyorská trilogie. Tato práce se proto zaměřuje na definici postmodernismu a také na jeho projevy v literatuře a v trilogii. Stručné shrnutí vývoje postmoderního románu, jak jej známe dnes, nezůstává pozadu a je rozebráno ve druhé kapitole, neboť Newyorská trilogie často odkazuje na kanonická díla buď ve formě pastiše, nebo ve formě aluze. V praktičtější části práce je hlavní důraz kladen na identitu. Je tedy analyzován ze sociologického hlediska na základě rozdělení od významného současného sociologa Zygmunta Baumana a také z pohledu toho, jak se Auster ve své práci zabývá problematikou identity. Vytváří například dvojníky nebo dokonce i trojníky, často zahrnuje postavu s jeho vlastním jménem – Paul Auster, postavy také přebírají vymyšlené nebo existující identity a zároveň je ztrácejí, identity se prolínají nebo se pletou.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Postmodernismus, fikce, Newyorská trilogie, Paul Auster, identita, aluze, pastiš

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INTRODUCTION

As the former Czech president Václav Havel once said in his speech on the need for transcendence in the postmodern world at Independence Hall in Philadelphia in 1994:

"We live in the postmodern world, where everything is possible and almost nothing is certain."

He was, indeed, right and Havel was not the only one who realized this fact. Actually, postmodernism is defined in the same way by two, for us crucial, philosophers Jean-François Lyotard or Wolfgang Welsh, too. Paul Auster decided to project this uncertainty and possibility of the postmodern world in his works and especially in his first novel written in 1987 *The New York Trilogy* where we may observe several examples of it. The characters mostly battle with their perception of themselves and how the society labels them. They show that they can truly become anyone in the pluralistic world, either a made-up character or a real-existing person, even the author of the trilogy Paul Auster. The possibilities are open, and one just must find what suits them best.

For this reason, identity is the main topic of this thesis, and the goal is to analyze the trilogy in terms of this matter as well as other postmodern elements which are typical for literature in the era. However, apart from the issue of identity, Auster included other elements which characterize postmodernism and especially postmodern literature. These are, for example, pastiche, allusion, unreliability of a narrator, parody, or paranoia. Chance is something that Auster enjoys working with in his works, too. It appears in a form of a random call which opens the first story from the trilogy or an opportunity to take up an identity of a friend who disappeared in the final story.

In the first chapter, there is a distinction made between modernism and postmodernism and later rather in detail defined the latter. Paradoxically, these two often cause confusion and even though having different names when one suggests appearing after the other, the boundary between them is blurry and it is often challenging to define them. There is also a part devoted to postmodern literature and its characterization.

The next chapter deals with two postmodern literary devices allusion and pastiche and hence there is a brief introduction of the development of a novel. There are the most influential works covered, especially the ones for the purposes of the analysis of the trilogy. Among these books and authors, we may find, for instance, Don Quixote by Cervantes, William Wilson by Poe, or Walden by Thoreau.

In the third chapter, the focus is finally shifted to identity, its definition and it is analyzed from the sociological point of view. Zygmunt Bauman, a prominent sociologist who has died only recently, suggested four types of a postmodern person in a consumerist world. These are: a stroller, a tourist, a vagabond, and a player. Hence, the characters from the trilogy are studied in terms of these characters and how these characters by Bauman manifest themselves and why.

Finally, in the last chapter, a deeper analysis of identity is brought to attention concerning the novel. The main question that this chapter surrounds is how the characters in the book deal with the issue of identity as well as Auster addresses it. The characters from all the three stories in the trilogy seem to somehow struggle with their self-identification, even though each of them slightly differently. Thus, we may notice that the characters lose their identity, they do not possess any at all, their identities merge or are mistaken and as a result, they take up new existing or made-up ones.

1. DEFINING THE MODERN AND POSTMODERN

In this chapter, two basic concepts will be introduced, namely postmodern and modern, and how these two concepts differ and what they have in common. Firstly, there should be stated the difference between the words modern and modernity as well as postmodern and postmodernity. Not only Wolfgang Welsh and Jean-François Lyotard claim that modernity is a part of postmodernity and cannot be separated. Therefore, we will also focus on modern elements apart from those postmodern projected in the work The New York Trilogy. However, the latter will be analyzed in more detail, as it is, after all, the main aim of this thesis. As far as this book is concerned, postmodern elements such as, allusion, pastiche, metafiction, or an unreliable narrator will not be left out and will also be briefly introduced and found in the analyzed book. Moreover, the thesis will deal with other postmodern values of the western culture and how they appear in the book in terms of social environment and how they differ from modern values.

As according to Welsh, radical pluralism is an important component of postmodernism, hence a few words will be devoted to pluralism and radical pluralism, too.[1] This will be needed for the introduction of the term identity as it will be the focus in the second part of this thesis. The aim of this chapter will be to acquaint readers with concepts and terminology closely related to the main topics of this work for a better understanding.

In the first place, it is crucial to explain the basic terminology that surrounds the topic of this thesis. The confusion might already start when we discuss the words modern, modernity and modernism as well as postmodern, postmodernism and postmodernity as each group of the three words looks quite similar at the first glance. For decoding them in detail, we will use the English dictionaries which provide a concise and clear explanation.

To start with, there is a difference in the word classes between the terms modern, modernity and modernism. Modern is an adjective used to describe something new or contemporary whereas modernity and modernism are both nouns which slightly differ in their meaning. Nevertheless, modern is a relative term and it depends on each to decide what modern means for them.[2] For some, modernity describes the quality of being new in contrast to what was considered traditional.[3] This also depends on the time period we find ourselves in since it can be also perceived as the variety and possibility provided in contrast with the past experience.

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[1] Wolfgang Welsch, *Postmoderna: Pluralita jako etická a politická hodnota* (Praha: KLIP, 1993), 17.
[2] *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online*, s.v. "Modern," accessed February 26, 2022, https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/ modern
[3] *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online*, s.v. "Modernity," accessed February 26, 2022, https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/ modernity

For instance, now, costumers in a shop choose goods from various brands and they put them in the shopping cart by themselves instead of one shop assistant providing them with goods in a shop usually by one brand. This new approach in shops may be then considered modern. Thus, modernity is rather a broader term. On the other hand, modernism is specifically defined since it represents an artistic and philosophical style, which was prominent in various areas such as architecture, painting, or literature which is usually dated between the years 1870/90 – 1945 and its peak is considered during the years 1914 and 1920s.[4] However, it came into existence even earlier, in the 18th century. At first, the word modernism carried a negative connotation as its suffix -ism, was related to theology at that time and it referred to religious "modern" streams such as Calvinism, which were not respected by the mainstream. Nevertheless, in the 19th century, the suffix suggested political, literary, and artistic movement and it gave rise to experimentation.[5]

This experimentation is mainly seen in literature and especially in prose, the area in which we are interested the most, looked for new and simply "better" ways of writing. The authors basically refused the traditional, and, in particular, the 19th century standards as they were considered old, limiting and not innovative whatsoever. This might have happened as a reaction against strict Victorian rigidness and conservatism. Modernist authors longed for new ways of expression to release this rigidness. Therefore, the authors experimented with various modern ideas and techniques such as the stream of consciousness, which is perhaps the most iconic characteristic feature of the modernist prose literature. Stream of consciousness brilliantly fragmented a story and made reading more complex for the readers. There was a tendency to prefer these hard-to follow texts which played with relativized time instead of the traditional conception of it as it was aimed at high culture. Only experienced readers were able to appreciate such writings. Modernists wanted to return to the natural nations and periodicity. They put effort into re-evaluating the current system and comparing it with the civilized progress. Ezra Pound's motto supports this claim as he said, *"Make it new"*, which is also the name of his collection of essays. It was not only about accepting traditions, but about re-evaluating and updating them in the modern era. In other words, taking elements from the past and modifying them into the new civilized world. Therefore, sometimes, we may hear about Pound's statement being complemented by *"Make it different"*.

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[4]*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online*, s.v. "Modernism," accessed February 26, 2022, https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/ modernism
[5] Rachel Potter, *Modernist Literature* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2012), 1–7.

Other typical features of modernist writing were flashbacks, unreliable narrator or at times even multiple narrators, plot-lessness and open endings. Several ideas in modernism come from and are inspired by psychology, philosophy, and political theory. Hence, there is an emphasis on individuality and subjectivity. The setting is usually not important, there is often absurdity present, symbolism, and intertextuality. Sometimes, there even appear foreign languages in the modernist literature, such as French. Formalism is another term connected with modernist writing as the authors viewed writing as a craft rather than an act of creativity. They believed that a text should be constructed from smaller parts and not the organic, internal one.[6]

The modernist writing is usually associated with the period after the World War I and considered as a catalyst for many authors. Due to the shell shock from the war, there was also unsettling literature written by authors such as Ernest Hemingway or John Dos Passos dealing with this particular issue. Newly, an interest in racial relations appeared, as well. Among the most prominent modernist writers belong, for instance, Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf, Henry James, James Joyce, or Ernest Hemingway, all of them who contributed to the development of the postmodern literature greatly.[7]

To add up, in the US, the modernist authors celebrated the new lifestyle, technology and urban setting during the modernist movement. They found a new interest in time, space and dream imagery which flourished even more in postmodernism. Why do we devote a part of this chapter to modernism? The reason is simple as the majority of the above-mentioned notions and ideas can be also observed in the postmodern work *The New York Trilogy*, such as fragmentation, individuality, or dream imagery, even though postmodernism came into existence later.[8] Moreover, the modernist writers had a great influence on the postmodern ones. This only proves the initial statement by Lyotard and Welsch about postmodernism being closely related to modernism.[9]

Similarly, as modern, modernity and modernism, the three latter words: postmodern, postmodernity and postmodernism are defined in the Longman dictionary. Again, the word postmodern is classified as an adjective, however, this time, the word is rather an adjective derived from the noun postmodernism since the definition of the adjective refers to something that is related to postmodernism as such.[10] According to the Longman dictionary,

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[6] Potter, *Modernist literature*, 13.
[7] Potter, *Modernist literature*, 22–36.
[8] Potter, *Modernist literature*, 124–134.
[9] Jean-François Lyotard, "Defining the Postmodern" in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 1999), 142.
[10] *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online*, s.v. "Postmodern," accessed February 26, 2022, https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/ postmodern

postmodernism, as well as modernism, is a style of art, painting, literature, etcetera, but this time, it came to existence as a reaction to modernism. Postmodernism uses a mixture of new and old styles in contrast to modernism which considered the old as something less valuable or interesting and tried to divert from it. [11] Due to the fact, that it developed after modernism, it is logical that it happened in the late 20th century. Not to omit the third word and noun at the same time, postmodernity surprisingly did not appear in the common dictionaries such as the Longman dictionary or Cambridge dictionary, even though it is used by authors like Zygmunt Bauman who even has written a book with this particular word in its title: *Intimations of Postmodernity*. Nevertheless, postmodernity could be perceived similarly as modernity, in the sense of a rather more general term which describes something possessing the quality of being postmodern. [12]

Postmodernism, in comparison to modernism, is therefore a term even more complex and according to Welsh extremely challenging to define as it is always difficult to recognize when something new begins and something old ends. Authors who deal with the issue of postmodernism often agree on the complexity of the term and on the broadness of what it actually covers. According to Robinson, nobody knows what the name postmodernism truly means, as well as modernism, and a more absurd question is how modernism ended or if there even was an end that marked the start of postmodernism. The only thing that seems to be certain about postmodernism is that it is highly skeptical. The term might be in many ways startling and perhaps that already creates the perfect characterization of it. [13]

> "Postmodernity means many different things to many different people. It may mean a building that arrogantly flaunts the 'orders' prescribing what fits what and what should be kept strictly put to preserve the functional logic of steel, glass, and concrete. It means a work of imagination that defies the difference between painting and sculpture, styles and genres, gallery and the street, art, and everything else. It means a life that looks suspiciously like a TV serial, and a docudrama that ignores your worry about setting apart fantasy from what 'really happened'. It means license to do whatever one may fancy and advice not to take anything you or the others do too seriously. It means the speed with which things change and the pace with which moods succeed each other so that they have no time to ossify into things. It means attention drawn in all directions at once so that it cannot stop on anything for long and nothing gets a really close look. It means a shopping mall overflowing with goods whose major use is the joy of purchasing them; and existence that feels like a life-long confinement to the shopping mall. It means the exhilarating freedom to pursue anything and in the name of what one should pursue it."
> …

[11] *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online*, s.v. "Postmodernism," accessed February 26, 2022, https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/ postmodernism

[12] Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 7–24.

[13] Dave Robinson, *Nietzsche a postmodernismus* (Praha: TRITON, 1999), 40–45.

>"Postmodernity is all these things and many others. But it is also – perhaps more than anything else – a state of mind."[14]

A state of mind could be understood as the way postmodern people see the world as opposed to modernism. It may be the view of the great narrative such as Fascism or Christianity and its sudden deconstruction. For instance, in postmodern era, being an atheist is as common as being a Christian. To add up, the globalized world and plurality may be other post-modern "states of mind". There is a variety of ways a person can choose to follow in life such as being married, being a heterosexual or being religious.

Despite Bauman's and the other authors' concern about defying the period of postmodernism, they usually place postmodernism in the period after the World War II from the 1950s until now, especially the literary postmodernism. Nevertheless, postmodernism is manifested not only in literature, which, however, will be of most interest to us in this work, but also in other areas, on which it has had a great impact. It is believed that the term postmodern originated in literary discussion in the USA in the 1960s and moved to architecture into fine arts and other arts, sociology, and philosophy. Nonetheless, the term gained the most popularity in 1975 in architecture with the propagator of the term Charles Jencks. He saw postmodern architecture as a means that communicated to ordinary people but also to the elite. It was a mixture of styles and ideas which could be perceived through multiple perspectives. Other fields where postmodernism emerged include theology, economics, histography, anthropology, jurisprudence, psychiatry, cultural theory, and even pedagogy. However, the words postmodern, postmodernity or even postmodernism appeared even before the 1960s and it carried various meanings before it led to the current one.

The term postmodernity was around the year 1870 firstly used by the painter John Watkins Chapman as an adjective. He wanted to describe more modern art than, back then, the most widespread direction of painting classicism. This new and modern was Impressionism at that time.[15]

For the second time, in 1917, Rudolf Pannwitz in the book *Die Krisis der Europaischen* described a postmodern person who was defined as a mixture of a little bit of everything, which is actually an on-point description when we consider that in postmodernism, anything is possible and boundaries of strictly defined social roles are blurry. Although his comment about a post-modern person could be meant in the negative sense as his book's name is in English translation "*The Crisis of the Europeans*", I see it as a positive description. It is natural for

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[14] Bauman, *Intimations of postmodernity*, 7.
[15] Welsch, *Postmoderna*, 18–19.

people to be complex rather than being black or white. There is a freedom hidden in the variety and options that are available for a post-modern person. They do not have to stick to their label, they may have multiple personalities – an artist, a teacher, an alcoholic, a sportsman, it all can be found within one person. Therefore, Auster's characters in The New York Trilogy who also consist of multiple personalities and traits are, in my view, after all reflections of all of us in a way.

In Pannwitz's work, we can already observe aspects of postmodernism in literature which we may see nowadays, too. For example, he does not separate sentences, there are no sentence signs, the work is full of neologisms, there are also oxymorons used, in other words, linguistically opposing connections. Paul Auster in *The New York trilogy*, however, separates sentences and uses the signs. The postmodern aspects come in other areas which are less obvious, such as references to other books or fragmentation caused by multiple identities merging.

The literary scientist Frederico de Onís firstly used the word postmodernism as a noun. He defined it in Spanish and Hispanic poetry as the period covering the gap between the years 1905 and 1914. Nevertheless, the term was used rarely and not with the same meaning as nowadays. Moreover, it did not even lead to the current understanding of the term. It only covered the period between the so-called moderate modernism (1986 – 1905) and rather more intense one in 1914.

For the fourth time, however, it finally started to point to the right direction in which we explain the term today. In 1947, D. C. Somerwell created a shortened version of the book *A Study of History* written by Arnold Toynbee in which the current period of western culture is considered post-modern. Nevertheless, postmodernism is depicted as the year in which the politics transformed from national state thinking into global thinking in 1975.

In literature, it was in the late 1950s (1959 – 1960) in the USA when Irving Howe a Harry Levin claimed that the postmodern literature differs in various ways in comparison to the modern one. They described it as slower and with a rather less innovative potential. This might evoke in someone the feeling that postmodern authors resigned and preferred nostalgy over experimenting which is not entirely true.

