博　士　論　文

題目　In the Country of the Smallest Things: Objects Embracing Fictionality in Paul Auster's Works

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日本語要旨

小さき物たちの国で
――Paul Auster 作品における虚構性を包含する物

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序章

Paul Auster の作品を見渡した時、そこに常にあるのは物である。そしてそれは、*Report from the Interior* で書いている彼の最初の記憶と結びついている。Auster が覚えている最初の記憶は物についてである。日常の中に溢れる物、つまらない小さき物たちは、彼にとって、名前を持ち、声を持ち、歩くことができるものたちであった。こういった最初の記憶は Auster の創作活動に影響を与え、彼は多くの作品内で物に様々な任を担わせている。*Sunset Park* の Miles Heller の例と同じように、Auster は物たちの声を聴き取ろうとしている。本論は Auster 作品におけるオブジェクトの描写を詳らかにし、それぞれが作品において、虚構性を包含する上で機能していることを分析する。

第１章　石の沈黙を聴く

数多くの小説を産み出している Auster のキャリアは、詩人として始まった。小説と異なり、難解とされる詩の中で多用するモチーフの一つに石がある。Auster の詩作品において、石は沈黙、言語による表象不可能性を意味している。しかし、この解釈は小説や映画で使われている石にはあてはまらない。第１章では詩作品、*Lulu on the Bridge*、そして *Moon Palace* を中心に Auster 作品における石の描写を拾っていく。

Lulu on the Bridge の石は主人公 Izzy と、その恋人 Celia に、詩作品で描かれる石とは異なった影響を与える。その石は

青白く光り、浮遊し、まったくの他人であった二人に絆を感じさせる。お互いを自分の想像力の産物であると疑うほどに Izzy と Celia は激しく恋に落ちる。*Lulu on the Bridge* における石と、詩の石との違いを考えるにあたり、*Moon Palace* の光り、空に浮かぶ石である月を議論に加えた。*Moon Palace* における石である月は、月そのものではなくネオンサインや、絵画で表象されているが、それらが発する光は、実のところ Nathaniel Hawthorne が “The Custom-House”で説明した芸術家に想像力を与える光と同質のものである。

このことを考慮すると、*Lulu on the Bridge* での Izzy と Celia の不可解なほど急速に発展した関係は、実は彼らが石の発光を見ることで、想像力が強まり、理想の恋人としての互いを想像したのだと考えられる。詩では沈黙の象徴だった石は、*Moon Palace*、そして *Lulu on the Bridge* においては芸術家の創造を促す、ミューズとなったのだ。

第 2 章　「静物」の復活

第 2 章は *Man in the Dark* における「静物」を意味する表現 “une nature morte”を議論の出発点とし、Auster 作品全体における身体の表象を分析したものである。「静物」は基本的に人間を指さないにもかかわらず、*Man in the Dark* では人間の身体を指し示すのに使われている。そのことから、主に *The Invention of Solitude*、*Sunset Park*、*The Brooklyn Follies*、*Travels in the Scriptorium*、*Leviathan* を扱い、死の描写を概観した。Auster は作品内でキャラクターの死を描く際、残酷な死の瞬間や、死体を克明に記すことはあまりない。しかし、*Man in the Dark* では Titus の死の様子を、そしてその死体を詳細に書き、その死体を一つの「静物」と表現する。

The Invention of Solitude の父の死への言及が明らかにしたのは、死によって生者に残されるものは二つ、死者のイメージ

と、死体の二つであることだ。死体は生前の死者と結びついたもの、その人の一部ではなく、全く未知のものとしてそこに発見されるのである。生前の記憶と共にある死者のイメージと、その死体とは別の物として捉えているために、追悼の意が感じられる描写と、一方で Titus のように克明な死の描写も出てくるのである。

死者の記憶と共にあるその人のイメージと、物としての死体が別物であることを確認したうえで、“une nature morte”の表現を検討した。この語が絵画の中でのジャンル、静物画を指すことを考えると、Titus の死は Katya が映画においてしたのと同様に、物を切り口として読み解くことを可能にするためだと考えられる。Katya は映画の中に登場する物から人間の感情を読み解く。Katya によって “une nature morte”として、見られたとき、Titus の死体はその視線によって射貫かれるのではなく、その生を呼び起こすことができる物になるのである。

