# Pastiche in Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*

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**Abstract**

This article is a Jamesonian study of Auster's The New York Trilogy in which one of Fredric Jameson's notions of postmodernism, pastiche, has been applied on three stories of the novel. This novel is one of Auster's outstanding postmodern works to which Jameson's theories of postmodernism, in particular, pastiche can be applicable. Pastiche has been defined by Fredric Jameson as an imitation of a strange style and contrasted to the concept of postmodern parody. This article indicates that theory of pastiche can be applied on both the form and content of three stories of the above mentioned novel.

**Keywords:** Pastiche, Parody, Depthlessness, Historicity

## 1. Introduction

Paul Benjamin Auster (1947) is one of the most influential American postmodern authors, whose works mostly mix realism, experimentation, sociology, absurdism, existentialism and crime fiction. Pastiche, intertextuality, aesthetic dignity and Auster's own appearance in his works, such as *City of Glass* (1985), are also some of the features of his works. The search for identity and self-discovery can be found in his works such as *The New York Trilogy* (2015)[1], *Moon Palace* (1989), *The Music of Chance* (1990), *The Book of Illusions* (2002), and *The Brooklyn Follies* (2005). *"Auster invariably blurs elements of fact and fiction within his narratives, and the majority of his fictional protagonists appear to be versions of himself. In this respect, Auster constructs postmodern autobiographies, and his characters share his own experiences"* (Martin 5). The blurred demarcations of fact and fiction in Auster's works, contribute to skepticism and a lack of coherent certainty. Due to using particular narrative perspectives in his writings, Auster distances himself from authorial authenticity. Moreover, Auster's conception of chance confirms his position as a self-conscious postmodern author. New York City is the main setting of Auster's writings. In the meantime, the postmodern notion of *urban displacement* is evoked by Auster in his works. "His books, products of solitude, not solidarity, deal with questions pertaining to the notion of the self, the nature of language, the power of story-telling" (Varvolgi 3).

Fredric Jameson (1934), an American literary critic and Marxist political theorist, has been called "probably the most important cultural critic writing in English today" (Roberts 1). He has a marvelous range of analysis of contemporary cultural trends including architecture, science fiction, nineteenth-century novel, cinema, philosophy, and experimental avant-garde art: "Jameson's work has done more to shape our consciousness of ourselves as an emergent global society than any other thinker" (Buchanan 1). Jameson is the Professor of Comparative Literature and Romance Studies (French) at Duke University. Sixth Award of The Modern Language Association has been granted to him for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement. In Adam Roberts's (1965) belief, Jameson is the world's leading representative of Marxist ideas. In his view points, he analyzes Marxist ideas by his postmodernist works: "Jameson is first and foremost a Marxist thinker, and the bulk of his work has directly or indirectly engaged with the traditions of Marxist thinking in the twentieth century" (Roberts 15).

In his book *Political Unconscious* (1981), Jameson argues that *postmodernism* should be considered a cultural dominant rather than a style. In his ideas, there are some features which are lost in postmodern works, including literature, one of which is *historicity*. According to him, postmodernity has transformed the historical past into a series of emptied-out stylization which can be commodified and consumed. In fact, he sees people's historical deafness as one of the symptoms of postmodern age. He believes that however postmodern theory is a desperate attempt to make sense of the age, but it refuses the traditional forms of understanding. History plays an increasingly dominant role in his interpretation of both reading (consumption) and writing (production) of literary texts: "History is another one of those codewords, like allegory, that Jameson relies on throughout his work, attributing to it his own specific set of valences" (Buchanan 58). According to Adam Roberts (1965) in his book *Fredric Jameson* (2000), Jameson believes that to understand the world accurately, people need to comprehend that interpretation must be rooted in a sense of history,

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[1] First published in 1987

they need to be aware of the way commodification dominates today's culture and they need to have a deep sense of past.

Back to Auster, it is noteworthy to mention that his works occupy an unusual position in the contemporary American writings. He eagerly enters into dialogue with other texts, such as the American Renaissance, or the works of European writers such as Kafka through his fiction. Actually, many of his fictional characters and some incidents in his books, come from real life and the effect in later novels is one of deceptive realism: "At the same time, however, Auster's fictions are, if anything, overdetermined, full of allusions and references to other books and writers. Even if that were not the case, it would still be problematic to say that his books come out of the real world" (Varvogli 6).

Considering the fact that Auster is a postmodern author whose work demonstrate postmodern world and postmodern man and indeed features of *postmodernism*, it can be suggested that his works can be studied through Jamesonian concepts of *postmodernism* such as *pastiche*. After all, *The New York Trilogy* (2015) is one of Auster's brilliant novels which can be studied through Jamesonian concept of *pastiche*. Based on the above argument these questions seem to be significant:

1- Can Auster's *The New York Trilogy* (2015) be studied in the light of Jameson's concept of *pastiche*? To what extent does *The New York Trilogy* (2015) comply with what Jameson has called *pastiche*? Can this concept be applied to all three stories?

2- What is the purpose of Auster's presence as a character in the novel? Is he to be mistaken by the actual author? How is the metafictionality of the novel related to the novel as *pastiche*?