The difference mainly comes in the form of the target audience of postmodern literature. According to the literary critics Leslie Fiedler and Susan Sontag, this time, it is meant for all the social classes, genders, and age groups and not only for the more intellectual men or those with a higher social status – this, as it has been mentioned above, was the thought of the postmodern architects, too. Everybody's subjective point of view is of interest and that means,

that the literature was meant for everybody. Everyone will find something, that speaks to them. The „higher ", sometimes referred to as canon literature is mixed with the „lower ", the popular literature. The usage of the popular input is simple. Primarily, it should attract the readers by its form and express difficult topics and themes whereas the higher is supposed to add more complex ideas or references which may be enjoyable for more intellectual and avid readers. This mixing led to the deconstruction of the typical canon as we know it.[16] Auster uses a form of a detective story and provides it with a new meaning – the search for one's identity rather than solving a crime case. He also tries encouraging the readers to stop distinguishing between high and low culture by doing so.[17]

Apart from this mixture, authors often mix realism with fantasy, too, which complicates the reader's recognition of what is real and what is not. Furthermore, outsiders become of the interest rather than those likeable characters or their role is changing throughout a story. All these can be observed in *The New York Trilogy*, too.

Anything goes, in other words, anything is possible, is the main motto of postmodernism since the artists did not want to follow one universal form but they preferred the beauty of variety, possibility, diversity and plurality. Back in time, it carried a negative connotation as some people believed that it was only a cheap propaganda. However, it did not mean anarchy as such, which might the motto evoke, but rather the possibility.

In literature, the motto „anything goes ", allows us to compare texts on multiple levels. The possibility is manifested in the realities that merge, unreliable characters, deconstruction of the classical narrative and, as it has been already mentioned by mixing the higher literature with the lower one. In other words, the traditional with the popular. The boundary between what is still artistic and what has become a kitsch, when one uses the forms only to get the attention and likeability by the readers, therefore becomes gradually thinner and thinner. However, we need to bear in mind that everything is possible only to a certain extent as we cannot mix independently and indifferently, because then plurality loses its meaning. Subsequently, one large whole of indifferent slurry is formed. What is different should not be mixed, what is different should be supported and cultivated.

This brings us to the question of pluralism. What pluralism even means? It is considered the essence of modernity. In a nutshell, it is a system in which two or more different things coexist in one common environment. Plurality is sometimes considered to have an ethical value.

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[16] Welsch, *Postmoderna*, 18–20.

[17] Ramón Espejo, "Coping with the postmodern: Coping with the Postmodern: Paul Auster's New York Trilogy." Journal of American Studies 48, No. 1 (February 2014): 156. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24485564

In the politics, for instance, democracy is the desirable environment for pluralism as people with various opinions live together and at the same time tolerate each other. Pluralism essentially requires this state of coexistence of two or more different or contradicting entities and democracy makes it possible.[18]

A number of sociologists around the world and across the time have expressed their view on pluralism in the society. These are, for instance, Max Weber, Paul Valéry, Arnold Gehlen, Daniel Bell and finally, Zygmunt Bauman.

Weber, the German sociologist of the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, talks about so called „polytheism of values ", by which he indicated that there is a plethora of values present in the world. The important fact is that every each of them has something that stands out and we should not consider the others less important.

Paul Valéry claimed that modernity is a state which accepts this huge number of opinions and beliefs and despite them being highly contrasting, they exist in one system together. These are, for example, various gods and goddesses or orders of the world, such as democracy and dictatorship which, despite them being polar opposites, coexist in one world.

A German sociologist Arnold Gehlen in 1969 stated that in a human being, we can find multiple genetic but also functional instances which are independently coexisting in the body.

Daniel Bell, an American sociologist later in 1973 claimed that the society is characterized by the radical antagonism, in other words by the hostility, between various spheres and objectives which also include the internal differences within oneself. There are diverse identities in an individual. We deal with plurality on many levels such as at work or in our private lives. To demonstrate such pluralism, let us analyze the term ordinary family. Nowadays, this term is not easily defined as it is rather relative. In the pluralist world, an ordinary family can be a family consisting of a husband, wife, and children but also a divorced family, a single mother with a child, a homosexual family and many other. Plurality, however, leads to uncertainty. We struggle with getting into these new forms of live and must deal with them on our own as they were not common in the past and we cannot take them up. Again, this might lead one to a battle with their internal coping mechanism.

We must not forget one of the most important sociologists, Zygmunt Bauman, who also addressed the subject of plurality and postmodernism. However, he rather detached himself from this term, as it seemed too limiting, as the prefix post usually describes something that arose after something ended. According to him, modernism and postmodernism are intertwined

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[18] Welsch, *Postmoderna*, 21–24.

and the boundary when something ended and something else began is blurry. He therefore chose the name liquid modernity, which, in contrast to the solid modernity (modernism), had less explicit boundaries, because the fluid moves and changes. The solid state is usually strictly limited and defined. Hence, this metaphor seems to be the best comparison to modernism and postmodernism. In many ways, he agrees with what has already been mentioned by his predecessors in the sense of diverse society and everchanging social roles and ways of living.[19]

From the philosophical point of view, plurality was also discussed multiple times. Kant believed that there are differences between types of knowledge but at the same time, only one exists which varies depending on the way people use it. Hegel agreed with the comment about one knowledge but denies the existence of other kinds. Husserl respects plurality but he does not accept any differentiation of the knowledge. The idea relates to phenomenology which claims that there are perspectives from which we see objects and there is always one perspective hidden from us. For instance, we see a house from maximum three sides. Even though we never see the fourth one, we know it exists and it has the same value as the rest of the sides.[20] Nietzsche was the first, even before Husserl, who dared to accept plurality. He saw pluralism and uncertainty as a beautiful and inseparable part of living. Nietzsche became an inspiration for postmodernists and with him arose the idea of deconstruction of the meta-narration, mixing of texts, languages, or interpretation of myths in new ways such as in a comic strip.[21] He discusses the transvaluation of all values (Umwertung aller Werte) which he elaborated in his work *The Antichrist*, where he mainly pays attention to Christianity and labels it as a religion of pity as it elevates the weak over the strong individuals. Therefore, it is obvious he criticizes it. He also sees Christianity as a predominant set of moral values for a western culture since people behave in a certain way if they are religious. To re-evaluate it, he contrasts it with Buddhism.[22]

Bachelard also openly defended pluralistic way of thinking and claimed that it came to existence as a result of scientific revolutions. All in all, in literature, there is a new interest to reevaluate the classical canon and perhaps not distinguish between what is high and what is low anymore. The main reason for this is democratization and therefore it is recommended to invite the mass people to help creating culture.

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[19] Tony Blackshaw, *The New Bauman Reader: Thinking Sociologically in Liquid Modern Times* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2016), 91–110.
[20] Welsch, *Postmoderna*, 16–25.
[21] Robinson, *Nietzsche a postmodernismus*, 40–45.
[22] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Antikrist* (Olomouc: Votobia, 2001), 9–126.

The core of postmodern concepts, however, does not lie in plurality but in radical plurality. It is even more intensified plurality. In contrast with the conventional pluralism, radicalized one affects everything including even elementary questions such as self-identification. In a nutshell, there is non-denial, awareness of growing plurality and appreciation of it and this is the focus of postmodernism.

In 1982, Ernst Topitsch at the colloquium about pluralism in Munich said that pluralism means rather the fact, that we all disagree with each other. Pluralism, through his eyes was not seen as what is different but as the fact that we expect some kind of a conflict.[23]

The postmodern approach towards plurality come mainly due to the negative experience with modernism. Modernism longed for uniformity which turned out to have catastrophic consequences as those who did not fit in were oppressed. On the other hand, postmodernism highly values differentiation and heterogeneity. The values are also considerably changed as from loss, there is profit, from oppression, there is autonomy, liberation, and development. Finally, the modern means to accept variety and heterogeneity. This is possible only if it is respected not only formally as a part of toleration, but also with rights of others being different or having different views on life. It is recommended to try to see world from multiple perspective to discover one's limits and to embrace plurality which also helps with understanding or accepting pluralistic opinions. It is necessary to respect otherness. To illustrate, for instance, in *The City of Glass*, being a homeless for the protagonist could be a liberation. Being on the streets is a new form of life which may seem unacceptable to some people but not necessarily to the protagonist. He becomes free of his responsibilities and burdens of his life after losing his wife and a child. His only purpose is to observe and solve a case.[24]

As it is with everything, some people had a negative view on the radicalized pluralism. They saw only the downsides such as hopelessness, deconstruction, and the end in the sense that nothing else will come. Those peoples' main concern was losing the uniformity alongside with the whole. They were not ready to accept the crucial positive side of pluralism which provides people with freedom. One of the reasons for this refusal was religion and the belief that salvation is in uniformity.

Our society is gradually more and more heterogenous, therefore pluralism is intensified, too. With the growing number of the system of rules, the insecurity emerges. Nothing is certain and everything can be perceived through various perspectives. One might find oneself in

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[23] Welsch, *Postmoderna*, 26–34.
[24] Espejo, "Coping with the postmodern," 147-171.

struggle with the definition of own identity. For every question, multiple equally correct answers exist which creates a high level of skepticism and uncertainty. This means that different opinions should not be looked down as they are equally valid. In the postmodern environment, it is necessary to respect all these differences.

The most prominent book on postmodernism was written in 1979 by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard: *La Condition Postmoderne*. In the book, Lyotard marks postmodernism as the end of meta-narrative and explains that it starts where the whole ends. Meta-narration is by Lyotard explained as one great narrative which explains and defines one particular culture. According to him, every culture requires its own great narrative which the people know and accept. For example, in Christianity, the meta-narrative includes the history of Christianity and all the Christian terms, ceremonies and institutions that come with it. He also claims that knowledge exists only to be sold and that it gradually loses its purpose. He also sees the problem in information and its purpose. In the nowadays world, knowledge serves as a product with which people rule the world. It does not help to develop oneself anymore and it does not even matter if a piece of information is true or not. Their aim is to achieve a goal.[25] Moreover, modern media such as TV and internet add to devaluating of knowledge and truth as they portray things as they want to and therefore the "truth" is usually biased.[26]

Therefore, there is held skepticism towards the universal truth and knowledge as it may seem to be forced and homogenizing. What Lyotard means by this is that people, ideas, or ways of living which do not fit in the accepted and common truth are considered bad or unacceptable. Finally, there was a diversion from the big projects which admit only one leading idea and later affect the way we perceive things, and which also affects the way of living in each era. The rise of postmodern criticism and deconstruction allows the end of all the meta-narrations such as Christianity, Fascism or even evolution by means of natural selection, which lose their meaning, and it is postmodernism which offers the opportunity to those suppressed different instances to develop.[27]

Postmodernism in literature is often connected with highly experimental writing as the American fiction in the 1960s has the effect of deconstruction. It seems to be a rebellion against the 1950s and late modernism especially in three pillars of modern art – the concept of reality,

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[25] Welsch, *Postmoderna*, 20–25.
[26] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (USA: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), 27.
[27] Lyotard, "Defining the Postmodern," 142–145.

identity, and uniformity of artistic form.[28] Identity will be analyzed in detail later in the thesis, specifically, in the third and fourth chapter.

There is often playing with the language in literary works, with the conception of knowledge and also means of living. Sometimes, there is seen an obsession about language and meaning of it since people used to look for meaning in everything. Therefore, postmodern artists prefer to include randomness into their art as simply not everything has to make sense or mean something.[29] In *City of Glass*, there is nicely portrayed the obsession about language and meaning. Quinn walks around New York looking for meaning of Stillman's walks, Stillman's experiment on his son, when he used to lock him up in a room and hoped for the God's language to emerge in him are such examples.[30]Additionally, there is not one given stereotype of a family unit, gender roles, and living in the contemporary society, either. Postmodernism gave rise to all queer movements, feminist movements, religious movements, and racial rights movements as everything is possible in postmodern era. That is the reason why in literary works, we may notice hints on these topics or realize why postmodern works often focus on such topics.[31]

Other characteristic features of postmodern literature are the following:[32]

- Metafiction
- Intertextuality
- Allusion
- Parody
- Pastiche
- Magical realism
- Unreliable narrator
- Distortion of time
- Paranoia
- Irony
- Fragmentation
- Randomness
- Hyperreality
- Unpredictability

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[28] Gerhard Hoffmann, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction* (New York: Radopi, 2005), 33–34.
[29] Robinson, *Nietzsche a postmodernismus*, 43.
[30] Paul Auster, "The City of Glass," in *The New York Trilogy* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), 62–72.
[31] Martin Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Harlow: York Press, 1992), 185–187.
[32] Kathryn VanSpanckeren, *Outline of American Literature* (Washington: United States Information Agency, 1994), 79–112.

Metafiction is a type of fiction which gives the reader hints about the work being a fiction. In a nutshell, it is a fiction that thinks and talks about itself. For instance, we may notice notes and comments of a writer which would not normally appear in a novel or, as it is in the case of Auster's trilogy, implementation of the writer's name in the story. In the analyzed novel, we can observe that Paul Auster incorporated his name and even his own occupation since the character and he are both writers. Metafiction, hence, may be used as a tool for parody of literary conventions and forms, such as a novel.

With another term, intertextuality, came a French critic Julia Kristeva and she suggested that from the structuralist point of view, texts refer to other texts. It shows us the relationships of texts. This term is closely related to allusion, parody, and pastiche. [33]

Allusion is more of a literary device which explicitly or implicitly references to another artistic work which can be literary. However, this reference does not necessarily need to be to a work but also to people or events. Mostly, the writer does not explain this reference as it saves time and space in the book. The understanding of an allusion is therefore completely dependent on the reader and on their knowledge.[34] An alluded text might be viewed from a different point of view and understood differently. As well as inter-textuality, it is connected with parody and pastiche.[35] In *The New York Trilogy* the references are usually to characters of traditional books written by influential authors. For instance, Daniel Quinn has the same initials as Don Quixote, Fanshawe, the character from *The Locked Room* is also a character from the book with the same name by Nathaniel Hawthorne. There is also William Willison mentioned in *City of Glass* as a penname of Quinn, which is also a character and a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe.[36]

Another term is parody, which is characterized as ridiculing of a work or even criticizing it by using similar way of writing in an amusing way.[37] In our case, Paul Auster imitates a detective story, we have a "detective" and seemingly some kind of a case in all three stories, which is actually made-up as we find out in the end.

Pastiche is an imitation of another work; this imitation is implemented in style of writing. Nevertheless, in contrast to parody, which uses ridiculing, authors using pastiche usually copy a style of previous authors because they appreciate them and want to pay tributes to them. However, pastiche may be perceived as a derogatory term for someone since it may evoke

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[33] Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Term*s (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 128.
[34] Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary,* 7.
[35] Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 17–18.
[36] Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, 3–314.
[37] Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary,* 185–186.

lacking originality in an author's writing.[38] Auster imitates styles of writing of authors mentioned above. He chose them as they had an impact on his writing development and his inspiration.[39] These are, for instance, Edgar Allan Poe and his short story about doppelgangers in *William Wilson*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's first attempt for a novel *Fanshawe* which he published anonymously and his wife Sophie after his death even denied that he had written it, Miguel Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and his tilting at windmills, Henry David Thoreau's solitude in *Walden*, and others. We will dig deeper into these influences in the following chapter.

Magical realism adds a magical touch to a realistic text which should remind the reader the fictionality of a story.[40] In *City of Glass*, the slight magical realism might be seen when two Stillmans appear at the platform, one of them having a "prosperous air about him".[41] In *Ghosts*, naming of the characters according to colors could already be a hint that the story uses magical realism.[42]

When there is an unreliable narrator in a story, it does not necessarily mean that they lie, their narration is often subjective, biased, or distorted in another way.[43] We can assume that due to the occurrence and discrepancy of multiple personalities within one character, the narrator is not reliable in neither of the three analyzed stories.

There is also obvious distortion of time as characters isolate themselves from the society physically or mentally. Blue, from *Ghosts*, is in his studio apartment observing Black, literally locked from the society, the time slows down for him as nothing else matters than observing Black opposite his room.[44] Quinn from *City of Glass* isolates himself physically and mentally as he leaves his life behind for the case and the time goes by as seasons change in the city. Quinn has paranoia about being observed as well as Blue sometimes feels like Black is watching him and there is no doubt about paranoia in Fanshawe in *The Locked Room* when he even has a gun by his side.[45] In postmodern literature, we can also notice irony, fragmentation, randomness, hyperreality and unpredictability.[46]

It is appropriate to mention the most prominent representatives of postmodern literature. I have decided to follow the division according to Bran Nicol who suggests a list of authors.

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[38] Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 211.
[39] Espejo, "Coping with the postmodern," 147-171.
[40] Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 167.
[41] Auster, "City of Glass," 55–56.
[42] Paul Auster, "Ghosts," in *The New York Trilogy* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), 137–197.
[43] Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary,* 268–269.
[44] Auster, "Ghosts," 135–198.
[45] Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, 3–314.
[46] Ezekiel Leon, "Literature for the 21st century: Postmodern Literature" in *English Literature: The Twentieth and the Twenty-first centuries*, ed. Ezekiel Leon (United Kingdom: ED-Tech Press, 2020), 167.

According to him, early post-modern fiction writers were Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges or William Burroughs. Nabokov and Pynchon were authors interested in metafiction. John Fowles and Julian Barnes wrote historical novels. The newly emerging topics including post-colonialism were the main interest of Toni Morrison or Salman Rushdie. There was a rise of women writers who were, for instance, Angela Carter or Margaret Atwood who dealt with the issue of feminism. William Gibson's focus was on sci-fi and cyberpunk, which is a type of science fiction dealing with future involving advanced computer technologies in an urban setting. Last but not least area of focus was metaphysical detective fiction among which we include writers such as Umberto Eco with his famous book *The Name of the Rose*, Jorge Luis Borges with his *Death and the Compass* and, finally, Paul Auster with his stories from *The New York Trilogy.[47]* We should not omit Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* in 1961 which is by Leon considered one of the publications that marked the peak of modernist literature.[48]

To sum up the chapter, let us establish that postmodernity is not anti-modernity as it does not go against it, neither it marks the end of modernity. Post-modernity is basically radicalized modernity which welcomes plurality in its principal self. Modernity, according to Bauman, can be either solid or liquid as it is more exact description than modernity and postmodernity. Liquid modernity is a perfect metaphor due to the ever-changing rules in the pluralistic society where nothing is certain nor limiting.

Postmodern literature is experimental as well as modernist literature, however, it does not look for anything new. It combines canon with popular literature and is aimed at all kinds of readers. The most common features of postmodern writing are metafiction, pastiche, parody, allusion, unreliable narrator, and unpredictability, and addressing one's identity which will be in detail analyzed further in the thesis.

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[47] Bran Nicol, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 7–9.
[48] Leon, "Literature for the 21st century," 167.

2. THE CONCISE DEVELOPMENT OF A NOVEL AND THE INFLUENCES ON PAUL AUSTER'S TRILOGY

This chapter will serve to briefly introduce the evolution of the novel into the form as we know it today, in other words as a postmodern one, both in the universal and in the English and American context since Paul Auster is an American writer. As the development of a novel is a broad and complex topic, we will discuss only the selection which is crucial for the analysis of the trilogy. This means that only people and genres which were most important for it will be mentioned. Thus, there will be covered picaresque, sentimental, realistic, Gothic, mystery, detective, and antinovel. As *The New York Trilogy* uses the form of a detective novel we should particularly pay attention to it and so-called anti-detective novel. Moreover, there will be a part of this chapter devoted to the most influential writers of some of the previously mentioned types of novels throughout the history. Most of the authors have written books that are considered canonical in the western tradition and not only Auster uses references, in the form of allusion or pastiche, that are related to the canon literature. The most frequently referred writers in Auster's work are Miguel Cervantes, Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville and last but not least, Nathaniel Hawthorne. After reading this chapter, we should be able to tell what makes the books by given authors canonical and how important are these links for understanding the work. Are they just purely random mentions of well-known names, or do they have a deeper meaning? We will try to answer these questions while doing a rather detailed analysis of these canonical works and names in all three stories from *The New York Trilogy*. Lastly, the issue that will be addressed is how Auster's trilogy contributes to the continual development of a novel and perhaps what new it brings.

Primarily, the term novel needs to be explained as all the following concepts will revolve around it. It is usually the hardest to define and the least evolved when we consider that it is a genre of a prose and compare it with other literary forms which are poetry and drama. Nevertheless, in a nutshell, it is a fiction written in prose of a certain extent, especially the longer one. This length is changing and the rules for this seem to slowly disappear. Despite this problem, it is generally believed that a novel's length is between 60,000 to 200,000 words.[49] The shorter pieces of writing are called novellas. Therefore, the three stories in the trilogy could be addressed as novellas owing to the fact that each of them is approximately 104 pages long. Other characteristics that could be used for a novel in contrast to a short story this time, is that a novel is more complex since there is more space to create a complex plot and sublots, focus

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[49] John Anthony Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary terms and Literary theory* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 157–158.

on various characters, and perhaps cover multiple timelines such as past, present, future. They also cover a long period of time in contrast to short stories. Moreover, short stories are meant to be read in one sitting which would be hardly done with a novel.

A novel usually deals with a human character's experience. Therefore, novels may be subjective or objective depending on the type of a narrator. Postmodern narrators are often unreliable due to the plurality of perspectives which means we cannot believe everything they say and how they perceive the world. Auster's idea was to confuse the readers and perhaps have the narrator's inner thoughts included. This suggests that in *The New York Trilogy*, the stories were told from the first person's perspective. However, it was mixed with the third person narrator who remains unnamed. Sometimes the reader is startled by this conversion between narrators as there are missing quotation marks signaling direct speech, especially in *Ghosts*. Nevertheless, the transitions are rather smooth, only the reader must be more immersed in reading to understand what is going on and who is speaking at a given moment. Omitting quotation marks is one of postmodern features. Some authors do not use punctuation at all, but Auster plays only with the quotation marks and not even every time. For instance, in *Ghosts*, there are no quotation marks, but it is still clear who is speaking due to little comments such as "Blue says" added by the author.

> "Black hesitates a moment, as though debating whether to take the plunge and then says:
> Has anyone ever told you that you look just like Walt Whitman?
> Walt who? answers Blue, remembering to play his part.
> Walt Whitman. A famous poet."[50]

Nevertheless, the comments are missing in a later conversation in the same story. Perhaps the reader manages to distinguish who is speaking if they know the rules for conversing.

> "How could he agree to it after he was dead?
> Ah, good point. I didn't say it right. He was still alive when he agreed. He just wanted them to know that he didn't mind if they opened him up later. What you may call his dying wish.
> Famous last words.
> That's right."[51]

In *City of Glass*, when Peter Stillman tells his story, the usage of quotation marks is again playful. They appear only at the beginning of a speech but are missing at the end. The reader must find out that the way of speaking is typical for Peter Stillman and that there is a lengthy monolog.[52]

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[50] Auster, "Ghosts," 174.
[51] Auster, "Ghosts," 175.
[52] Auster, "City of Glass," 15–22.

Now, when we explained the definition of a novel, it is appropriate to mention some types that emerged throughout the history. Novels which influenced Auster's work are crucial for this thesis and therefore, picaresque, realistic, sentimental, gothic, mystery, detective and finally, anti-detective novel will be briefly analyzed with some of their representatives. Mainly those, whose writing Auster alludes or uses as a pastiche in *The New York Trilogy.*

Even though it is by some believed that Boccaccio's *Decameron* in the fourteenth century created the basis for the novel development, the birth of it is usually dated since 1605-15 with the masterpiece written by Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*.[53] The genre of *Don Quixote* is a picaresque novel, which had a great influence on the development of a novel as it shows a rather realistic outlook. It has its origins in Spain, hence the name picaresque comes from the Spanish word "pícaro" which could be translated as a rascal or scoundrel. It describes adventures of this rascal who usually comes from a lower social class and who travels and tries to survive in the fight with the society. In a picaresque novel, we can find satirical or comic features and sometimes there is not much of a plot in such writing. Cervantes is viewed as the representative of the genre with his most famous picaresque novel, but the official founder would be the Spanish anonymous writer of *Lazarillo de Tonnes* (1554).[54]

The birth of a novel in the English tradition is dated to early-eighteenth century due to authors such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding who are associated with the rise of prose and therefore of a novel.[55] The choice of these writers is not arbitrary, they are considered fathers of a novel. Daniel Defoe was a so-called realist, and his masterpiece is *Robinson Crusoe*, of course, among other brilliant works by this author such as *Moll Flander*s or *A Journal of the Plague Year*. Nevertheless, particularly in *Robinson Crusoe*, he claimed that the story was real, and the detailed description of the nature contributed to the validity of this claim, but in fact, the book was a fiction.[56] Although a novel is connected with reality on some level, it usually depicts a story of a character and seems to be realistic, it also may be fictional. Moreover, in the Enlightenment era, the realistic books were of main interest since it reflected the Enlightenment state of consciousness where a person's reason and sense were preferred over religion and hence, it was also a smart business move to sell one's books.[57]

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[53] Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 563–597.
[54] Anthony J. Close**,** "The Legacy of Don Quijote and the Picaresque Novel"**,** in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel: From 1600 to the Present*, ed. Adelaida López de Martínez Martinez and Harriet Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15–30.
[55] Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 563–597.
[56] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: The Penguin English Library, 2012), 3–352.
[57] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding. History & literature* (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 9–34.

Auster also plays with this reality concept only differently than Defoe. He claims he is a realist, but his novels give us a feeling of a fiction by adding the fictional value by referring to characters by names of colors or because multiple characters are actually one or one name refers to more of them (Peter Stillman, Paul Auster, Fanshawe, Black being White and Blue) or by including absurdity in the novels. For instance, the characters stop living their own lives to solve a made-up case or they take up an identity of somebody else as it is in the case of the new Fanshawe in *The Locked Room*.[58]

Reality is clearly essential for a novel. Richardson also worked with the realistic component but went even further than Defoe as he meticulously described not only the nature, but also the interiors and other details that made his books seem more realistic and therefore believable. His well-known work *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded* is a sentimental novel which celebrated the sentiment and relied on the emotional response both, from the readers and the characters. *Pamela* is at the same time also an epistolary novel which is written as series of letters and as a result, the effect of realism on the reader is even more intensified because there is a first-person narrator who makes the story more believable despite their view being usually biased due to subjectivity.

Henry Fielding, the last missing author who is considered the father of the novel did not pay such attention to the description of the countryside and interior, but he made his works realistic by precise topography. In his humorous picaresque novel, *The History of Tom Jones*, he painstakingly describes the places. This means that he even adds the actual names of places on his way to London. In addition, Fielding firstly included Gothic mansion in a novel.[59]

This brings us to the Gothic novel which developed in England in the late 18th century. The sensibility was perceived through horror and fear which are powerful emotions and probably the strongest of all. In such novels, readers could enjoy mysterious atmosphere, medieval castles, ruins, sometimes a damsel in distress or even a monster or a ghost.

American authors who wrote gothic novels or who are associated with this genre are, for instance, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Edgar Allan Poe. There are intertextual references to all three authors in the work by Paul Auster. In fact, all of them are American dark romantic writers and in their stories, we may even detect existential questions and questions of identity as well as signs of self-isolation. These issues concerning looking for one's identity

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[58] Auster, Paul. (The author of The New York Trilogy). "Interview with Inge Birgitte Siegumfeldt". 10/02/2017. excerpted from A Life in Words: In Conversation with I. B. Siegumfeldt by Paul Auster, just published by Seven Stories Press. https://lithub.com/paul-auster-i-dont-even-know-if-the-new-york-trilogy-is-very-good/.
[59] Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, 26–27.

and alienation from the society are also present in Auster's trilogy as the characters leave their life behind to focus on a given task which helps them find their new self. Moreover, Auster uses Hawthorne's *Fanshawe* as the name for the main character in *The Locked Room*. In an interview with Joseph Mallia, he even admitted that it is a direct reference to Hawthorne since Hawthorne is one of Auster's favorite writers.[60] We may notice that at the end of *The Locked Room*, the new Fanshawe destroys a notebook Fanshawe wrote.[61] When Hawthorne wrote *Fanshawe*, he was young and once he tried to destroy all the copies of it, too. Moreover, he published it anonymously and was extremely secretive about it. Interestingly enough, his wife Sophie even denied that he had written it long time after his death.[62] On top of that, her name appears in *The Locked Room* since Fanshawe's wife's name is Sophie, too.

Auster also mentions Hawthorne's book *Wakefield* in *Ghosts*. Wakefield is a man who plays a joke on his wife as he decides to leave one day but instead of leaving, he settles down in an apartment nearby his old house and observes what will happen. Nevertheless, the joke gets serious when years go by, and he does not return home. He sometimes meets his wife in the crowd, on occasions even brushes against her but she does not pay attention to it, nor does she realize it is him.[63] This shows that one is lost in the crowd and that one's individuality loses its meaning when being in a mass. Moreover, the topic is similar with Auster's *Ghosts* since Blue does not return to his wife, either. In his case, in a way Blue observes himself instead of his life without him because Black, in fact, is Blue.[64] *The Locked Room* deals with a similar topic when Fanshawe leaves his wife without explanation and without her knowing anything about him, where he went or whether he is dead.[65]

The same referencing, Auster does with Melville's *Bartleby, The Scrivener*. Melville's characters must experience the fragmentation of the world to find themselves and this could be applicable for both, Auster's, and Melville's heroes. To illustrate, *Bartleby, The Scrivener*, just like Auster's characters, deals with the question of being an outsider in the society. Bartleby does not accept materialistic value of life and thus he is considered strange. As his short story ends with an exclamation "Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!"[66], it may suggest that the reason for

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[60] Auster, Paul. "Paul Auster by Joseph Mallia." By Joseph Mallia. Bomb, 23 (1988). https://bombmagazine.org/articles/paul-auster/
[61] Auster, "The Locked Room," 314.
[62] J.M. Tyree, "Fanshawe's Ghost" in *New England Review (1990-)* (Vermont: Middlebury College Publications, 2003), 76-86.
[63] Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Wakefield" in *Twice Told Tales* (Boston: American Stationers, 1837), 185. https://archive.org/details/twicetoldtale00hawtrich/page/n5/mode/2up?view=theater
[64] Auster, "Ghosts," 137–198.
[65] Auster, "The Locked Room," 201–314.
[66] Herman Melville, "Bartleby, The Scrivener: The Story of Wall-street" in *The Piazza Tales* (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), 31.

not fitting in is the society itself with the values it prefers. This topic is not the only thing the stories have in common. Both books are set in New York and all the main characters, especially if we consider *City of Glass* and *The Locked Room*, are writers. Nevertheless, even Blue from *Ghosts* uses writing while observing Black and therefore writing is an action that connects them all.

The American writer of the first half of the 19th century, Edgar Allan Poe had a great influence on Paul Auster, too. Auster in an interview admitted he is an avid reader, and he loves Poe dearly as his first book he bought with his own money when he was 11 years old was written by this particular author.[67] Even without knowing this fact, we may guess the influence by the references to him or his works in *The New York Trilogy*. This is, for instance, his book *William Wilson*, which is also the pen name of Quinn in *City of Glass*. Poe's *William Wilson* is about doppelgangers, a huge topic in *The New York Trilogy*. In each of the stories, there can be doubles found. Moreover, identities even merge among characters which is the case of Blue and Black who become one character only one observing the other as if in a mirror. *The Locked Room* is a direct pastiche of *William Wilson* since in both stories, the main characters are doubles. They look the same, they behave the same and there is a question of stealing one's identity.

If we look closer to Poe's *William Wilson*, we may notice quite a considerate number of similarities with Auster's trilogy, especially with *City of Glass* and *The Locked Room* which both deal with doppelgangers similarly like *William Wilson.*

> "LET ME CALL MYSELF, FOR THE PRESENT, WILLIAM WILSON. That is not my real name. That name has already been the cause of the horror — of the anger of my family. Have not the winds carried my name, with my loss of honor, to the ends of the earth? Am I not forever dead to the world? — to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden hopes? And a cloud, heavy and endless — does it not hang forever between my hopes and heaven?"[68]

Firstly, Poe opens the short story with the phrase: "That is not my real name" as can be seen above. This phrase is alluded by Auster in *City of Glass* when Stillman junior tells his life story. He tends to repeat this sentence multiple times while narrating. It does not only serve as a pastiche, but also as a tool that helps us understand Stillman's difficulty in terms of speaking since he learnt to speak much later than he should have because of his father who used to lock

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[67] Auster, Paul. (The author of the New York Trilogy). "The 'mechanics of reality': Paul Auster speaks about his work and inspiration". 01/13/2009. excepted from La clé des langues Anglais. http://cle.ens-lyon.fr/anglais/litterature/litterature-americaine/dossier-paul-auster/the-mechanics-of-reality-paul-auster-speaks-about-his-work-and-inspiration

[68] Edgar Alan Poe, "William Wilson" in *The Pit and the Pendulum and Other Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 66.

him up in a room isolated from everyone and everything.[69] A short example of Peter's speech can be seen below.

> "My name is Peter Stillman. Perhaps you have heard of me, but more than likely not. No matter. That is not my real name. My real name I cannot remember. Excuse me. Not that it makes a difference. That is to say, anymore.[70]

In both cases, that is Poe's and Auster's, a name carries a significance concerning the doubling. Each of both names, Peter Stillman and William Wilson, actually have two owners. In the case of William Wilson, there are two almost identical men and in the case of Peter Stillman, there is a father and son. Fanshawe is a name that both quite alike characters from *The Locked Room* use.

There are other similarities with *The New York Trilogy*. For instance, in *Ghosts*, Blue discovers that Black does exactly the same activities as he does. Both are detectives and observe a man who just sits and writes the whole day which drives them crazy.[71] In *William Wilson*, the two Williams have exactly the same name, day of birth, height, the way of speaking and walking, they go to the same school and class, and they dress identically.[72] They behave and look the same that the reader is sometimes confused which Wilson is speaking for a moment. Nevertheless, despite their similarities, they hate each other just like Blue starts to hate Black towards the end. As a result, one kills the other in both cases.