3- As mentioned in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Jameson believes that *pastiche* will cause reader lose his connection to history, which turns into a series of styles and superseded genres, or simulacra, "the past as referent finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts"(18). To what extent does the novel deviate from its historical past, the detective genre? Does Auster keep a critical distance from the original genre?

## 2. Fredric Jameson's Theories of Pastiche

To have a short look at Fredric Jameson's (1934) concept of postmodernism, it can be stated that his work on *postmodernism* is one of the most influential analysis on which he has offered a particularly significant analysis in his books especially in his magisterial one, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991). As it is stated in this book, *postmodernism* is mostly interpreted as a style describing the logic of contemporary culture and literature with some outstanding differences with *modern* era: "This is, however, precisely why it seems to me essential to grasp Postmodernism not as a style but rather as a cultural dominant: a conception which allows for the presence and coexistence of a range of very different, yet subordinate, features" (4). According to him, *postmodernism* can be defined as the present time when it is considered historically in the age in which historical thinking is forgotten. Henceforth, *postmodernism* can either reveal some deeper irrepressible historical motivations or adequately inhibit and divert them. Jameson believes that *postmodernism* is in search of breaks and events not new worlds; it looks for alterations and irreversible changes in the representation of things and of the way they change. In spite of *modernism* which considers the things themselves, *postmodernism* formally investigates on the variations and considers the contents as images. *Postmodernism* is a fully human world in which modernization process is finished and nature certainly has gone; in his view point, culture has become a product and *postmodernism* is the process of consumption of utter commodification. In fact, *postmodernism* is the life-style of the superstate. Considering this definition, it relates to Karl Marx's (1818-1883) concept of *fetishism* of commodities and the old concepts of *culture industry* by Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Adorno (1903-1969). (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 3-5).

Beside the definition of *postmodernism* in general, Fredric Jameson (1934) who is highly critical of current historical situation and stresses several times that his conception of *postmodernism* is historical rather than a merely stylistic one, pinpoints some specific symptoms and associates them with postmodern condition in *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991); among which a breakdown of the distinction between high and low culture, the erosion of the categories of high art and popular culture, the coexistence of aesthetic and political logics, a whole new type of emotional ground tone (hysterical sublime), new relation to technology (geopolitical aesthetic), mutation in built space (cognitive mapping), breakdown of the signifying chain in the use of language, schizophrenic self, a fragmenting, eclectic schizophrenia in place of the modernist unifying paranoia, the waning of affect, a whole new type of emotional ground tone, depthlessness, lack of historicity, pastiche and etc… can be counted (26-38).

As it is mentioned above, one of the important notions of *postmodernism* in Jameson's estimation is *pastiche*, which is an imitation of a strange style and contrasted to the concept of postmodern *parody* by Linda Hutcheon (1947). Hutcheon unlike Jameson, approves the postmodern culture and considers *parody* a thoughtful recycling of existing forms. On the contrary to Jameson who characterizes postmodern *parody* as blank *parody* without any political goal, Hutcheon values *parodic self-reflexivity* in postmodern literature, considering that literature as an implicit political critique and historical awareness. In Jameson's view point, in postmodern period, *parody* has been replaced by *pastiche*: "*Pastiche* is, like *parody*, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of *parody*'s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 17). He considers this reversion to blank *parody* as a falling off from modernism during which individual authors were mainly branded by their individual and inimitable styles: In postmodern *pastiche*, by contrast, "Modernist styles... become postmodernist codes" (<u>ibid</u>), leaving people with nothing but "a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm" (<u>ibid</u>). Consequently, postmodern cultural

productions mount to "the cannibalization of all the styles of the past, the play of random stylistic allusion" (*Postmodernism* 18).

In such a world of *pastiche*, people lose their connection to history and history reverts to a series of styles, genres, or simulacra. This concept is used by Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) as well and like him Jameson is highly critical of the current historical situation; indeed, he paints a dystopic picture of the present and associates it with a loss of people's connection to history: "The new spatial logic of the simulacrum can now be expected to have a momentous effect on what used to be historical time" (*Postmodernism* 18). In such a situation, "the past as referent finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts" (ibid) and people can no longer understand the past except as a repository of genres, styles, and codes ready for commodification.

### 3. Pastiche in The New York Trilogy

*The New York Trilogy* (2015) is one of Auster's wonderful works including three stories as *City of Glass* (1985), *Ghosts* (1986) and *The Locked Room* (1986). This novel has been categorized as a detective fiction. It is said that he mingles the traditional features of the detective genre with the experimental, metafictional and ironic features of *postmodernism*. In this novel Auster scrutinizes the fluctuating identity of the main characters. He at the same time examines the imbalance between the physical author, the individual who has written his name on the cover, and the authentic author (material that comes right out of author's own experience). In the first story *City of Glass* (1985), Auster has written a metaphysical apologue about a solitary man in relation with his subconscious mind. The second story, *Ghosts* (1986), is again considered as a detective one displaying a man forced to tail himself. The last story, *The Locked Room* (1986), is an autobiography about a disappeared writer by his unnamed friend. Although the stories and their styles of writing are opposing to each other, they are one story which are resolved through the last one *The Locked Room (1986)*. In *City of Glass* (1985) the author's pen name is William Wilson which is the title of one of Edgar Allan Poe's (1809-1849) short stories. In *The Locked Room* (1986), the name of the narrator and the absent author represent the opening line of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851). After all, *The New York Trilogy* (2015) is very much the archetype of postmodern fiction. It is open-ended while the stories seem to be closed.

### A.   *A General Overview of City of Glass*

*City of Glass* (1985) and two others *Ghosts* (1986) and *The Locked Room* (1986) seem to be detective ones. In the first story, Daniel Quinn, an author of conventional detective stories, who is by chance mistaken with a detective, Paul Auster, is following the philosopher and former convict, Peter Stillman. This philosopher had served twenty years in prison for keeping his son in a room isolated from human speech and contact for seven years to accomplish his bizarre language deprivation experiment to discover the original language of innocence. Quinn is supposed to follow and keep him away from his son.

### B.   *Jamesonian Pastich in City of Glass*

Although Quinn, the protagonist, is the author of mystery novels in which he has created a "private eye-narrator, Max Work" who solves many series of crimes, but this story is not a real detective one. In detective stories there is a mystery which is eventually solved by the detector. But in this story the real mystery is character's identity. In fact the form of this novel is an imitation of the detective genre which converts it to a metaphysical one. Alison Russell (1958) in her article entitled "The New York Trilogy: Paul Auster's Anit-Detective Fiction" (1990) printed in *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* book claims that "The three novels comprising the trilogy- *City of Glass*, *Ghosts*, and *The Locked Room*-are essentially retelling the same story. All three employ and deconstruct the conventional elements of the detective story, resulting in a recursive linguistic investigation of the nature, function, and meaning of language" (71). At the beginning of the first story the narrator declares that the knowledge of Quinn regarding the crime is not more than ordinary people.

> Like most people, Quinn knew almost nothing about crime. He had never murdered anyone, had never stolen anything, and he did not know anyone who had. He had never been inside a police station, had never met a private detective, had never spoken to a criminal. Whatever he knew about these things, he had learned from books, films, and newspapers. (Auster, *City of Glass* 7).

Therefore, Quinn as the author of mystery novels does not have any tangible information about real crime. Then, how can he write these kinds of novels? Just by reading books. The narrator adds that "What interested him about the stories he wrote was not their relation to the world but their relation to other stories. Even before he became William Wilson, Quinn had been a devoted reader of mystery novel" (Auster, *City of Glass* 7). Therefore, his stories are not real detective ones but kinds of imitation of this genre on which he has no sufficient information. Going further, if Paul Auster as a character in the novel is mistaken by the actual author, it can be said that the same imitation of the detective genre is used by Auster himself in writing the whole novel as well. In this regard, Dennis Barone in the *Beyond the Red Notebook* (2011) which is edited by him declares that:

> To be sure, Quinn's knowledge about crime and detection is wholly conditioned by their representations in films, books and newspapers, but while this knowledge serves him well as an author, Quinn's reliance on the literary model of detection gradually declines as he sees its inadequacy in an "actual" situation. At first, Quinn doesn't feel handicapped by the fact that he has no knowledge of real crime and detection, for "what interested him about the stories he wrote was not their relation to the world but their relation to other stories (14).

And as the narrator of the story asserts:

> What he liked about these books was their sense of plenitude and economy. In the good mystery there is nothing wasted, no sentence, no word that is not significant. And even if it is not significant, it has the potential to be so-which amounts to the same thing (8).

Considering these sentences, what the author of the book believes in, is in contrast with what exactly written. In fact, this novel is filled with many futile words, sentences and events. In this novel, nothing is finally done; while in detective novels, everything, even the most trivial things can be a clue to solve the problem and bear a connection to the outcome of the story. In fact this novel seems to be a detective one but as the stories, especially *City of Glass* (1985) proceed, it converts to philosophical genre which is metaphysical detective. This is of course, one of the features of *postmodernism* which is conversion of a genre in a story to another one.

Moreover, one of the other features of detective genre is that readers can identify themselves with the detective and achieve interpretive victory alongside him, or closely on his heels. Glenn W. Most (1952) in his book under the title of *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory* (1983), comments that the detective serves as "the figure for the reader within the text, the one character whose activities most closely parallel the reader's own" (348). But in this novel, readers cannot identify themselves with the protagonists who are following insistently what they exactly know nothing about which lead them toward mere absurdity. The reader cannot identify himself with a detective who sleeps on the trashes and does not use information in the world of media to find out that Stillman has committed suicide, for instance. Moreover, often at the end of detective stories, the detective reviews the entire proceedings, charting the true implication of the clues and characters he has encountered. But the protagonists of three stories especially Quinn is scattered leaving the readers in ambiguity and confusion. In fact, readers of detective stories typically admire the interpretive skill of the detective, who, in the midst of mysterious, misleading, and disparate clues, is able to discern logical and necessary connections leading invariably to the solution of the mystery. But in this novel, not only readers do not admire their protagonists' interpretive skills, but also criticize them for wasting time in search of nothing and moving toward losing their identities and even their ordinary lives.