Furthermore, the story in *The Locked Room* is most definitely a pastiche of *William Wilson* for the fact that Fanshawe and the unnamed narrator are also lookalikes who have a lot in common. There is no killing in this case, though. Fanshawe, who decides to disappear one day just like the man from *Wakefield* written by Hawthorne, provides the narrator with an unfathomable opportunity to take up Fanshawe's life and live it as the real Fanshawe.[73] They both look the same anyway. This has always been a goal of Wilson, too.

Additionally, there is a pastiche of *The Man of The Crowd* – another book by Poe. It is about a man who observes people from his window and gradually recognizes them as individuals.[74] In this case, there are again identity issues which will be discussed in the following chapters more. However, we can already see that the idea of observing someone in terms of creating new identity is applicable for all the three stories in Auster's trilogy. Quinn

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[69] Auster, "City of Glass," 1–134.
[70] Auster, "City of Glass," 16.
[71] Auster, "Ghosts," 182–183.
[72] Poe, "William Wilson," 74.
[73] Auster, "The Locked Room," 199–314.
[74] Edgar Alan Poe, "The Man of the Crowd" in *The Pit and the Pendulum and Other Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 84.

observes Stillman, Blue Black and the unnamed narrator has already observed his target and became him, Fanshawe.[75]

Poe is also considered the creator of the detective genre as it is generally believed that the first detective story was written by him, and the book's name is *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. A detective novel is, in fact, a subgenre of crime fiction in which there is some kind of a crime, and a detective who finds the culprit and solves the case.[76] The types of a detective story may vary from the perfect crime to a wrong accusation but all in all, the point of a detective story is to solve it. The readers can identify themselves with the detective and experience the success of figuring out a case, but one cannot do it with Quinn nor Blue. Quinn is not even a detective; he has no experience except for writing his own detective novels. Quinn writes mystery detective novels but that is where his experience with investigating ends.[77] Furthermore, he lives in the rubbish when he works as a detective and perhaps that is not ideal image of a person the readers would like to identify with. As a matter of fact, there is not even a crime in neither of the stories. Only a task that seems to look like a crime.

According to Kravitz, there is a rather postmodern term that could be fitting to Auster's interpretation of a detective story and that is anti-detective novel. He explains it as the one where there seem to be impossible to find who has committed the crime or, as he calls it, "whodunit". Anti-detective novel may be sometimes referred to as a metaphysical detective story since it deals with philosophical topics such as self-identification. One may also call it a postmodern novel due to its emergence in the postmodern era. When the genre was still in the cradle it used to be called "the locked room mystery" which is the name of the last story in the trilogy, too.[78] It was a popular form of an early detective fiction. In such a fiction, it seems like the criminal is a character with supernatural powers who can play with the rules of the nature owing to the fact that there are no clues which would help solving it. It is a crime that is surrounded by a mystery.[79]

As innovative as it may sound to use a form of a detective story to deal with something else than investigating a crime – in Auster's case it is the search for identities, for Auster it is

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[75] Hana Lyčková, "The Problem of Identity in Writing by Paul Auster" (MA, Masaryk University in Brno, 2009), 12–13.

[76] Bennett Kravitz, "Thoughts on the Anti-Detective in Paul Auster's 'New York Trilogy', Adam Ross's 'Mister Peanut', and Martha Grimes' 'The Old Wine Shades.'" *Studies in Popular Culture* 36, no. 1 (2013): 45–61.

[77] Auster, "City of Glass," 4.

[78] Kravitz, "Thoughts on the Anti-Detective," 45–61.

[79] Penzler, Otto. "The Locked Room Mysteries: As a new collection of the genre's best is published, its editor Otto Penzler explains the rules of engagement." Independent. December 28, 2014. https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/the-locked-room-mysteries-as-a-new-collection-of-the-genre-s-best-is-published-its-editor-otto-penzler-explains-the-rules-of-engagement-9947360.html.

not revolutionary or new whatsoever. He recalls authors who had already worked with this idea before him or before postmodernism as such. *Don Quixote, Crime and Punishment* or *Waiting for Godot* are examples of using a genre as a useful tool to express something else such as criticism in the case of *Don Quixote* which ridicules chivalric romances. Auster admits that the authors had inspired him to write something similar.[80] *The New York Trilogy* constructs and deconstructs the typical detective genre. A classical crime case should consist of two stories. The first is the crime and the second deals with solving it. A detective story focuses on the second part where nothing happens except for observing, finding evidence, and figuring things out and indeed, nothing really happens in the trilogy, either. The emphasis is rather on observing and realizing oneself.[81]

The New York Trilogy is primarily categorized as a postmodern novel. As we have already discussed in the first chapter, a postmodern novel typically includes metafiction, allusion, pastiche, mixing of canon and popular literature, hyperreality or parody. It is aimed at all the people which means everyone will find something that will be intriguing for them no matter their education or social status.[82] Here are some examples of postmodern novels: Salinger's *The Cather in the Rye*, Beckett's *Molloy* and, of course, Auster's *The New York Trilogy*, even though Auster vehemently denies the trilogy to be either a postmodern novel or a detective story. This could be true if we take into consideration the fact that in a detective story, readers expect solving a crime rather than a search for one's identity. What is more, postmodern literature is not commonly associated with philosophical and existential issues. Concerning postmodernism, some critics may consider the trilogy a late modern literary piece of writing since there are similarities with modernist writers and since the boundary between modernism and postmodernism is thin.[83]

Concerning *The Catcher in the Rye*, the genre is a bildungsroman which means there is a character development while he is coming out of age. It is also an honest view on the society which Auster appreciated.[84] We may observe some development in Auster's characters, too – the character eventually finds or loses their identity, or they find their inner peace. The question is if Auster's trilogy may be as well considered a bildungsroman since there is a sign of characters' development. It probably depends on each individual to decide but judging by the

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[80] Auster, "Interview with Inge Birgitte Siegumfeldt".
[81] Kravitz, "Thoughts on the Anti-Detective," 45–61.
[82] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1988), 202–203.
[83] Espejo, "Coping with the postmodern," 147-171.
[84] Auster, "The 'mechanics of reality'".

realizations the characters make by the end of the stories, it could theoretically be called a bildungsroman.[85]

The chosen examples of books that have been mentioned so far could be considered canonical. What is canon and who decides what is canonical? Canon used to mark the selection of books that were studied in the western part of the world at school institutions, in other words, the books are those which mark tradition. Canonical become works which are highly original in comparison to others, and which have an impact on the works of other authors as they are authentic and genuine. Life is too short to read all the authors that have existed throughout time and therefore there was this tendency to choose only the ones, that in a way mark or characterize a type of writing in each time era or those who came with something new that enriched the process of writing and therefore reading. These canonical books also help people to get to know themselves in a way and hence, they are important in the sense of growing and developing as a person. It depends on an author of books summarizing literary history to consider what is canonical. It is not easy for a literary work to become canonical, though; it must be considered by various cultures and times but if it survives till present, there simply must be something about it that is worth reading or at least knowing about. However, we have come to a point where there are already too many canonical books that we are not able to read them all.

Canonical books of the world and the western culture are the ones we have seen in the part about the development of the novel but also others such as Shakespeare's tragedies, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tale*s and other works by authors like Beckett, Emerson, Charles Dickens or Walt Whitman. For instance, Walt Whitman is alluded in *Ghosts* when Black tells Blue he reminds him of Walt Whitman to which Blue remarked that everyone has a double.[86] There is even mentioned his poetry collection *Leaves of Grass* there. Milton is mentioned in the book as well, specifically in *City of Glass*.[87] However, there is no deeper meaning to it except for paying tribute to his works. Auster in his interviews revealed that he adores John Milton for the reason that he had completely changed his view on literature when he was at college. It was him from whom he had taken inspiration of New Babel and the mad theories present in *City of Glass*.[88]

Auster mentioned other influences on him, one of them being *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky. He claimed that when he read it at the age of 10, it was the time he realized

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[85] Regina Rudaitytė, *Postmodernism and After: Visions and Revisions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 73.
[86] Auster, "Ghosts," 174.
[87] Auster, "City of Glass," 45.
[88] Auster, "Interview with Inge Birgitte Siegumfeldt".

that he wanted to write novels. Hemingway was important for him because of his style as he showed him that there is art to writing. J.D Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* astonished him by the honesty and James Joyce was his God at the age of 18. He also confessed being a fan of Fitzgerald.[89]

Nevertheless, the references in the trilogy focus mainly on works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville and Edgar Allan Poe who have already been mentioned. Apart from these, though, the focus is also on pastiche of literary forks by Miguel Cervantes, Samuel Beckett, and Henry David Thoreau – another canonical authors.

Firstly, there are links to Don Quixote in *City of Glass*. Daniel Quinn and Don Quixote do not only share the same initials DQ they are both outsiders and in battle with the society, too. Auster in the book is currently studying the possible identities of Cide Hamete Benengeli, the narrator of *Don Quixote*. Moreover, there are direct references to *Don Quixote* in the trilogy. To illustrate, there is an excerpt from the part where the unnamed narrator from *The Locked Room* explains his relationship with Fanshawe which he compares to the relationship of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

> 'Still, I continued to go along with him, a befuddled witness, sharing the quest but not quite part of it, an adolescent Sancho astride my donkey, watching my friend do battle with himself.'[90]

Cervantes parodied chivalry and earlier novels which only confirms that Spain was generally a bit ahead in the development of the novel in contrast to the rest of the Europe. Auster also uses a parody but of the detective genre.

Even though Beckett was mainly known for his absurd drama and not novels, he has written novels, too. Auster imitates the absurdity typical for Becket as in his stories, nothing really happens except for observing someone and in the end, the reader is often left with more unanswered questions than at the beginning.[91] Moreover, Beckett's novel *Molloy* deals with double identities which, as we have already mentioned above, appear in the trilogy, too.[92] An intriguing fact is that the two authors met in Paris and therefore knew each other.[93] Fanshawe travels to Paris while in search for the genuine Fanshawe.[94] Auster used Beckett's aspect of absurdity, the distrust of language, and worked with this idea in his trilogy. We may notice that the characters express difficulty to articulate their identity and find the right words to express

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[89] Auster, "The 'mechanics of reality'".
[90] Auster, "The Locked Room," 217.
[91] Lyčková, "The Problem of Identity," 10–12.
[92] Lyčková, "The Problem of Identity," 15.
[93] Auster, "The 'mechanics of reality'".
[94] Auster, "The Locked Room," 287–291.

themselves. Peter Stillman junior is a perfect example with his weirdly constructed sentences as he speaks about himself in the third person and repeats phrases such as "excuse me", "that is not my name", "thank you" or multiple interjections.[95]

> "I am Peter Stillman. That is not my real name. My real name is Peter Rabbit. In the winter I am Mr White, in the summer I am Mr Green. Think what you like of this. I say it out of my own free will. Wimble click crumblechaw beloo. It is beautiful, is it not? I make up words like this all the time. That can't be helped. They just come out of my mouth by themselves. They cannot be translated.
> 'Ask and ask, it does no good. But I will tell you. I don't want you to be sad, Mr Auster. You have such a kind face. You remind me of a somesuch or a groan, I don't know which. And your eyes look at me. Yes, yes. I can see them. This is good. Thank you."[96]

It is, indeed, a powerful tool to demonstrate what consequences his father's experiment caused. He was obsessed with the search for the prelapsarian language which adds to the absurdity and obsession with language.

Isolating oneself from the society is a pastiche to Thoreau's *Walden*. The only difference is that the setting is not in the cabin in the countryside but in the case of *Ghosts*, in a small apartment opposite Black's flat in bustling New York City. However, Auster still emphasizes that the apartment is located in a rather calm area.

> "Blue takes a small grey satchel down from the shelf and packs it with his thirty-eight, a pair of binoculars, a notebook, and other tools of the trade. Then he tidies his desk, puts his papers in order, and locks up the office. From there he goes to the apartment that White has rented for him. The address is unimportant. But let's say Brooklyn Heights, for the sake of argument. Some quiet, rarely travelled street nor far from the bridge – Orange Street perhaps. Walt Whitman handset the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* on this street in 1855, and it was here that Henry Ward Beecher railed against slavery from the pulpit of his red-brick church. So much for local color."[97]

Blue struggles to understand *Walden* at the beginning but without realizing he is about to imitate the experience – writing in solitude. Writing is an activity which connects all the three stories as has been stated – Quinn and Fanshawe are writers and even Blue writes about Black. Auster is a writer, too. In one of his interviews, he revealed that he writes in a small, rented apartment in New York City and his description of the process of writing resembles the one of Blue, by walking in the apartment a lot. Even his room is similar – a small, isolated place only used for one thing, for writing and for Blue observing, and writing down reports.[98]

Apart from the intertextual reference to Hawthorne's *Fanshawe* and *Wakefield*, Poe's *William Wilson,* Melville's *Bartleby, The Scrivener* Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, Thoreau's

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[95] Auster, "City of Glass," 15–22.
[96] Auster, "City of Glass," 18.
[97] Auster, "Ghosts," 138–139.
[98] Auster, "The 'mechanics of reality'".

Walden, and Beckett's *Molloy* we may notice a reference to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* as Henry Dark has the same initials as Humpty Dumpty. Perhaps the name of the first story stems from this reference since Carol is known for his *Through the Looking-Glass* and Auster's first story is called *City of Glass*.[99]

Auster even includes links to *The Red Notebook*, his own book. There he got his initial idea of a random phone call which he wanted to follow, and which motivated him to write the three stories. The idea of the wrong call, originally, to the Pinkerton Agency intrigued him greatly.[100] Hence, Auster reminds himself of the idea from *The Red Notebook* and pays tribute to it as Quinn writes his notes into a red notebook and Fanshawe has written his explanation of leaving his life behind into a red notebook, too.

Interestingly, there are allusions even to the stories in the trilogy itself where one story refers to the others. For instance, Fanshawe from the last story introduces himself as Peter Stillman from the first story. [101] In *City of Glass*, there are allusions to *Ghosts* as can be seen below.

> "My name is Peter Stillman. That is not my real name. My name is Mr Sad. What is your name, Mr Auster? Perhaps you are the real Mr Sad and I am no one."[102]
> …
> "I am Peter Stillman. That is not my real name. My real name is Peter Rabbit. In the winter I am Mr White, in the summer I am Mr Green."[103]

Mr Sad may refer to Blue from *Ghosts* if we consider that the idiom feeling blue suggests being sad. In the second example, there is again reference to colors which are typical for the second story of the trilogy. There is another example of links to colors below.

> "Everything about Peter Stillman was white. White shirt, open at the neck; white pants, white shoes, white socks. Against the pallor of his skin, the flaxen thinness of his hair, the effect was almost transparent, as though one could see through to the blue veins behind the skin of his face. This blue was almost the same as the blue of his eyes: a milky blue that seemed to dissolve into a mixture of sky and clouds."[104]

This example suggests that White could be Petr Stillman. After all, both create a case and a task for the characters. The blue color in the form of veins and his blue eyes on the white body may suggest that the identities easily merge just like colors. Perhaps White is also Blue.

We could continue with the reference to the name Henry Dark, as it is the real Fanshawe's new name and at the same time Henry Dark is a penname of Quinn from *City of Glass*. There

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[99] Auster, "City of Glass," 81.
[100] Auster, "Interview with Inge Birgitte Siegumfeldt".
[101] Auster, "The Locked Room," 296–297.
[102] Auster, "City of Glass," 17.
[103] Auster, "City of Glass," 18.
[104] Auster, "City of Glass," 15.

is also a discussion where Quinn from *City of Glass* appears in *The Locked Room* when the real Fanshawe talks about his life after he left his wife and son behind.

> "'You're talking about Quinn?'
> 'Yes, the private detective.'
> 'Did he find you?'
> 'Twice. Once in New York. The next time in the South'"[105]

This suggests that Fanshawe is Peter Stillman senior from the first story and that perhaps the unnamed narrator is Quinn who looked for him.

The difference between allusion and pastiche has already been covered in the first chapter, thus we do not need to explain the term too much in here. We may only state that concerning references in the book, allusions are not as meaningful as it is in the case of pastiche since there must be deeper knowledge to notice them, and it includes copying a form or a style of other authors whereas allusion consists of not so meaningful mentions of famous names and links to canonical works. Therefore, not all the references must necessarily make sense and have a deeper purpose.

The New York Trilogy may be seen from two perspectives, either as a pastiche or a parody of the detective genre. Fredric Jameson, an American literary critic, sees the novel as a pastiche which could be understood as a derogatory term in a way. Jameson describes a pastiche as only blankly copying the styles and forms of other literary works. Such statement evokes lack of originality. On the other hand, Linda Hutcheon, an academic worker, describes *The New York Trilogy* as a postmodern parody to the detective genre.[106]

Pastiche in this thesis could be considered from both perspectives, however, Jameson nicely exemplifies various forms of a pastiche in the trilogy. These are: a pastiche of the three stories (*The City of Glass, Ghosts, The Locked Room*), pastiche of a detective novel, Auster as a character in the *City of Glass* and lastly, pastiche of canonical works. Additionally, even though there is this possibility, it does not necessarily have to express a negative connotation. Even copying styles of various authors takes time and complex thought processes which eventually create an original piece of writing.[107]

The New York Trilogy is a series of three stories but is it a typical trilogy? Trilogy is usually a sequence of three literary works that are in some way related, often one story continuing across the volumes. Auster's Trilogy is a series of three novels which are basically one story seen through various perspectives as Auster himself clarifies in *The Locked Room*.

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[105] Auster, "The Locked Room," 306.
[106] Maedeh Zare'e, Razieh Eslamieh, "Pastiche in Paul Auster's The New York Trilogy," *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, no. 5 (October 2016): 197–207.
[107] Zare'e, Eslamieh, "Pastiche in Paul Auster's The New York Trilogy," 197–207.

"These three stories are finally the same story, but each one represents a different stage in my awareness of what it is about."[108]

The characters and the ideas are the same. Surprisingly, the author did not plan to write one story basically three times differently. After writing the first story, he realized he had already written something similar, which was called *Blackouts* and he adjusted it a little bit and created *Ghosts* out of it, then *The Locked Room* was an easy continuation and closing of the three stories.[109]

It has been stated that the book is a pastiche of a detective novel. In other words, it is an imitation, despite his novel does not comply with the typical detective features. In fact, the three stories construct and deconstruct the elements of a detective novel.[110] Auster uses the form to investigate the case of identity of the characters. Auster as a character in *City of Glass* is a pastiche, too. Interestingly enough, he makes fun of himself as the character that appears in *City of Glass* is almost a complete opposite of the real Auster.[111]

All in all, *The New York Trilogy* is a book that contains references to greatest authors who influenced the development of a novel as we know it nowadays. Paul Auster applies intertextual references which may or may not contain a deeper meaning. Some literary critics call this piece of writing genius as it consists of a plethora of clever references and as it deals with an interesting and perhaps innovative usage of a detective genre.[112]

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[108] Auster, "The Locked Room," 294.
[109] Auster, "Interview with Inge Birgitte Siegumfeldt".
[110] Zare'e, Eslamieh, "Pastiche in Paul Auster's The New York Trilogy," 197–207.
[111] Auster, "Interview with Inge Birgitte Siegumfeldt".
[112] Samet Güven. 2011. "Analysis of the New York Trilogy by Paul Auster in Terms of Post-modernisim" In *The 6th International Conference on Interdisciplinarity in Education, Karabuk/Safranbolu*, 2011, Karabük: Karabük University.

3. A POSTMODERN CHARACTER IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY BY ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

In this part of the thesis, not only a literary postmodern character will be described but also briefly a modern one. Hence, a comparison of these two will be needed. There will be a useful division of postmodern characters proposed by Zygmunt Bauman who distinguishes four different types depending on their actions and behavior in the post-modern globalized world which is ruled by consumerism. These characters are the stroller, the tourist, the vagabond, and the player.[113] Since the focus of this thesis is aimed at the postmodern features in *The New York Trilogy* and the issue of identity is one of them, the division of Bauman's types of people in the postmodern society into the four groups will be discussed in terms of the analyzed book. Moreover, there will be an introduction to the topic of identity consisting of its definition, too. Plurality is also essential for *The New York Trilogy* as all three stories are set in New York City. This is a place of plurality itself and therefore the same setting in the stories is not a coincidence. After all, that is the name of the trilogy itself, as well. In the rather practical part of this chapter, Bauman's types of characters will be analyzed within the characters of *The New York Trilogy.*

To start with, identity is a term that may mean a plethora of things depending on the context or the area it refers to. For instance, it is defined as a set of personality traits which make an individual distinctive and unique. It also may mean characteristics that enable us to recognize someone from the others. Yet another definition speaks about the exact sameness as in the quality of being identical.[114] Interestingly enough, this creates an oxymoron since sameness and uniqueness are two complete opposites. In the Western tradition, the crucial question investigated dealt with manners of preserving the sameness in the constantly changing and developing world. This change may be either biological or environmental such as it was in the transition from modernism to postmodernism. It is therefore logical, that one's personality evolves, shifts, and transforms over the time.[115] To sum up in extremely simple terms, for the purposes of this work, identity is understood as a set of characteristics that make us who we

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[113] Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist- or a Short History of Identity", in *Questions of Cultural Identity,* ed. S. Hall & P. Du Gay (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011), 18–36.

[114]*Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "Identity," accessed June 02, 2022, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity?fbclid=IwAR2Vh0LZvFeTRnVIi_fhc1y9eWvOK4l6c_p0dp-xPuapsKQMWyfQvHQkB8M

[115] Guri Ellen Barstad, Karen Patrick Knutsen and Elin Nesje Vestli, "The Search for Self: Continuity and Mutability", in *Exploring Identity in Literature and Life Stories: The Elusive Self*, Edited by Guri E. Barstad, Karen S. P. Knutsen and Elin Nesje Vestli, (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), 1–15.

are, how we want to be perceived by others and how others actually see us. Identity makes us unique, authentic, and distinguishable individuals.[116]

Identity is always viewed from perspectives it relates to. Therefore, it may be related to race, ethnicity, gender, profession, culture, or society. Since we are dealing with a literary work, we will be interested only in those that are somewhat connected with *The New York Trilogy*. Therefore, even though ethnicity, race and gender are common postmodern literary topics, they will not be of interest within this thesis as Auster's main characters do not hesitate or think about these particular issues. They all are white American men living in New York City. What is the problem concerning the identity in their cases, though, is how they think of themselves in relation to social roles and how they think they fit or do not fit in. For instance, Quinn asks himself existential questions after he loses his wife and son. He does not feel that he is still a part of the society as he is not positive about his social roles anymore. Is he still a father and husband even though he has lost his family? Is he still the same writer who has written several detective novels? Concerning the protagonist of the second story, Blue, there is nothing specific about him said at the beginning. The only thing we know about him is that he is from New York, works as a detective and perhaps he is soon-to-be husband as we may notice references to "future Mrs Blue" in his story.[117] The gender social role issue appears in the case of Blue when he does not call his fiancé because it would show a weakness.

> "He doesn't want to seem weak. If she knew how much he needed her, he would begin to lose his advantage, and that wouldn't be good. The man must always be the stronger one."[118]

We also know that his name is Blue. Nevertheless, not even the color itself says much about him. We can only rely on our feelings that we experience in relation to hearing or seeing colors and in this case, the blue color. Perhaps we may associate his name with the idiom feeling blue, which means to be sad. Blue may be sad in life and that makes him to change his identity and to discover himself again. This could be the reason why he gets invested in the case even though there are unanswered questions, for instance, about what is the purpose of observing Black.

Fanshawe, or to be more precise, the unnamed narrator who eventually decides to possess the identity of his close friend Fanshawe does not originally even have any identity except for being alike with Fanshawe and that is the reason he takes up an identity of his friend who has clearly stated social roles – a writer, husband, and father.

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[116] Steluta, Stan, and Gabriela Iuliana Colipca. 2012. "Deconstructing and Reconstructing Identity. Philosophical Frames and Literary Experiments" In *Proceedings of the 4th Edition of the International Conference: Paradigms of the Ideological Discourse, Galati, 2012*, 325-330. Galati: University of Galati.
[117] Auster, "Ghosts," 147.
[118] Auster, "Ghosts," 140.

This labelling does not only appear in the trilogy, but it is also a natural behavior which people habitually tend to do. Why do we like labelling? It helps us to avoid uncertainty and fear of the unfathomable world. Whenever there is no label fitting for a person, we cannot figure them out or guess what we may expect from them. They could kill us, mug us or do nothing at all. We simply do not know. There is this ambiguity about such people we cannot label and therefore the person is usually at the edge of the society. This means they get an ambiguous label such as a weirdo and, of course, people do not want to be friends with weirdoes. Hence, labeling is fairly common in the postmodern era as everything is uncertain and relative. A label helps us to create an image of a person and connect the person with certain traits typical for the image. For instance, common preconceptions about a detective are that he is probably good at solving crimes, finding evidence, he must be intelligent and certainly he would not hurt an innocent person whereas an image of a suspect is rather negative, we suppose that they have done something wrong and there is no way we should believe the person. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes, a suspect is, indeed, only a suspect but not a criminal.

The issue of identity has been a problem since modernity, and it continues in postmodernism. In fact, it has been born a problem and people struggle with discovering their identities. Bauman uses an interesting metaphor that describes post-modernism as a desert since as well as in a desert, in the postmodern environment, one cannot follow footsteps of someone else who had already walked the same path. The footsteps quickly disappear when the wind blows. Moreover, there are no stable paths in the sand that would lead them correctly in the life journey. Therefore, one must rely only on oneself and trust in their own judgment. In postmodernism, everything rapidly changes, and new ways of living emerge which may be attractive for some but not for the others. Thus, identities in a postmodern world can be changed as easily as clothes. This is visible in TNYT since Quinn changes his identities fairly easily and quickly. Once he is Quinn and suddenly, when writing, he becomes William Wilson and later he accepts being Auster the detective. He seems to be doing this for his own satisfaction. He feels he must become somebody else to have their personality traits which allow him to do their job and behave accordingly.[119] Also Blue changes his identities but by using disguises, therefore he literally changes them as clothes.[120]

Modernism, in contrast to the metaphor of a desert, could be compared to a labyrinth as just as a labyrinth, it is quite stable, and one can look back at their footsteps or go along the walls the labyrinth is made of. In a labyrinth, people see what was before to be able to continue

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[119] Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, 3–314.
[120] Auster, "Ghosts," 135–198.

their journey, they may go back, follow someone's footsteps, or go along the walls. Moreover, the walls set bounds, limit, and lead us through the maze.[121]

An example of a modern literary character is Madame Bovary, a character in the book carrying the same name written by Gustav Flaubert firstly published in 1956. She knew exactly who she wanted to become but it was not acceptable at the time she lived. She was not satisfied with the child born, she wanted to leave to be a tourist, to experience world on her own will. Nevertheless, her role was set by the society and influenced by men who were at the time a dominant part of the society.[122]

On the other hand, postmodern characters such as Quinn, Blue or Fanshawe are provided with a plethora of possibilities who they can become. One only must find what suits them best. This may be overwhelming but also liberating in contrast with the strictness of modernism.

In modernism, people looked for their identity with the aim to find it and keep it stable whereas in post-modernism, the main idea was to keep the options open and not limit them.[123] This statement may lead someone to a conclusion that identity in the postmodern environment is rather anxious and uncertain. In fact, this is exactly what it is, and the hint of such anxiety and ambiguity also appears in TNYT as all the characters struggle with their own self-identification. They either refuse, lose, or succumb their identify and often they attempt through ridiculous ways to find themselves within the society. The specific ways of dealing with finding one's identity will be, however, discussed in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

Now, let us see an intriguing Bauman's idea of a postmodern person and the four types he proposes which seem to be extremely fitting for the people in nowadays consumer society. These are a stroller, a tourist, a vagabond, and a player, all of them being an inseparable part of the globalized post-modern world. Obviously, consumerism has a big significance in the postmodern world since our society is, in fact, consumerist for multiple reasons. One of them is that in modernism, people were speculating whether they are working for living or living for working. In post-modernism, the question changed to consuming for living or living for consuming. Frankly, people enjoy the opportunities of little joys in the form of products and experiences offered. It is what makes us motivated to continue working, to have this little something we look forward to.[124] Since the world moves, it is therefore natural that people inhabiting the Earth must move, too. Hence, the Bauman's division is also based on the

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[121] Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist- or a Short History of Identity," 18–36.
[122] Gustave Flaubert and Leo Bersani, *Madame Bovary* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), 5–424.
[123] Richard D. Ashmore, Lee Jussim, David Wilder, *Solid Identity, Intergroup Conflict and Conflict Reduction* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 66.
[124] Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalizace* (Praha: Mladá Fronta, 1998), 99.

movement in the world. All the proposed character types are partly defined by their movement in the world and how long they stay at one place. In the pluralistic world, the rules quickly change, and we also want to stay at given places shorter time than in the past when the goal was to settle down. Due to this fact, there is a popularity of part-time jobs in contrast to full time jobs, people go from one relationship to another one and, in general, settling down is more challenging than in the past.

In modernism, to find the truth and the purpose of life withing oneself, it was common to go on a pilgrimage which was always at distance and often unachievable. They must have gone on a pilgrimage for avoiding being lost in the world. Nevertheless, pilgrimage is not a modern invention, it had been there since the beginning of Christianity as such. In postmodernism, however, there is no place for pilgrims anymore due to the conditions of pluralized world. Moreover, there is not a majority of people who are Christians anymore. People believe in multiple Gods, universe, or karma. They often do not believe in anything at all. For this reason, Bauman proposes new, postmodern, types of a pilgrim's successors in the globalized changed world. These are, as we have already mentioned at the beginning, the stroller, the tourist, the vagabond, and the player. These are the ones that slightly appear in every one of us and they immaculately represent the new society defined by consumerism.

The stroller is the type of a person who, as the name suggests, enjoys strolling around, especially in an urban setting. This may mean various things. Such a person could be a regular in a theatre, in a park or in a shopping mall. These places offer a freedom in the sense of anonymity. One might easily get lost within a crowd which may be viewed positively in the sense that one gets an opportunity to be oneself without having to worry what people think about them. The chance of meeting and recognizing someone repeatedly is small, especially in the setting so populated as New York is. On the other hand, it may be viewed negatively as one is always alone even though they are constantly surrounded by people. To add up, building relationships becomes more challenging than ever if one does not meet the same people often. We tend to see only moving bodies in a crowd but do not distinguish faces.[125]

Nevertheless, strolling creates an opportunity to become an observer if one wants to do so. Stroller may imagine what happens in people's life without ever having an impact on them. They are the writers of their own stories about people, full of imagination and possibilities. This is how they enjoy spending their leisure time. Perhaps their imagination and the reference to them as to writers connects all the characters from TNYT with the job of a writer. It is Quinn's

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[125] Bauman, *Globalizace*, 105.

original job, Paul Auster is a writer too, Blue notes down what Black does and finally Fanshawe used to be an author of many books and manuscripts, too.[126]

Such observers do not have to leave their house at all to be strolling. They may use the nowadays technological advances like TV or computers by watching movies and videos. They are not brave enough to do things they see but they feel happy exactly where they find themselves. They do not need anything else from life. Strolling is an act without past and consequence as these encounters on the path do not have an impact and are not meaningful. They are only people passing each other. An example of a perfect place for strollers are shopping malls as it is a safe place full of people living their own life. Strollers are playful consumers, and they play with the concept of a chance. They work with a question what would happen if, but they always have an opportunity to hide in their comfort zone. In comparison to the pilgrim, stroller mocks what pilgrim did in all seriousness, especially walking with a higher purpose. Stroller is a man of leisure, and they do this activity predominantly in their leisure time.

Quinn and Stillman senior from *City of Glass* could be considered strollers as they are constantly on a stroll. When Quinn follows Stillman to collect some information about him, he tracks his daily walks in the city. Quinn's imagination is one of the factors that he uses in his search as he wonders what the regular walks mean and if Stillman wants to say something through them. Right at the beginning of the story, we get a general description of Quinn and how he passes the time.

> "More than anything else, however, what he liked to do was walk. Nearly every day, rain or shine, hot or cold, he would leave his apartment to walk through the city – never really going anywhere, but simply going wherever his legs happened to take him."[127]

We also find out what he feels like when he is on a stroll which only proves that he is, in fact, a stroller.

> "Each time he took a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself behind, and by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to think, and this, more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace, a salutary emptiness within."[128]

Blue also uses his imagination while he is observing Black. He imagines various scenarios and reasons for the need of observing Black. Is it a marriage case? Are Black and White brothers? These questions spring to his mind while not actually asking or interfering with none of those included. This means that Blue is also a creator of what-if stories. Moreover, he goes

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[126] Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, 3–314.
[127] Auster, "City of Glass," 3.
[128] Auster, "City of Glass," 4.

occasionally on a stroll when he believes Black is in his apartment doing nothing as usually. Sometimes, he follows Black on his strolls. Black walks without purpose and perhaps through doing so, he shows Blue a way of living life differently.