Thus, from the beginning, the connection between events in *City of Glass* (1985) differs from that which readers would expect to find in a detective story. Consider Sherlock Holmes's comments to Watson at the end of, Arthur Conan Doyle's (1859-1930) *The hound of the Baskervilles:* "The whole course of events," said Holmes, "from the point of view of the man who called himself Stapleton was simple and direct, although to us, who had no means in the beginning of knowing the motives of his actions and could only learn part of the facts, it all appeared exceedingly complex." (235). According to Dennis Barone, in the book *Beyond the Red Notebook:*

> For Holmes there is a fundamental, "simple and direct" pattern underlying the only apparently complex or random events. And so, with the solution inherent in the beginning, the detective plays the part of an archaeologist, charting the significance of the crime's clues or artifacts, items that cannot *not* be meaningful and that call out to be interpreted and fit into their proper pattern. The narrative of detection directs us to a mode of interpretation that operates, in a sense, in reverse from the corpse back to the criminal (75).

According to Aliki Varvogli's book under the title of *The World that is the Book: Paul Auster's Fiction, The New York Trilogy* (2001) has been described as a postmodern detective story in which Auster borrows some elements from detective fiction and uses his own writing to explore the nature and depicts the limitations of the genre, and to ask questions of a more philosophical nature concerning perception, interpretation, and the availability of truth, or meaning. *The New York Trilogy* (2015) also belongs to the tradition of metafictional writing by virtue of its self-conscious nature. Auster not only disrupts traditional conventions of time, place, causality and unity of action, he also crosses ontological boundaries by creating a character named Paul Auster in *City of Glass* (1985).

In addition to what has been written above, it is noteworthy to mention that Auster is a postmodern author, but not a political one. He does not have any political aims for writing his novels. Therefore, there is not any political bite behind this novel. This is just an imitation without any goals. It is not constructive. As Jameson says: "Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 17). According to him and as it can be vividly seen in the form and even content of the novel, in the world of *pastiche,* everything lose their connection to the history which is changed to a series of style and superceded genres or simulacra. Bearing in mind the concepts of *parody* by Linda Hutcheon (1947) and *simulacra* by Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), it can be said that the form of this novel is *pastiche* of the detective genre. According to Brendan Martin's *Paul Auster's Postmodernity* (2008), *City of Glass* is a *pastiche* of the detective genre which displays many of the classic characters of postmodern fiction. In this regard, he says:

> These include an indeterminate and ironic relationship between character and author; an ambiguous narrative voice; the blurring of fact and fiction; and döppelgangers as a central theme. As the novel's protagonist Daniel Quinn is a writer with the literary pseudonym William Wilson, Auster alludes to Edgar Allan Poe's eponymous story that deals with duality (1).

In short, as Linda Hutcheon (1947) points out in *The Politics of Postmodernism: Parody and History* (1989), "Jameson argues that in postmodernism "parody finds itself without a vocation," replaced by pastiche, which he (bound by a definition of parody as ridiculing imitation) sees as more neutral or blank parody" (186); and as there is no political bite in the works of Paul Auster including this novel; it can be concluded that the form of three stories of *The New York Trilogy* (2015) is not detective but flat imitation of this genre as it does not have the features of a real detective or mystery story making a metaphysical genre.

Investigating the story in details, it can be seen that Stillman had written a book entitled *The Garden and the Tower: Early Visions of the New World* which was divided into two parts: "The Myth of Paradise" and "The Myth of Babel". In the first part Stillman argues that the first men to visit America believed that they had accidentally found paradise, in the second part, the discovery of the New World was the quickening impulse of utopian thought, the spark that gave hope to the perfectibility of human life. America, was destined to become a veritable 'City of God'. However, what Stillman finds after he is released from prison is a City of Glass instead of a City of God which then glass breaks easily. Here is what he tells Quinn:" I have come to New York because it is the most forlorn of places, the most abject. The brokenness is everywhere, the disarray is universal. You have only to open your eyes to see it. The broken people, the broken things, the broken thoughts" (78).

As it is stated in an article by Hazel Simth under the title of "Aa Labyrinth Of Endless Steps': Fiction Making, Interactive Narrativity, And The Poetics Of Space In Paul Auster's "City Of Glass" (2002), this book is somehow looking back to the John Milton's (1608-1674) "Paradise Lost" (1667). In this book, he describes the building of the Tower of Babel as a utopian era in which all language was united. Therein, he contemplates through the colonial 17th century figure of Henry Dark as the private secretory of John Milton (1608-1674) and thinks that the Tower of Babel will rise again in current America as a uniting linguistic, political and cultural force and as a paradise on all earth:

> Turning to the Babel story, Dark then elaborated his plan and announced his vision of things to come. Quoting from the second verse of Genesis 11—"And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shi-nar; and they dwelt there"—Dark stated that this passage proved the westward movement of human life and civilization. For the city of Babel—or Babylon—was situated in Mesopotamia, far east of the land of the Hebrews […] (Auster, *City of Glass* 47)