> "These divagations last several hours, and at no point does Blue have the sense that Black is walking to any purpose. He seems rather to be airing his lungs, walking for the pure pleasure of walking, and as the journey goes on Blue confesses to himself for the first time that he is developing a certain fondness for Black."[129]
> …
> "Black writes, reads, shops in the neighborhood, visits the post office, takes an occasional stroll."[130]

The tourist is another character type by Bauman and as well as a stroller, he also moves. The moving, in his perception travelling, is rather with a purpose this time – at least he believes so. It is considerably easier to move from one place to another than to grow as a person in one place. A tourist enjoys experiencing something new and different to feel alive, to experience life to the fullest. In the consumer society people seek experiencing or possessing something new and travelling fulfills this desire ultimately. In other words, a tourist is a perfect consumer for his needs that want to explore and the products and services he buys during the process. As it has been mentioned above, settling down is out of fashion, life is ushered, and people also live their life faster than in the past. Due to this, we never stay in one place for too long.

A tourist has a lot in common with a vagabond since one could never exist without the other. Vagabond is a tourist's nightmare and at the same time, he fuels him enjoy being a tourist even more. On the other hand, a vagabond's dream is to become a tourist. These could be also distinguished according to their class. Usually, a tourist is from the upper class or upper middle class, a person who has recourses and can enjoy the products and services of the postmodern consumer world. In contrast, a vagabond often comes from the lower class and due to this, becomes the outsider of the society. Thus, the world is an inhospitable place for him whereas a tourist is welcome everywhere he sets his foot. If things went badly, a tourist would probably become a vagabond. Despite them having in common the movement, there is one great difference between these two. A tourist has his back door ready if something undesirable is bound to happen. They have a place or people they can rely on or return to anytime they decide to. A vagabond has no other choice than being homeless as he has no place to return to. Tourists are in such situations that provide them with an enjoyable feeling, but they want to have the

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[129] Auster, "Ghosts," 153–154.
[130] Auster, "Ghosts," 157.

safety cushions and well-marked escape routes in case they are needed. Sometimes, the familiar wears of and ceases to allure but this adventure of a travel soothes their soul. [131]

Blue from Ghosts is a tourist who definitely has a place he can go back to. We know he has a stable socially well accepted job as a detective, and he has a fiancé Mrs. Blue. He probably just found peace in an intriguing case that took him from the ordinary life he had led before it. It was an opportunity to "travel" out of his own reality to experience something new.[132] Nevertheless, Blue suddenly becomes a vagabond from a tourist at the moment he meets his ex-future Mrs Blue with a new partner on the street and she is pounding at his chest, screaming and obviously being angry.[133] That is an important moment for Blue as he loses his safety cushion and somebody he could return to from his adventure. Perhaps he wanted to become a free and masterless since the beginning, but his personality did not allow him to do it. Therefore, he decided to leave it on the fate and chance.

We do not know how Blue decides to continue after he kills Black, will he come back to his old life only with a different woman and continue it as a tourist who will go on adventures from time to time or will he disappear to a different country or even a continent? Auster provides the reader with space for their own imagination about how the story continues since open endings often characterize post-modern writings. Nevertheless, he offers his own ideas he likes to think about the continuity of Blue's life. Perhaps the extract below suggests that with the hope of a new and better life Blue continues somewhere else not even in the United States as New York could have become an inhospitable place for him due to losing future Mrs Blue and killing Black.

> "Anything is possible, therefore. I myself prefer to think that he went far away, boarding a train that morning and going out West to start a new life. It is even possible that America was not the end of it. In my secret dreams, I like to think of Blue booking passage on some ship and sailing to China. Let it be China, then, and we'll leave it at that. For now is the moment that Blue stands up from his chair, puts on his hat, and walks through the door. And from this moment on, we know nothing."[134]

Fanshawe, the real one, disappears one day out of blue but has a life he can return to whenever he wants to. He has a family and a stable job as a successful writer. However, this idea of the original Fanshawe returning back haunts the new one since he would lose everything. Nevertheless, we can confidently say that Fanshawe is a tourist or that he changed into one

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[131] Bauman, *Globalizace*, 95–120.
[132] Auster, "Ghosts," 137–198.
[133] Auster, "Ghosts," 166.
[134] Auster, "Ghosts," 198.

when he talks to the unnamed narrator about his running away and sharing his feeling he has while running away. [135]

> "It gave me a feeling for travel, a real taste for it. Not at all what I had expected. My plan had always been to still and let the time run out."[136]

The vagabond is closely related to the tourist in the sense of similarities. Basically, a vagabond is an alter ego of a tourist. Without a vagabond, tourist would not enjoy his life the way he does as he constantly remembers that he could end up being him and this creates a sense of excitement for him. The vagabond has his own advantages, though. He is masterless, out of bounds, out of control and therefore completely free of the consumer word but also of the responsibilities that the world puts on us. For example, paying up bills, setting up families or maintaining a stable job. To make his life exciting and hopeful, he freely roams throughout the world and at the same time does not have anything to lose. There is no place he can return and therefore he is a man that does not belong anywhere. Just like it was common for a pilgrim in the modern times, for the vagabond there is not a set destination of his wandering. Interestingly enough, modernity was terrified of vagabonds as they could not be ruled, and they were free. They could escape anytime and that made them unpredictable. Even they do not know where or when they move next, and they do not even care that much. Wherever vagabond goes he is a stranger, therefore, it is better not to get used to or become too comfortable in one place. One would lose their anonymity which they particularly cherish. Each stop on their journey means new opportunities and hope.

Examples of the vagabond appear in TNYT in the following characters: Quinn, original Fanshawe, White, Blue, Stillman junior and senior each of them slightly differently. However, neither of them stays at one place for a long time. For example, the authentic Fanshawe shows sign of being paranoid in his mind about being followed, therefore, he is still on the move with the aim of not being caught. Both Stillmans eventually disappear from the world and are no longer to be found – just like White whose only task seems to be to get Blue invested in the case. Blue also became a vagabond as in New York, there would probably be nothing else for him, anymore. A new city or country would be a place of hope for a new life where he could start over.

Quinn and Stillman have in common the fact that they are outsiders in the society and that is the reason why they are on the move. Stillman was in prison; Quinn does not know who he

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[135] Auster, "The Locked Room," 201–314.
[136] Auster, "The Locked Room," 306.

is anymore after losing his label as a father and husband. Stillman senior tells his story to Quinn and confesses he is still on the move.

> "There's so much to do, and so little time to do it. Every morning I get up at dawn. I have to be outside at all kinds of weather, constantly on the move, forever on my feet, going from one place to the next. It wears me out, you can be sure of that."[137]

He also admits that he appreciates being a stranger by saying he does not want to talk to unknown people because then they are not strangers anymore.

> "'It's not that I don't like strangers per se. It's just that I prefer not to speak to anyone who does not introduce himself. In order to begin, I must have a name.'
> 'But once a man gives you his name, he's no longer a stranger.'
> 'Exactly. That's why I never talk to strangers.'"[138]

Lastly, Bauman's player, as the name already suggest, is someone who plays with a chance and risk and enjoys games in general. In his perception, life is a game of chances and risk, and we can choose whether we want to go on with it or not. At the beginning, we are provided with a set of cards, and it is up to us whether we play them right or wrong or not at all. Whoever who does not like the outcome of the game must start from the scratch.

When Quinn faces the dilemma to choose which Stillman is the right one at the railway station, he risks as he completely relies on his hunch. There is not a correct answer in such a situation since both men look the same only one fits the image of an old crazy Stillman more than the other.

> "Quinn froze. There was nothing he could do now that would not be a mistake. Whatever choice he made – and he had to make a choice – would be arbitrary, a submission to chance. Uncertainty would haunt him to the end."[139]

This again, reminds us of the uncertainty and chance element which characterizes postmodernism.

Also, the unnamed narrator in *The Locked Room* – plays with the chance and decides to play his cards that life provided him with right when he gets the opportunity to become Fanshawe just like William Wilson in Poe's short story since *The Locked Room* is a pastiche to it. It is beneficial for both characters as they are provided with everything they have ever wanted, such as freedom or family and writer's job, without working hard for it.[140]

As well as the world of a player, pluralistic society is full of possibilities and risks. Despite the fact that pluralism highly adds to the quality of a freely chosen way of living and identity as such, it also contributes to the risk of easily losing one's identity and obstacles in trying to

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[137] Auster, "City of Glass," 75.
[138] Auster, "City of Glass," 74.
[139] Auster, "City of Glass," 56.
[140] Poe, "William Wilson," 6–21.

fit in. The world may be too overwhelming for some people and having a plethora of possibilities does not guarantee to easily just pick one and follow it.

The role of New York City in the trilogy serves as a perfect example of a place of plurality where it is challenging to find one's identity or to be taken as an individual distinguished from the others. It reflects the change of the world after the liberation of women, black people, gay and queer people combined with globalization and consumerism. One is constantly in a mass but alone. Nevertheless, it may be viewed positively or negatively depending on a person and what suits them the best. For instance, Quinn seems to enjoy his anonymity, he does not have many friends anymore and he can become whoever he wants to. On the other hand, the new Fanshawe enjoys possessing a stable identity and having everything the society presents people should have such as a family, job and status. Therefore, the positive side of it could be viewed in the guaranteed anonymity which it creates. However, someone could see it as a disadvantage since they may feel always alone, and it is challenging to break this anonymity into a relationship. Moreover, the people living in New York may find out that they have never fitted in and experience alienation and anxiety. Quinn perfectly describes how New York makes him feel.

> "New York was an inexhaustible space, a labyrinth of endless steps, and no matter how far he walked, no matter how well he came to know the neighborhoods and streets, it always left him with the feeling of being lost. Lost not only in the city but within himself as well."[141]
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> "On his best walks, he was able to feel that he was nowhere. And this, finally, was all he ever asked of things: to be nowhere. New York was the nowhere he has built around himself, and he realized that he had no intention of ever leaving it again."[142]

Since there are various cultures that meet in New York, it is sometimes referred to as a melting pot.[143] Due to this, New York is a place hospitable for all the postmodern characters proposed by Bauman: the stroller, the vagabond, the traveler, and the player even if only for a short time. In such a big city as New York, it is difficult to see the sky and be thoughtful because of the light pollution at night or simply because of the skyscrapers. The characters of Auster, though, are left with this difficult task to stop and decide how to live next as they face the end of their life in a way. For instance, Quinn loses a child and wife, Fanshawe – the real one, escapes and the second can replace him, Blue is indecisive about his future with his fiancé and therefore isolates himself by immersing in the case where he discovers his own identities. They must deal with their problems in the city where everything is possible as a lot happens in there. To add

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[141] Auster, "City of Glass," 3–4.
[142] Auster, "City of Glass," 4.
[143] Adrian Room, *Nicknames of Places: Origins and Meanings of the Alternate and Secondary Names, Sobriquets, Titles, Epithets and Slogans for 4600 Places Worldwide* (New York: McFarland & Company, 2006), 331.

up, the streets may mislead them from the purpose from where they want to go – they pass the time but are not fulfilled with their initial purpose which may be an obstacle in their journey towards new selves and life.[144]

Perhaps Auster was inspired by New York because it is the place which Auster knows extremely well. He lives there and even has a writing apartment there, similarly like Blue who has a rented apartment where he works on his case concerning Black.[145] Or, since we assumed that the trilogy is a pastiche of *Bartleby, The Scrivener* by Melville and the setting also takes place in the New York City, it could play a role in choosing "the city that never sleeps", too.[146]

In conclusion, all the people in the globalized and pluralistic world have a little bit of the four proposed personalities by Bauman. The instances differ only in the predominance of one over the others. To add up, the characters change in us during and throughout our life depending on the personal growth we go through. As well as for ordinary people, Auster's characters in TNYT also possess multiple personalities and characteristics typical for Bauman's characters. We are able to observe a little bit of a tourist, vagabond, player but also a stroller in Quinn, Blue, Stillman, Fanshawe and unnamed narrator from *The Locked Room*. The beauty of Bauman's types lies in the fact, that all of them have a quality that is alluring and a quality that may be seen as a negative one. To illustrate, a vagabond is a perfect example of a person who is free yet lonely and alienated from the society. Movement is what connects us all and the same goes for Auster's characters along with other things, such as the place where they live and issues with self-identification which will be more addressed in the following chapter.

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[144] María Dolores Rueda Montero, "Identity as Alterity in Paul Auster's New York Trilogy and Martin Amis's London Fields" (PhD diss., University of Seville, 2018), 5.
[145] Auster, "Interview with Inge Birgitte Siegumfeldt".
[146] Melville, "Bartleby, The Scrivener," 1–29.

4. THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY AS A LEADING POSTMODERN THEME IN THE NEW YORK TRILOGY

Along with other, perhaps more common, features of postmodern literature such as pastiche, allusion, unreliable narrator, paranoia or unpredictability, doubts about identity seem to be the leading and most distinctive topic in *The New York Trilogy*. It is because all the characters deal with this issue, even though each of them slightly in a different manner. For instance, Quinn seems to possess multiple personalities which help him to acquire traits that go with a given character, Blue seems to be escaping his old identity and reflexing upon himself and, finally, the unnamed narrator steals an identity of his close friend.[147] In the book, we may therefore observe signs of mistaken identities, merging, mirroring, losing, taking up different identities, doubling or event tripling of oneself.

Hence, in this chapter, we will dig deeper into the question of identity, the way it is projected as an issue in the trilogy and perhaps the techniques that particularly help the characters of the book to discover their new self and at the same time battle with their old one. We should not leave out the reality and imagery component in terms of identity. While analyzing *The New York Trilogy*, we should bear in mind the existence of two crucial concepts that help the characters to undergo their inner metamorphosis. These concepts are alterity and the uncanny.

Firstly, alterity means otherness which refers to the other of two, usually mainstream things, ways of living or even other people. Nevertheless, it may mean something out of convention or the opposite of the same. It is categorized as a psychological term and therefore, it is no wonder that the process of the characters' hunt for identity happens within oneself. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, it is also "the quality or state of being radically alien to the conscious self or a particular cultural orientation".[148] In a nutshell, identity could not exist without alterity as to become a distinctive individual, it is needed to be compared to the others with the aim to create own personality. The characters from the trilogy support this claim since they all find themselves in an ongoing investigation which predominantly consists of observing others. As an example, the narrator in *The Locked Room* utters a sentence about Fanshawe: "Without him I would hardly know who I am." [149]

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[147] Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, 3–314.
[148] *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "Alterity," accessed June 09, 2022, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alterity
[149] Tyree, "Fanshawe's Ghost," 77.

Therefore, at some point in each story the characters eventually realize that the search for identity is not only about themselves but also about the others who may be complete strangers to them. The characters do not fit in within the society but for them, to be a part of the society is pivotal in their process of self-identification.[150] Thus, we may observe the characters brought often to homelessness, solitude and even to madness during the process. Moreover, identity, according to Auster, is alterity even though they cancel each other at the same time since identity is related to individual uniqueness and therefore the inner self whereas alterity is related to the outer world.[151]

"The uncanny" by Sigmund Freud is another term that has a significance concerning the ontological search for identity in the trilogy. Freud has written an essay carrying the same name and since he had always been inspired by the mind and what is going on inside especially during growing up, he made another research into what makes us experience fear in the adulthood. In fact, the uncanny comes from the German word "unheimlich" which is understood as uncanny or unfamiliar and it is an opposite of "heimlich" something that is familiar.[152] The uncanny represents something hidden inside the familiar environment that was never meant to come to light and was supposed to remain a secret.[153] Thus, we have a tendency to suppress some emotions, for instance those, that are considered childish. To exemplify, as adults we are told that we should not be afraid of talking dolls because they are not real nor scary – it is a childish fear. Talking dolls in a fairytale are acceptable as the setting is imaginary and not real. On the other hand, a talking doll in a realistic setting, such as a movie with real actors sends chills down one's spine. This example indicates that realism is a necessary component for the uncanny.[154]

Auster playfully uses realism in the trilogy, as we have already mentioned before, owing to mixed elements of both – imaginary world and the real one. Hence, the boundary between reality and fiction is often blurry for the reader. The characters often do not distinguish reality, either. For instance, Quinn fluently and devotedly switches between his real self and his fictional identities such as Max Work, William Wilson, or Paul Auster.[155] Furthermore, the

[150] Christoph Behrends, "How to Conceptualise a Postmodern Understanding of Identity in Relation to Race," *GRIN Verlag; 1st edition* (January 4, 2008): 1–26.
[151] Montero, "Identity as Alterity," 5–12.
[152] Sigmund Freud, David McLintock, and Hugh Haughton, *The Uncanny* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 34–46.
[153] Roza Lambrechts, "The Quest for Identity: Self versus Other in Paul Auster's The New York Trilogy" (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2009), 31.
[154] "What is the Uncanny?," School of Writing, Literature, and Film, Oregon State University, last modified May 5, 2021. https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/what-uncanny
[155] Güven, "Analysis of the New York Trilogy," 131.

narrator from *The Locked Room* reveals that the two stories before *The Locked Room* are fictional since he is the author of them. Therefore, he denies reality which has been throughout the book in a question.[156] As a result, Auster indicates that we should not believe everything we read which supports Lyotard's distrust in the narrative.[157]

Additionally, since uncanny is related to fear of the unfamiliar, it could be explained as the internal contradiction we feel in some situations, especially new situations. Experiencing the new inner self coming out may be terrifying. This is the case of Blue from *Ghosts* who faces his double – someone who he has been watching turns out to be Blue in a different form all along. In other words, the unfamiliar becomes familiar but it is too frightening for Blue that he decides to kill Black.[158]

When people find themselves in new situations, they are usually frightened of the unfamiliar. Thus, we are often scared of people who we do not understand and who we cannot categorize. Hence, the labelling discussed in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, labelling and identities may be a problem, especially in a pluralistic fragmented world where they are unstable and situationally enacted. They change with addressing by the society in a given context. People become overwhelmed by all the roles the society makes them play according to the allotted label.[159] Consequently, one finds themselves in a state of internal fragmentation which can be observed in Auster's characters, too.[160] Even Peter Stillman senior realizes that the world is fragmented when he says to Quinn: "You see, the world is in fragments, sir."[161]

This fragmentation is, after all, a part of postmodernism as well as a chance and uncertainty and therefore, it is no wonder that the characters show slightly schizophrenic signs. Especially Quinn is an example of someone having a split personality due to symptoms of a disorder called dissociative identity disorder. This disorder is usually activated by a tragical event with which a person cannot deal on their own. For this reason, they create another personality that is able to cope, and this process may continue with other difficult situations emerging.[162] The tragical event for Quinn is losing his wife and a child which makes him doubt his social roles. He creates new characters that help him to escape the reality and the heavy burden of his life.[163]

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[156] Auster, "The Locked Room," 115–314.
[157] Lyotard, "Defining the Postmodern", 142–145.
[158] Lambrechts, "The Quest for Identity," 30.
[159] Montero, "Identity as Alterity," 13.
[160] Tyree, "Fanshawe's Ghost," 83.
[161] Auster, "City of Glass," 75.
[162] Frank W. Putnam, *Diagnosis and Treatment of Multiple Personality Disorder* (London: The Guilford Press, 1989), 321.
[163] Auster, "City of Glass," 3–134.