It is noteworthy that since the time of the very first European settlers in the New World, America has been represented as a promised land; a land of both openness and opportunity, a new Eden where man might rediscover the paradise he once lost or claim the biblical land he had once been promised. In this promised land, man would rediscover the edenic harmony that once existed between himself, his surroundings, and his community; back in paradise, he would once again speak a natural language which first given him by God. It can be suggested that this reference to "Paradise Lost" is resembling Jameson's *pastiche* as *City of Glass* (1985) sets in late-twentieth-century America and borrows that rhetoric which is far from obsolete to depict the dangers of such an edenic promise. Moreover, one language and one space cannot hold the variety of race, sexualities and culture in the world. The Tower of Babel is a symbol of both unity and disunity of language at the same time as God has punished the builders by destroying it. Peter Stillman speculates this image as a symbol of freedom and unity. But this is exactly an influential image of repression and uniformity. This image is more like a prison than a paradise: "Once completed, the Tower would be large enough to hold every inhabitant of the New World. There would be room for each person, and once he entered that room, he would forget everything he knew. After forty days and forty nights, he would emerge a new man, speaking God's language, prepared to inhabit the second, everlasting paradise" (49). In fact Auster in the story displays how a utopian vision of land and language can easily dissolve into a dystopian nightmare. During this demonstration, of course, Auster's writing risks repeating that fusion of land and language his narrative would wish to describe.

As it is mentioned above, Stillman, had hidden away his son to a locked room and served him from language for many years. This had a permanent effect on him. He seems to be trapped somewhere between the *real* and the *imaginary* (two concepts of Jacque Lacan (1901-1981)). Indeed, the longing to achieve the *real* can be seen in Peter Stillman, Senior's absurd search for the perfect language. The perfect language according to him is the language which corresponds to the world and the language which is not the subject of the arbitrary link between (Lacan's) *signifier* and *signified*:

> A language that will at last say what we have to say. For our words no longer correspond to the world. When things were whole, we felt confident that our words could express them. But little by little these things have broken apart, shattered, collapsed into chaos. And yet our words have remained the same. They have not adapted themselves to the new reality […] (*City of Glass* 77)

His perfect language is one in which there is an absolute fit between *signifier* and *signified*, but looking for such a language raises dilemmas about creative writing in the postmodern era. This desire to restore the gap between *signifier* and *signified* is part of previously mentioned Stillman's larger mission to restore unity to American society. He believes that the world is fragmenting and it is his duty to put it back together. The gathering junk from the street and renaming them to heal the rift between *signifier* and *signified* is a kind of *pastiche* to structuralist idea according which language makes the world as the language in which there is no difference between its *signifier*, *signified* and referent is not a desirable language since the divisions between *signifier* and *signified*, the slippages and ambiguities of language are those which give language life and create inventive texts. Hence, Stillman's seeking for such a language is absolutely

inconsistent, even within his own intellectual terms. In his book he confesses that life could only start to flourish after the fall, that good could only exist in the face of evil, and that the new world, even in its early beginnings, was never a harmonious place.

Likewise, according to Scott A. Dimovitz's article, *The New York Trilogy* (2015) is also a *pastiche* to Beckettian narrative and suggests that the narrative of the novel does not have any purposes as same as the Beckettian narrative which has no goal but only defeat. In this regard he says: "Written into a solipsistic container, spewing words to the city or writing texts that have no point but their own subversion, *The New York Trilogy* (2015) suggests that the Beckettian narrative ultimately serves no purpose but its own defeat. Perhaps it is no surprise that no other Auster novel after *The New York Trilogy* (2015) carries the same mysteriously problematic and extensively antimimetic structure" (629). Indeed, in Dimovitz's view point using and rejecting the Beckettian style makes Auster's fiction more realistic. He elaborates it in this way:

> By enacting and rejecting the Beckettian paternal influence, the fiction was able to move to the far more realistic, if still somewhat symbolic prose that composes the rest of Auster's corpus. Auster's antipostmodern project almost inadvertently writes back against the critical discourses written by his contemporaries, and he manages to negate postmodernism by way of a critique of its foundational moments. Of course, Beckett takes priority, and his works served as the inspirational basis for the postmodern theorists who would come after him, turning art into theory. Though he misread Lacan, claims he never read a word of Derrida, and was only apparently familiar with structuralist-era Barthes, Auster nevertheless effects a critique of those theorists by his rejection of their inspirations. (629)

Although there are no overt references to Beckett in *The New York Trilogy* (2015), its structural and thematic similarities with Beckett's *Trilogy* are taken for granted. In fact, he rewrites Beckett's *Trilogy* of novels in his *New York Trilogy* (2015). Considering this, it can be claimed that Auster in *The New York Trilogy* (2015) imitates Beckets' style, especially narration, but as this kind of narration has no goal itself, this imitation for Auster will be aimless either. Jameson calls this kind of aimless imitation as *pastiche*.

### C. *A General Overview of Ghosts*

*Ghost* is the second installment of *The New York Trilogy* (2015)*,* a novel of *intertextuality*, which was first published in 1986. It begins on the date of Paul Auster's own birth. Indeed, it functions as a kind of bare-bones framework for the other two stories, featuring two-dimensional protagonists called Blue, Black, and Brown. This story begins with a character named 'White' hiring the main character 'Blue' to spy on someone named 'Black'. Blue is a private detective doing this job for many years and now he is supposed to spy on Black for an undetermined period of time in exchange for a vast amount of money and an apartment to live in supervising Black's apartment. Blue makes reports of his daily activities and send them to White; but, gradually begins to be frustrated and board with this case until then he finally decides to confront him. So, sees Black in his apartment where he sits with a gun pointing at Blue. It becomes clear that Black in fact is White, who has hired Blue to watch himself. After a verbal struggle, Blue grabs White and beats him unconscious. Blue then grabs all the papers of Black and begins to read his story. It is not revealed to the reader what the story was about. Blue then leaves the apartment where the reader is left to make up his mind where Blue went next.

### D. *Jamesonian Pastich in Ghosts*

As it is mentioned above, form of *Ghosts* (1986), like that of *City of Glass* (1985), demonstrates an imitation of the detective's genre and as it does not have the real specifications of detective genre, it is considered a *pastiche* to this genre. However, it is noteworthy to mention that in this story, the detective is a real one as opposed to Quinn, who is merely a writer of detective stories pretending to be a detective. In this story, it can be said that the author imitates this genre as a metaphor for the individual's search for self. The main character's search for identity outside the framework of the text and the reader's search for meaning in the text, are both aiming to find the identity.

In *The Cultural Turn* (1998), Jameson points out:

> Supposing that modern art and modernism – far from being a kind of specialized aesthetic curiosity – actually anticipated social developments along these lines; supposing that in the decades since the emergence of the great modern styles society had itself begun to fragment in this way, each group coming to speak a curious private language of its own, each profession developing its private code or idiolect, and finally each individual coming to be a kind of linguistic island, separated from everyone else? But then in that case, the very possibility of any linguistic norm in terms of which one could ridicule private languages and idiosyncratic styles would vanish, and we would have nothing but stylistic diversity and heterogeneity. (5)

According to him, *pastiche* involves the imitation or the mimicry of other styles and particularly of the mannerisms and stylistic twitches of other styles. In fact, when people no longer believe in the presence of normal language, of ordinary speech and of the linguistic norm, *pastiche* appears and *parody* becomes incredible. The result of *pastiche*, henceforth is a shift away from time and towards space as the dominant mode of structuring cultural experience:

> That is the moment at which pastiche appears and parody has become impossible. Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without

laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared with which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humour: pastiche is to parody what that curious thing, the modern practice of a kind of blank irony, […] (5)

Unlike Jameson, Linda Hutcheon (1947) declares in an article under the title of "The Politics of Postmodernism: Parody and History": "The paradox of postmodernist parody is that it is not essentially depthless, trivial kitsch, as Eagleton and Jameson both believe, but rather that it can and does lead to a vision of interconnectedness" (182). In this regard Ian Buchanan (1969) asserts in *Fredric Jameson: Live Theory* (2006): (…pastiche is defined as a symptom of a deeper historical shift-[…], which several critics (particularly Linda Hutcheon) have mistaken it to be, then it is only because it is a negative judgement on the times inasmuch as they seem to demand this kind of writing" (97).

In the meantime, as same as *City of Glass* (1985), this story is also a *pastiche* to Beckett's (1906-1989) style and sentiment. It can be concluded that Blue's successful retrieval of his reports results in corresponding ambiguity and an devastating lack of cognitive certainty, *depthlessness* and *historicity*: "There they are, one after the other, the weekly accounts, all spelled out in black and white, meaning nothing, saying nothing, as far from the truth of the case as silence would have been" (*Ghosts* 191).

Considering above Jameson's explanation on *pastiche*, it can be suggested that Auster's *Ghost* (1986) is even a *pastiche* of his first story, *City of Glass* (1985). *Ghost* (1986) is a mimicry of the first story, two protagonists who are appointed to follow two aimless men, four characters in search of their lost identities and by the end two protagonists who do not attain anything just absurdity. At last in two stories the reader is left confused with two vanished protagonists. It can be concluded that the second story is a *pastiche* to the first one without any satiric impulse, just speaking in the dead language of *City of Glass* (1985).

In addition, it can be suggested that Blue who initially struggles to understand the subject matter of nineteenth-century Henry David Thoreau's (1817-1862) *Walden* (1854)*, is going to imitate his philosophy in writing of his reports. But, the reader is aware that he is not a man of much reading: "Blue has never read much of anything except newspapers and magazines, and an occasional adventure novel when he was a boy" (165). So, this imitation of writing does not make sense. But, while clarity eventually emerges to some extent, Blue is unable to apply the same philosophy to the contents of his own notebook: ". . . his words, instead of drawing out the facts and making them sit palpably in the world, have induced them to disappear" (Auster, *Ghosts* 149). It is an imitation or wearing that stylistic mask with no outcome at the end. It can be said that his notebook is a *pastiche* to Henry David Thoreau's (1817-1862) *Walden* (1854); or to state it better, Blue is not in a position to comprehend the subject matter of *Walden* (1854) and to imitate his style of writing. It can thus be claimed that Blue merely echoes the viewpoint expressed by nineteenth-century Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862).

What he does not know is that were he to find the patience to read the book in the spirit in which it asks to be read, his entire life would begin to change, and little by little he would come to a full understanding of his situation—that is to say, of Black, of White, of the case, of everything that concerns him. But lost chances are as much a part of life as chances taken, and a story cannot dwell on what might have been. (Auster, Ghosts 165)

### E. *A General Overview of The Locked Room*

*The Locked Room* (1986) is the final story in Auster's *New York Trilogy* (2015) is widely a postmodern and postexistentialist novel. It works best after reading the first two stories. As it is mentioned in an article by Stephen Schiff entitled "Inward Gaze of a Private Eye" (1987): "*The Locked Room* is a brilliant leap forward, a beguiling entertainment that accomplishes nearly everything the first two books set out to do and provides a diverting main character as well". In this story, a nameless narrator, who might be identified with Auster himself, is a biographer not a detective; a chaser of facts, details and clues. The man he is looking for, is his recently vanished friend, Fanshawe, a golden boy who left his wife with a mass of manuscripts to give them to anonymous narrator of the story. Fanshawe reminds the golden Fanshawe of Hawthorne's first novel. This Fanshawe's early life has been borrowed wholesale from Auster's own, so the narrator and the object of his pursuit both represent the author.