Another thing defying postmodernism is the mentioned plurality of possibilities. One does not understand the life of the other. For instance, the unnamed narrator does not understand why Fanshawe would want to leave his family and those who love him as that is everything he has ever longed for. Nonetheless, the pluralistic world allows one to follow their heart and what makes them particularly happy.

> 'That's the one thing I'll never understand.'
> 'Sophie?'
> 'How could you walk out on her like that. What did she ever do to you?'
> 'Nothing. It wasn't her fault. You must know that by now. It's just that I wasn't meant to live like other people.'[164]

Quinn shows similar signs, this time in the form of jealousy when he finds out about Auster's life. He sees that Auster is living a life that Quinn has always wanted. In his view, Auster has everything, a son, a wife, and he is a writer.[165] However, those are socially constructed values of life which do not ensure one will be happy after acquiring them. Due to pluralization, there are options and freedom to choose who we want to be. Nowadays, it is popular to be different, authentic, and most importantly original. This individualization serves as a desire to become someone else, to have a different lifestyle. [166]

In Auster's trilogy, characters reach a point in which they experience their personal identity crisis, in other words, a psychological conflict about their social role or they fail to follow the continuity of their identity.[167] For Quinn life stopped after the tragedy, Blue secretly longs for a change and the narrator does not have own genuine identity. Therefore, on their quest for identity, the identities merge, are mistaken or even lost and consequently, while creating their new ones, they are doubled, or new ones are made-up through stealing existing identities or by using one's imagination.

Firstly, merging of identities is most visible in the second story the most since the names of the characters are inspired by colors and colors are easily mixed on a palette as well as the identities of the characters. [168] For instance, within the trilogy, is an intriguing merging of characters from all the three novellas. Judging by some intertextual comments, we may assume that Peter Stillman junior is also White based on the comment: "Everything about Stillman was white."[169] Quinn could be the unnamed narrator from *The Locked Room* as they both are chasing

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[164] Auster, "The Locked Room," 311.
[165] Auster, "City of Glass,"
[166] Jan Keller, *Odsouzeni k modernitě: co hledá sociologie a našla beletrie* (Praha: Novela Bohemica, 2015), 155–153.
[167] Frank Freudi, *100 Years of Identity Crisis: Culture War Over Socialisation* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 35–44.
[168] Lyčková, "The Problem of Identity," 25.
[169] Auster, "City of Glass," 15.

and following someone. Besides, his name is even literally mentioned in *The Locked Room*. At the end of *Ghosts*, Black turns out to be Black and there is no doubt about merging in the case of Fanshawe and the narrator from the last story.[170]

This merging often results in mistaken identities. Especially, in *The Locked Room*, the mistaken identity takes a different turn when one actually becomes the other. The narrator and Fanshawe looked like twins and even wore similar clothes. Fanshawe is a writer, and the narrator is a literary critic who reviews books but sometimes even re-writes. This suggests that just like re-writing books, he re-writes Fanshawe's life when he starts living as him, with his family and replaces him that the real Fanshawe is not missed. Even his mother notices the similarities between these two.

> "You even looked like him, you know. You always did, the two of you – like brothers, almost like twins. I remember when how when you were both small, I would sometimes confuse you from a distance. I couldn't tell which one of you was mine."[171]

Their mutual friend in France, Anne Michaux, mistakes the narrator for Fanshawe, too. This happens when the narrator has already taken over Fanshawe's life. Surprisingly, he seems rather hurt by this confusion.

> "What I will mention, however, is that her initial double take was caused by the fact that she mistook me for Fanshawe. Just the briefest flicker, as she put it, and then it was gone. The resemblance had been noticed before, of course, but never so viscerally, with such immediate impact. I must have shown my reaction, for she quickly apologized (as if she had done something wrong) and returned to the point several times during the two or three hours we spent together – once even going out of her way to contradict herself: 'I don't know what I was thinking. You don't look at all like him. It must have been the American in both of you.'"
> …
> "Nevertheless, I found it disturbing, could not help feeling appalled."[172]

Not only in the third story, but there are also identities mistaken at the beginning right in the first story. It is when Quinn is being mistaken for Auster. To be precise, when he repeatedly receives calls which were meant for a detective Paul Auster. However, in contrast to the narrator who feels appalled by being mistaken, Quinn seems to react positively as this new role helps him escape his reality and focus on something else than his own life. He feels like he is not the Quinn who used to write detective stories and therefore he creates a penname, William Wilson. This all indicates that Daniel Quinn is gradually losing his original identity. Blue also loses his old self when discovering he is Black. "Months go by and at least he says to himself out loud: I can't breathe anymore. This is the end, I'm dying."[173]

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[170] Auster, "The Locked Room," 289–290.
[171] Auster, "The Locked Room," 262.
[172] Auster, "The Locked Room," 289–290.
[173] Auster, "Ghosts," 173.

In the middle of summer in 1948, the year that marks the end of *Ghosts*, Blue's old cowardly identity dies. Cowardly in the sense that he himself was not able to act as he wished. For example, Black actually manages to break up with his girlfriend, something that Blue could never do. Also, Fanshawe gets to a point of losing his identity after he disappeared, and his close friend took his identity from him. This does not bother Fanshawe too much, though. In fact, he seems to be delighted with the fact as it was his goal to ensure the narrator to become a new husband for his wife. Moreover, he prefers to be called by his new name he decided to use, Henry Dark.[174]

Renaming one's character brings us to the process of taking up the new identities. In TNYT, for this purpose they use doubling, mirroring, or stealing existing identities, making up imaginary identities with the help of a disguise or a made-up name.

To start with, doubling, is a result of what the characters try to suppress as we have stated above and therefore, when the suppressed comes to life in the form of a double, a problem arises. Thus, the uncanny. For instance, Peter Stillman wants to suppress his behavior towards his son with the same name, Blue suppresses his desire to become someone else and finally, the narrator suppresses his own real identity. The doppelgangers are important because they often initiate the change in the characters, and this refers back to the otherness and the importance of others in the process of self-identification.[175] The most distinctive doubles in the trilogy are the narrator and Fanshawe but also Blue and Black or Peter Stillman junior and senior. Even Paul Auster, the author of the trilogy himself, is doubled there.

Using an author's name as a name of a character in his own work is a postmodern element that some writers use. This is the case of Percival Everett and including his name it the book *I am not Sidney Poitier* where his character is a professor[176], or Paul Auster in his *City of Glass* where Paul Auster is supposedly a detective and also a writer. Actually, there are three people who have this name – the author of the trilogy, thus the real-existing one, a detective we never meet and a writer who represents the real Auster but does not have much in common with the real one. Auster adds some of his autobiographical facts but only those, that are not essential such as being a writer. He walks and writes just like his characters in the trilogy. Auster tries to speak in the voice of his characters as he confessed in an interview. He also added that being

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[174] Auster, "The Locked Rom," 308–310.
[175] Lambrechts, "The Quest for Identity," 33.
[176] Percival L. Everett, *I am not Sidney Poitier: a novel* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2009), 5–234.

his characters creates confusion as they are not him but at the same time, he pretends to be his characters, therefore they are him in a way.[177]

> "What I was hoping to do, in effect, was to take my name off the cover and put it inside the story. I wanted to open up the process, to break down walls, to expose the plumbing. The self that exists in the world— the self whose name appears on the covers of books— is finally not the same self who writes the book."[178]

Hence, some characters share the same traits as him and not only the ones with the same name. For instance, Daniel Quinn portrays a parallel to real Auster, precisely his 1980s version before he met his wife Siri. The two of them have a lot in common such us writing poetry in the 1980s or losing their loved ones. Quinn literally and in Auster's case, it was through a divorce. Fanshawe as well as Auster was born in February 1947, both are married writers with one child and a sister with nervous breakdowns. Furthermore, they both had financial problems in the 1970s. Since the characters are, as discussed in the previous chapter, often at the edge of the society, it is no surprise that Auster has experienced a similar displacement in his life in multiple areas. For instance, he is the youngest son and a Jewish writer. To sum up, Auster's characters mirror his life in a way.[179]

In *City of Glass*, Auster's role comes to Quinn fairly easily as it is in the form of a mistaken call, and he also seems to accept this new identity without showing much hesitation.

> "He was Paul Auster now, and with each step he took he tried to fit more comfortably into the strictures of that transformation. Auster was no more than a name to him, a husk without content. To be Auster meant being a man with no interior, a man with no thoughts."[180]

Paradoxically, after meeting the real Auster, he does not feel like using his identity anymore owing to his feeling that Auster is taunting him for everything he has lost and ever wanted. Nevertheless, Quinn is not a man who would stick to one personality and therefore, he also uses William Wilson as his penname and Max Work as a fictional detective in his books. The manner Daniel creates his new identities is by using his own imagination and therefore idealistic characters. For instance, Max Work is a competent detective with traits Daniel definitely does not have.

> "Over the years, Work had become very close to Quinn. Whereas William Wilson remained an abstract figure for him, Work had increasingly come to life. In the triad of selves that Quinn had become, Wilson served as a kind of ventriloquist. Quinn himself was the dummy, and Work was the animated voice that gave purpose to the enterprise.
> …
> "And little by little, Work had become a presence in Quinn's life, his interior brother, his comrade in solitude."[181]

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[177] Auster, "The 'mechanics of reality'".
[178] Paul Auster, *Collected Prose* (New York: Picador, 2010), 555.
[179] Lyčková, "The Problem of Identity," 21.
[180] Auster, "City of Glass," 61.
[181] Auster, "City of Glass," 6.

Consequently, the main character of *City of Glass* has come to the point that these separately named aspect of himself have completely taken over his personality and that his true self is slowly disappearing. By the end, Quinn changes, in fact his transformation is the most drastic out of the characters from the three novellas. As Roza Lambrechts nicely describes it, from a neat, socially aware man presented to the readers at the beginning his repressed animalistic features start to come out and his only interests are those needed for survival – food, rest, and shelter.[182] Readers find him living in the rubbish on the street. To discover oneself, Quinn must look deeply into himself and due to this fact, he more and more becomes Peter Stillman junior – he even uses his name in one of the interviews with Peter Stillman senior and at the end of the novella, he is found in Stillman's empty flat where everything concerning the case started. This is again otherness as Peter initiated his quest for identity.

Nevertheless, there are more doubles in the first story. We may notice that the name Peter Stillman is used for a son and a father. Quinn also uses the name Peter Stillman in one of his conversations with Stillman senior. Again, the identity is therefore tripled just like in Auster's case. Not only name connects two characters but also the appearance. The two Stillmans at the platform both look the same and we, as readers, cannot distinguish which one is the authentic one.[183]

In *Ghosts*, the author rather works with personal traits and what the characters do which makes them doppelgängers – these are the traits of Blue and Black.

"Blue no longer knows what to think. It seems perfectly plausible to him that he is also being watched, observed by another in the same way that he has been observing Black."[184] Black tells Blue about his striking similarity concerning appearance with Whitman to which Blue responds with a comment that everyone has a double.[185] In this particular novella, we may observe so-called mirroring of one's identity as Blue is observing Black and therefore himself just like in a mirror. The French psychoanalyst of the 20th century Jacques Lacan described a mirror stage of a child which happens between 6 – 18 months when the child realizes himself as a person in a mirror. This self-observation may cause happiness but also frustration due to the fact that the child notices limitations of their own body such as the disability to walk properly, yet.[186] This could be applied to Blue's observation of Black and realizing his own limitations such as being a coward which makes Blue frustrated. The role of Black also serves as an example of how to live life – for instance by going on strolls.

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[182] Lambrechts, "The Quest for Identity," 39.
[183] Auster, "City of Glass," 174.
[184] Auster, "Ghosts," 170.
[185] Auster, "Ghosts," 174.
[186] Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 112.

> "These divagations last several hours, and at no point does Blue have the sense that Black is walking to any purpose. He seems rather to be airing his lungs, walking for the pure pleasure of walking, and as the journey goes on Blue confesses to himself for the first time that he is developing a certain fondness for Black."[187]

They have the same job and do similar activities during the day such as observing someone as a part of a detective work. Blue starts to slowly change as can be seen below.

> "There are times when he feels totally removed from Black, cut off from him in a way that is so stark abs absolute that he begins to lose the sense of who he is. Loneliness envelops him, shuts hum in, and with it comes a terror worse than anything he has ever known. It puzzles him that he should switch so rapidly from one state to another, and for a long time he goes back and forth between extremes, not knowing which one is true and which one is false."[188]
>
> …
>
> "He needs my eye looking at him. He needs me to prove he's alive."[189]

Judging by the examples above, in the process, there is incorporated the other and the uncanny experience once again. Blue needs Black for his journey into discovering his own personality and owing to the case, he is able to make a change and grow as a person.

> "I'm changing, he says to himself. Little by little, I'm no longer the same. This interpretation reassures him somewhat, at least for a while, but in the end it only leaves him feeling stranger than before."[190]

Furthermore, the readers may notice that Blue uses a disguise as a means for possessing an identity in order to be unrecognizable by Black. He basically becomes a vagabond by dressing as one.

> "Finally, mustering the courage to act, Blue reaches into his bag of disguises and casts about for a new identity. After dismissing several possibilities, he settles on an old man who used to beg on the corners of his neighborhood when he was a boy – a local character by the name of Jimmy Rose – and decks himself out in the garb of tramphood: tattered woolen clothes, shoes held together with string to prevent the soles from flapping, a weathered carpetbag to hold his belongings, and then, last of all, a flowing white beard and long white hair."[191]

Quinn from the previous novella uses also a kind of a disguise, not literal this time, as there is no need for him to hide his looks since Stillman does not recognize him, even though he has already seen him. Instead, Daniel uses various names as a disguise. He introduces himself as Henry Dark and for the third time as Peter Stillman when he conversates with Stillman senior. Nevertheless, in both cases where characters "dress themselves into another person" are left with more questions and do not actually get closer to any conclusion concerning the case nor their identity.[192]

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[187] Auster, "Ghosts," 153–154.
[188] Auster, "Ghosts," 158.
[189] Auster, "Ghosts," 184.
[190] Auster, "Ghosts," 148.
[191] Auster, "Ghosts," 173.
[192] Lambrechts, "The Quest for Identity," 26.