Indeed, "These three stories are finally the same story, but each one represents a different stage in my awareness of what it is about" (Auster, *The Locked Room* 294). As it is stated in Aliki Varvogli's *The World That Is The Book: Paul Auster's fiction* (2001)*, the story begins with Fanshawe's disappearance and ends when the narrator meets him but still he remains unseen, communicating through the door of a locked room. It can be said that the theme of this story is the missing writer or to clarify it better the role of the author. Unlike the first two stories in which the search for another person unavoidably "turns into a quest for one's own identity and its expression in writing" (54).

### F. *Jamesonian Pastiche in The Locked Room*

In literary studies, there are many links between different literatures through space and time. Considering *parody*, the focus would be on how the authors are influenced by the predecessors and how tradition is reflected in their work. To borrow a quote from Jameson: "To be sure, parody found a fertile area in the idiosyncracies of the moderns and their "inimitable" styles" (*Postmodernism*, 16). By the use of *parody,* the reader's experience of the past authors will be changed through providing their work with new meanings, but *parody* expands the readers' perception of the text. To borrow another quote from Jameson's *Postmodernism*: "All these strike one as somehow characteristic, insofar as they

ostentatiously deviate from a norm which then reasserts itself, in a not necessarily unfriendly way, by a systematic mimicry of their willful eccentricities" (16).

To have a look at the form of this story, it seems noteworthy to state that although in this story there is not a detective, but gradually the narrator converted to one while he investigates on Fanshawe's writings, photos, memories and when he finally finds him behind the locked room: "… for several weeks I sat in my room making lists, correlating people with places, places with times, times with people, drawing maps and calendars, looking up addresses, writing letters. I was hunting for leads, and anything that held even the slightest promise I tried to pursue" (271). A few pages further, the narrator really considers himself a detective and asserts: "I was a detective, after all, and my job was to hunt for clues. Faced with a million bits of random information, led down a million paths of false inquiry, I had to find the one path that would take me where I wanted to go" (283).

However, this story and the whole novel, not only do not conform to the conventions of the detective genre, but also questions some of the convictions by which the genre is characterized. There are many articles in which this story and the whole novel is considered metaphysical detective story among which an article by Marika Buršíková under the title of *Elements of the Metaphysical Detective Story Genre in the Work of Melville, Hawthorne and Poe* (2013) can be named. According to this article, metaphysical detective story is a genre typical for postmodern literature and different from the classical detective story in which a mystery and at the same time a key to its solution which is intermingled in the text in the form of clues should be presented.

To analyze the classical detective story in a different way, Peter Hühn (1939) in "The detective as reader: Narrativity and reading concepts in detective fiction" by the help of Saussure's terminology defines detection as: "selecting and grouping signifiers and assigning various signifieds to them" (Hühn 455). That is to say each signifier has an equivalent signified:

> At first, the crime is viewed as an uninterpretable sign. It poses a threat to the established order, since its traditional agents (the police) are unable to come to terms with it. This is why the detective has to be called in. The second plot, the story of investigation, is the detective's re-enactment of the story of the crime. It is the detective's interpretation which not only includes the detective's reading of the mystery but also the way he was able to read it, the description of the process that led him to the solution. In this final phase, all the signifiers are matched up with their signifieds; there is nothing redundant, nothing left to speculation. (Buršíková, 6-7)

As a matter of fact, Peter Hühn (1939) points out that what the reader can find in postmodern era is a metafictional detective story rather than a classical detective one. Indeed, as far as a literary genre complies with certain rules, it can operate well. Therefore, when a story complies with the conventions of a classical detective story, which are expected to be effective, it can be said that it would be a *parody* of this genre. But even a minor change can swerves the reader's attention away from the plot to the conventions themselves. Therefore, metaphysical detective in *postmodernism* no longer conform to the conventions of the classical ones in previous eras, and question some of the certainties by which the genre is characterized.

Indeed, when the classical detective moves toward postmodern world which according to Jameson "the enormity of a situation in which we seem increasingly incapable of fashioning representations of our own current experience" (21), it will face failure as it still applies those previous methods of detection, but it will be frustrated by different explanations of the detective in the story which seem to coexist or cancel each other out. The metaphysical detective story is thus a postmodern genre in all its aspects. David Harvey (1935) in his book under the title of *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1990) characterize this type of fiction: "fragmentation, indeterminacy, and intense distrust of all universal or totalizing'discourses (…) [which] are the hallmark of postmodernist thought" (Harvey 9). Jameson in *Cultural Turn* (1998) asserts that:

> … Parody capitalizes on the uniqueness of these styles and seizes on their idiosyncrasies and eccentricities to produce an imitation which mocks the original. I won't say that the satiric impulse is conscious in all forms of parody: in any case, a good or great parodist has to have some secret sympathy for the original, just as a great mimic has to have the capacity to put himself/herself) in the place of the person imitated. Still, the general effect of parody is - whether in sympathy or with malice - to cast ridicule on the private nature of these stylistic mannerisms and their excessiveness and eccentricity with respect to the way people normally speak or write. So there remains somewhere behind all parody the feeling that there is a linguistic norm in contrast to which the styles of the great modernists can be mocked. (4)

The metaphysical detective genre thus cannot be a *parody* to the classical detective story as "since the emergence of the great modern styles society had itself begun to fragment in this way, each group coming to speak a curious private language of its own, each profession developing its private code or idiolect, and finally each individual coming to be a kind of linguistic island, separated from everyone else" (Jameson, *Cultural Turn* 5). In the postmodern world the metaphysical detective is a *pastiche* to its classical form. In fact, this new genre is the imitation of a classical detective style, the wearing of a its mask and speech in its dead language, a *pastiche*, which is to parody what that curious thing, the modern practice of a kind of blank irony" (Jameson, *Cultural Turn* 5).

To sum up, in *The Locked Room* (1986), the narrator is going toward a gradual inability to solve the ontological mystery. As a matter of fact, *The Locked Room* (1986) does not provide any clear answers as to who is to be trusted. Instead of finding Fanshawe, the narrator loses himself and his identity at the end of the story, having no result. According to Jameson in *Cultural Turn* (1989):

> …Pastiche: in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum. But this means that contemporary or postmodernist art is going to be about art itself in a new kind of way; even more, it means that one of its essential messages will involve the necessary failure of art and the aesthetic, the failure of the new, the imprisonment in the past. (7)

He also adds that "The allusive and elusive plagiarism of older plots is, of course, also a feature of pastiche" (9). *The Locked Room* (1986) is not a nostalgic story, since it takes place in a contemporary setting, in New York. On the other hand, mostly Fanshawe and then the narrator are the ambiguous characters. It is noteworthy to remind that *history* and *pastiche* are two interwoven concepts as Jameson says: "Yet, paradoxically, the new return to an older problematic of the modern and of modernity is not really to be grasped as an attack on that of postmodernity: it is itself postmodern, and this is the deeper significance of all the multiple returns and revivals […]"If all that is now past, why not go back to the 'values' and certainties once in place?" (*Cultural Turn*, 98). Therefore, in *The Locked Room* (1986) and in the whole novel, there is references to some styles in the past and even older texts. These references are indeed repetitions and imitations.

### IV. Conclusion

According to this research Fredric Jameson's (1934) concepts *of pastiche* can be applicable to Auster's *The New York Trilogy* (2015). It can be concluded that an imitation of the detective genre is used by Auster in writing of the whole novel *The New York Trilogy* (2015). Auster's purpose is to create a metafictional novel by his presence in the first story which is one feature of postmodern world. As a matter of fact, the metafictionality of the novel can be related to Fredric Jameson's concept of *pastiche.* Therefore, presence of Auster as the real author in the first story can be considered a *pastiche*.

Moreover, Auster imitated the form of classical detective story but the novel does not comply with its features. It is thus just a *pastiche*, according to Jameson "new spatial logic of the simulacrum", to this genre which has been created a metafictional detective novel that according to many critics it cannot be considered a genre. It is just an aimless imitation, wearing its mask aimlessly. In fact, the three stories construct and deconstruct the elements of detective stories. Beside the form of the novel there are many reference to other novels and stories and different intertexualities in this novel which seem useless such as in *City of Glass* (1985) in which there are references to Samuel Beckett's (1906-1989) concept of the impossibility of language, which is also a *pastiche* to Samuel Beckett's (1906-1989) style and sentiment or reference to John Milton's (1607-1684) "Paradise Lost" (1667), Edgar Allen Poe's (1809-1849) "William Wilson" (1839). They do not serve any purpose, so they can be regarded and studied in the light of Jameson's concept of *pastiche*. In the meantime, it can be suggested that these three stories are *pastiche* to each other as they imitate themselves and they are really one story. The main characters of three stories are somehow like each other. They are depthless charters, having no past, nor future who lack historicity. In this respect they are similar to each other. So, it can be concluded that beside the forms of these stories are *pastiche* to classical detective stories and they are *pastiche* to some other novels which are referred to in the content, they are *pastiche* to one another and perhaps *pastiche* to Auster's other novels as well.

It is noteworthy to mention that through applying Jameson's concept of *pastiche* on this novel, the reader can be helped have a better understanding of Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy* (2015) and also Fredric Jameson's theories of *postmodernism*. In the meantime, other postmodern works of Auster such as *The Music of Chance* (1990) and *In the Country of Last Things* (1987) can be studied through the Jamesonian theories. To end up this research, it worth mentioning that contrary to Linda Hutcheon who believes that *The New York Trilogy* (2015) is a postmodern *parody* of the detective novel genre, this research suggests that this novel is a *pastiche* of this genre because, it is only an aimless, non-political imitation of a peculiar style. As Jameson points out, it is in fact wearing the linguistic mask of detective genre and speak in its dead language. It does not have any ulterior motives of *parody* amputated of the satiric impulse or devoid of laughter.

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