In *The Locked Room* the obvious doppelgängers are Fanshawe and the unnamed narrator due to their resemblance and since one replaces the other without people around minding. Not event Fanshawe himself minds as he, in fact, hoped for this outcome. Hence, mutual parasitism is applied here. Nevertheless, this story focuses on a different aspect of identity. The narrator does not show much originality and his own characteristics. He is literally attached to Fanshawe and lives his life in Fanshawe's shadow. This creates his only perception of identity and as a result, after Fanshawe leaves, he completely replaces him. In other words, he steals his identity which has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage could be seen in the fact that he has everything prepared, there is nothing he had to work hard for. However, the idea of Fanshawe coming back is frightening for him. The narrator's internal goal is to get rid of being the double of Fanshawe, he longs for developing his own character. Thus, he feels appalled by being mistaken for Fanshawe. Consequently, he gradually tries to get rid of Fanshawe inside him and by the end, he finally manages it when he destroys Fanshawe's manuscript. The excerpt below is a proof of the narrator becoming independent individual who is not obsessed by the idea of Fanshawe, anymore. "I could see my breath in the air before me, leaving my mind in little bursts of fog." The personal pronouns: I, me, my which he uses in the sentence above suggest that he finally identifies as an individual personality.[193]

Additionally, Auster likes to play with names as these words define us. They are the first thing that people get when introducing to each other. It is something that has a potential to serve as a label since even under personal names, we imagine certain traits and associations. Thus, names are considered basic aspects of human's identity. Even Stillman senior supports the claim that no arbitrary relationship exists between the names and things.[194]

> "What do you do with these things?"
> "I give them names."
> "Names?"
> "I invent new words that will correspond to the things."
> "Ah. Now I see. But how do you decide? How do you know if you've found the right word?"
> "I never make a mistake. It's a function of my genius."
> "Could you give me an example?"
> "Of one of my words?"
> "Yes."

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[193] Tyree, "Fanshawe's Ghost," 83–84.

[194] Kamran Ahmadgoli and Sameer Abd AL hussein Hassan, "Identity, Chance and Incredulity of Postmodern Metafiction in Paul Auster's City of Glass," *Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 17, no. 11(2020): 29-40.

> "I'm sorry, but that won't be possible. It's my secret, you understand. Once I've published my book, you and the rest of the world will know. But for now I have to keep it to myself."
> "Classified information."
> "That's right. Top secret."[195]

Daniel Quinn uses a number of names due to his doubtful approach towards his own social roles. However, when he is speaking to Stillman, Quinn surprisingly uses his real name and Stillman creates preconceptions about him based on the name and what it rhymes with. Similarly, people make these assumptions based on a profession, a social status, or a gender.

> 'Ah,' said Stillman reflectively, nodding his head. 'Quinn.'
> 'Yes, Quinn. Q-U-I-N-N.'
> 'I see. Yes, yes, I see. Quinn. Hmmm. Yes. Very interesting. Quinn. A most resonant word. Rhymes with twin, does it not?'
> 'That's right. Twin.'
> 'And sin, too, if I'm not mistaken.'
> 'You're not.'[196]

This speech may be seen as foreshadowing of the fact that Quinn has another personality within and that perhaps stealing someone's identity is sinful.

Moreover, names of Auster's characters often contain allegorical meaning that provides the readers with an insight into one's personality. To illustrate, the name Blue might give us a hint of sadness or William Wilson indicates doubles especially for those who have already read Poe's *William Wilson*. But *The New York Trilogy* is not the only work by Auster where the characters' names already reveal some information about them. For instance, in the book *Travels*, we encounter Mr. Blank who has lost his memory.[197]

Concerning *Ghosts*, Eric Berlatsky in his essay mentions hints of racial issues which the names may suggest and remind the readers of the American history of slaves. Especially in the case of Black, Blue.[198] Even though this may be relevant, it is definitely not as distinctive and obvious for readers as the said fragmentation of identity present. Perhaps if the comparison focused more on Black and White, it would be more striking for the readers. Unfortunately, that is not the case and even between these two characters, there are not explicit comments to racial issues except for mentioning colors.

In conclusion, identity shown as a problem of postmodernity and the number of possibilities makes choosing one's identity paradoxically a rather challenging task due to

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[195] Auster, "City of Glass", 77.
[196] Auster, "City of Glass", 75.
[197] Lyčková, "The Problem of Identity," 19.
[198] Eric Berlatsky, "Everything in the World Has Its Own Color: Detecting Race and Identity in Paul Auster's Ghosts," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory,* no. 64 (2008): 109-142. 10.1353/arq.0.0014.

plurality. Surely, it can be said that with the purpose of self-identification, there is a need of other people. We need to see examples, to be able to reflect on ourselves and to compare. In all the cases, there is someone else who has initiated the process of metamorphosis for the main characters. There has been used various means for transforming in the quest for one's identity in Auster's work such as merging, mistaking, losing, taking up a new identity in the form of doubling, stealing one's identity, mirroring or creating made-up personalities. However, doubling appears to be the most significant and distinctive in the trilogy since we can find doubles, sometimes even triples, in each of the stories.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to identify the elements of postmodernism in Paul Auster's work, especially, in his well-known novel *The New York Trilogy*. Thus, owing to the thorough analysis, it was discovered that Auster uses various elements such as intertextual references in the form of a pastiche and allusion, metafiction, fragmentation, randomness, unpredictability, and unreliable narrator. Furthermore, he also enjoys playing with language and the identity issue. That is the reason why the focus of the thesis was aimed specifically at the question of identity which was studied from the sociological point of view but also from the psychological one.

In the first chapter, the basic knowledge about postmodernism and terms connected with it were introduced. It was established that postmodernity is not anti-modernity as it does not go against it, neither it marks the end of modernity. Post-modernity is only radicalized modernity which welcomes plurality in its principal self. Modernity, according to Bauman, can be either solid or liquid as it is more exact description than modernity and postmodernity. Liquid modernity is a perfect metaphor due to the ever-changing rules in the pluralistic society where nothing is certain nor limiting. In terms of postmodern literature, it is experimental as well as modernist literature, however, it does not look for anything new. It combines canon with popular literature and is aimed at all kinds of readers. The most common elements of postmodern writing are metafiction, pastiche, parody, allusion, unreliable narrator, unpredictability, and addressing one's identity. Auster uses all of these in his trilogy. Nevertheless, there are some that are more prevalent such as pastiche and allusion or the identity issue.

Firstly, the trilogy is a pastiche of a detective novel. However, his novel does not comply with the typical detective genre as the characters do not solve crimes but look for their identity. Therefore, he provides a detective genre with a rather innovative usage, even though Auster himself does not see it that way since his predecessors have already tried for something similar. A good example is Cervantes and his usage of a chivalry romance as a satire. We can find a pastiche of the novellas from the trilogy within the trilogy as well as Auster is a character in *City of Glass*. Additionally, the book consists of references to greatest authors who have significantly influenced the development of a novel as we know it nowadays. These are, mainly, Miguel de Cervantes and his *Don Quixote*, Henry David Thoreau and his *Walden*, Nathaniel Hawthorne and his *Wakefield*, Edgar Allan Poe, and his *William Wilson*, and finally, Herman Melville and his *Bartleby, The Scrivener*. Nevertheless, Auster also uses only mentions of other

famous names such as Milton to whom he only pays tribute. Hence, Paul Auster applies intertextual references which may or may not contain a deeper meaning.

Secondly, concerning the sociological point of view, Zygmunt Bauman has suggested four types of a postmodern person which is mainly based on the trend of movement in the world. These are: a stroller, a tourist, a vagabond, and a player. All the people in the globalized and pluralistic world, including the characters from *The New York Trilogy,* have a little bit of the four proposed personalities inside them. The instances differ only in the predominance of one over the others in a given period of time as they may overlap and change within a person. As well as for ordinary people, Auster's characters in TNYT also possess multiple personalities and characteristics typical for Bauman's postmodern personas. We are able to observe a little bit of a tourist, vagabond, player but also a stroller in Quinn, Blue, Stillman, Fanshawe and unnamed narrator from *The Locked Room*. The beauty of Bauman's types lies in the fact, that all of them have a quality that is alluring and a quality that may be seen as a negative one. To illustrate, a vagabond is a perfect example of a person who is free yet lonely and alienated from the society. This again only supports that postmodern world is a place full of plurality and possibility where nothing is black and white.

Finally, identity shown as a problem of postmodernity and the number of possibilities makes choosing one's identity paradoxically a rather challenging task. It can be said that with the purpose of self-identification, there is a need of alterity. We need to see examples, to be able to reflect on ourselves and to grow as people. This applies for the characters of the trilogy, too. In the novellas, there is someone else who has initiated the process of metamorphosis for the main characters. There has been used various means for transformation concerning one's identity in Auster's work such as merging, mistaking, losing, taking up a new identity in the form of doubling, stealing one's identity, mirroring or creating made-up personalities. However, doubling appears to be the most significant and distinctive in the trilogy since we can find doubles, sometimes even triples, in each of the stories. These doppelgängers are mainly the narrator and Fanshawe, Peter Stillman junior and senior, Paul Auster and Quinn as Paul Auster and last but not least Black and Blue.

The overall essence of *The New York Trilogy* is to show that chance and ambiguity are a part of the postmodern life and that we should learn to live with it. That is the reason why Auster provides the readers with open endings and, thus, let them be their own creators of possible endings or even options they may choose for living their life. Despite postmodern literature is a rather complex topic, it provides us with a new experience towards reading and shows us the beauty of variety which makes us see things from various perspectives.

RESUMÉ

Tato práce se zaměřuje na postmoderní prvky v díle Paula Austera, a to především v knize s názvem *Newyorská trilogie*. K výzkumu byly provedeny analýzy a rozbor děl s touto prací spojenými, dále proběhla práce s kritickými recenzemi a analýzami dalších výzkumníků, kteří se zaobírali podobnou či stejnou otázkou. Zjistili jsme tedy, že Auster využívá různé postmoderní prvky, jako jsou intertextové odkazy v podobě pastiše či aluze, metafikci, fragmentaci, náhodnost, nepředvídatelnost a nespolehlivého vypravěče. Kromě toho ho také zajímá význam a zrod jazyka a otázka identity. A proto se práce zaměřila právě na identitu, která byla zkoumána z hlediska sociologického, ale i psychologického.

Jelikož je postmodernismus často kritiky považován za velmi komplexní a těžce definovatelný termín, celá první kapitola této práce je věnována právě definici tohoto pojmu v kontrastu s pojmem modernismus. Dozvídáme se tedy, jaký je rozdíl mezi modernismem a postmodernismem, jelikož už právě tam často nastává zmatek s definicí. Z důvodu, že je tato diplomová práce zaměřena na literaturu, nesmí být opomenuto projevení postmodernismu v literatuře, jeho charakteristické znaky a významní autoři. V první kapitole jsou tedy představeny základní poznatky o postmoderně a s ní související pojmy. Bylo zjištěno, že postmoderna není anti-modernou, protože nejde proti ní, ani neoznačuje konec modernity jako takový. Postmoderna je pouze radikalizovaná moderna, která vřele vítá pluralitu. Modernita podle Baumana může být pevná nebo tekutá, přičemž tekutá modernita je dokonalou metaforou díky neustále se měnícím pravidlům v pluralitní společnosti, kde nic není jisté ani omezující. Podobnou metaforou je jí také poušť v kontrastu s labyrintem, který má jasně stanovené hranice a omezení. Postmoderní literatura spojuje kánon s populární literaturou a je zaměřena na všechny druhy čtenářů, jelikož je zve k tvoření nové literatury spojením vyššího a nižšího. Nejběžnějšími rysy postmoderního psaní jsou metafikce, pastiš, parodie, aluze, nespolehlivý vypravěč, nepředvídatelnost a v neposlední řadě otázka vlastní identity. Všechny tyto prvky Auster používá ve své trilogii. Přesto se některé v trilogii objevují častěji nebo jsou více výrazné. Mezi tyto patří intertextuální odkazy a již zmíněné téma identity.

V druhé kapitole je tedy zaměření fokusováno na odkazy děl a různých významných autorů ve formě pastiše či aluzí. Z tohoto důvodu je vysvětlen rozdíl mezi těmito úzce spojenými pojmy. Nechybí stručný vývoj románu do podoby, jak ho známe v postmodernismu a zmínění děl, která pro tento proces byla stěžejní. Tato díla bývají často označována jako kanonická pro západní kulturu, a ne jenom tam. Není tedy náhoda, že Paul Auster, americký spisovatel, využívá těchto světově známých jmen a děl v jeho trilogii.

Samotná trilogie je pastiš detektivního románu. Austerova trilogie však neodpovídá typickému detektivnímu románu, protože postavy neřeší zločiny, ale hledají svou identitu. Poskytuje nám tedy poměrně inovativní využití detektivního žánru, i když sám Auster to takto sám nevnímá. Tvrdí, že o něco podobného se již pokoušeli jeho předchůdci. Například Cervantes s jeho pojetím rytířské romance. Pastiš se v trilogii objevuje hned v několika podobách. Samotná trilogie je vlastně pastiš sama na sebe, jelikož všechny tři příběhy jsou stále tím prvním, pouze s jinými postavami a prostředím. Také Paul Auster jako postava v prvním příběhu je pastiš. Kniha obsahuje odkazy na nejvýznamnější autory, kteří ovlivnili Austera, ale i vývoj románu do podoby, jak jej známe dnes. Jsou to především Miguel de Cervantes s jeho dílem *Don Quijote*, Henry David Thoreau a jeho *Walden*, Nathaniel Hawthorne a jeho *Wakefield*, Edgar Allan Poe a *William Wilson,* a konečně Herman Melville a jeho *Písař Bartleby*. Auster však také používá pouze zmínky o dalších slavných jménech, jako je například Milton, kterému pouze vzdává hold. Auster tedy používá odkazy, které mohou, ale nemusí obsahovat hlubší význam a čtenář je schopen si užít čtení jeho díla i bez toho, aniž by tato jména znal. Kdo má však všeobecný přehled a tato jména zná, je to pro něj spíše bonusem, který přináší ještě větší čtenářský prožitek.

Z pohledu sociologického, Zygmunt Bauman navrhl čtyři typy postmoderního člověka, které vycházejí především konzumní globalizované společnosti a z pohybu ve světě. Mezi tyto typy patří zevloun, turista, tulák a hráč. Všichni lidé v globalizovaném a pluralitním světě mají trochu od každého, včetně postav z *Newyorské trilogie*. Instance se liší pouze v převaze jednoho nad ostatními v daném časovém období, jelikož se tyto osobnosti mohou v člověku překrývat a měnit. Stejně jako je tomu u obyčejných lidí, Austerovy postavy mají také rozmanité osobnosti a vlastnosti typické pro Baumanovy postmoderní osobnosti. V Quinnovi, Blueovi, Stillmanovi, Fanshawe a nejmenovaném vypravěči z posledního příběhu můžeme pozorovat trochu turisty, tuláka, hráče, ale i zevlouna. Krása Baumanových typů spočívá v tom, že všechny mají vlastnosti, které jsou lákavé, a vlastnosti, které mohou být vnímány jako negativní. Pro ilustraci, tulák je dokonalým příkladem člověka, který je svobodný, ale zároveň osamělý a odcizený od společnosti. To opět jen podporuje tvrzení o tom, že postmoderní svět je místem plným plurality a možností, kde nic není černobílé.

Identita je zobrazována jako problém postmoderny a v době plurality se hledání vlastního já může jevit jako obtížný či nemožný úkol. Dá se říci, že za účelem sebeidentifikace je potřeba ostatních. Potřebujeme vidět příklady, umět reflektovat sami sebe a růst jako lidé. To platí i pro postavy trilogie. V novelách je to vždy někdo jiný, kdo iniciuje proces proměny hlavních postav. V Austerově tvorbě byly použity různé prostředky k proměně identity, jako je například

prolínání osobností, záměna, ztráta, převzetí nové identity v podobě zdvojení či odcizení identity, zrcadlení nebo vytváření nových vymyšlených osobností. Zdvojení se však v trilogii jeví jako nejvýznamnější a nejvýraznější, protože v každém z příběhů najdeme dvojníky, někdy i dokonce trojníky. Těmito dvojníky jsou především vypravěč a Fanshawe, Peter Stillman mladší a starší, Paul Auster a Quinn jako Paul Auster a v neposlední řadě Black a Blue.

Závěrem můžeme tedy tvrdit, se všemi podloženými důkazy rozebranými v této práci, že *Newyorská trilogie* tedy obsahuje hned několik prvků typických pro postmoderní literaturu. Mezi tyto patří, aluze, pastiš, nespolehlivý vypravěč, metafikce a v neposlední řadě otázka identity. Celková podstata trilogie slouží k tomu, aby nám ukázala, že náhoda a nejasnost v postmoderním světě nemusí být vnímány špatně. Jsou součástí postmoderního života, a proto bychom se s nimi měli naučit žít. To je důvod, proč Auster poskytuje čtenářům otevřené konce a nechává je tak samotné přemýšlet o tom, co se stalo dál. Toto je zároveň učí vidět svět hned z několika úhlů pohledu a žít svůj život tak, jak to vyhovuje právě jim. Přestože je postmoderní literatura poměrně komplexním tématem, poskytuje nám nový vhled do čtení a ukazuje nám krásu rozmanitosti, která nás nutí přemýšlet o věcech z různých perspektiv.

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