第 3 章　蒐集のアレゴリー

第 3 章では *The Music of Chance*、*In the Country of Last Things*、*Oracle Night* を取り上げ、物の蒐集行為に焦点をあてた。*The Music of Chance* で Nashe と Pozzi は Flower と Stone とのポーカーで惨敗し、負債を抱える。Pozzi の脱落により、Nashe は最終的に一人で石を積む日々を送る。その中で、石が日記としての役割を持ち始め、また、当初は無意味に思われていた Flower のコレクションが、Nashe にとって意味を持ち始める。

In the Country of Last Things で、Anna は物たちが次第になくなっていくディストピア世界に身を置き、その中でごみ同然のがらくたを拾い生活をしている。Anna が拾う物たちは、物としての元来の機能をほぼ果たしていない物である。また、Woburn House のコレクションも Anna の蒐集物と同じく、こ

の世界においては意味のない品物であったが、Boris がそれぞれに物語を付与していく。*Oracle Night* でも同様の展開が見られる。*Oracle Night* で蒐集されるのは、物語であるが、これらの物語は文字の物質性を想起させる描かれ方をしている。物理性を強調された、そしてそれぞれには何のつながりもない物語を、Orr は青いノートの中に書き集めていくのである。Orr もまた、脈絡を見出せなかったそれぞれの物語に、つながりを見出すこととなる。

3 作において、登場人物たちがそれぞれに意味を為さなかった物の間に脈絡を見出したときに、暴力事件、流産や死といった破局へと物語は展開していく。そのことを Walter Benjamin のアレゴリー論と照らし合わせたとき、Auster の描く新たなアレゴリーを読み取ることが出来る。

第 4 章　創作する部屋

Auster 作品は物理的空間と関係が深い。第 4 章では、部屋の描写を精査し、部屋と執筆家たちとの関係を考察する。Auster の小説内に描かれる部屋は、その部屋の持ち主の特性を表すべく書かれることが多い。*The Book of Illusions* 、*The Locked Room*、*Leviathan*、*Travels in the Scriptorium* には、小説家や研究者といった物を書く登場人物が出てくる。そして、彼らの部屋は、彼らの執筆活動と大いに関係しているのである。

The Book of Illusions の主人公、ドイツ語で部屋を意味する名をもつ Zimmer はサイレント映画の研究書を執筆している。執筆する部屋は、彼を世界から切り離す。*The Locked Room* の語り手は失踪した友人 Fanshawe の伝記を書こうとしている。Fanshawe の人生を生きる語り手は、彼の生家を訪れた際、そこにある Fanshawe の存在に圧倒される。ある男の爆破事故から始まる *Leviathan* において、語り手の Aaron はその男 Sachs の半生を語る。Aaron と Sachs は友人であり、ともに作家であ

る。そして、Aaron は Sachs について書く時に、まさに Sachs が執筆を行った部屋を使う。

これらの作品を見渡した時、彼らに共通しているのは、その部屋が世間から隔離されているように感じ、そしてその部屋を監獄に例えていることである。部屋を描写する立場であった書き手たちはむしろその部屋に閉じ込められ、書くことを強要されているのである。このことは *Travels in the Scriptorium* を見ると明らかで、部屋の方が、書き手たちに書かせている物と言える。

第 5 章　主体的なオブジェクト

Timbuktu において、物語の展開に絡む物というのは見当たらない。なぜなら、その小さき物は主人公として据えられているからである。第 5 章では、*Timbuktu* に登場する人間の支配の客体である犬を取り上げる。*Timbuktu* は、主人 Willy と犬の Mr. Bones の旅路を描いた中編である。全知の語りで語られ、視点人物に犬の Mr. Bones が採用されている。

Mr. Bones が考えることができる犬であることを、語りの視点を精査することで明らかにする。また、*Timbuktu* における人間の描写は、人間の獣性を前景化する。*Timbuktu* は、犬を考えることのできる存在として描き、一方で人間の獣性を前景化することで、人間社会における犬と人の二項対立的な関係を攪乱している。

物語の結末を見ると、そのことは明らかとなる。Mr. Bones は Jones 家という新たな家を見つけ、ペットとしての地位を獲得したにもかかわらず、結果的に脱走をする。Willy の Jones 家に戻るようにという助言も無視し、Mr. Bones は車の行き交うハイウェイに走っていくのである。そしてそこでは言語能力を手に入れられるとされる、死後の世界ティンブクトゥを目指すのである。このことは、人間にとっての客体としての地位を

脱却し、Mr. Bones が主体性を持ったオブジェクトとなり得ることを示唆している。

終章

5 章を通し見てきた Auster 作品における物についての議論の、更なる発展可能性を探った。*Timbuktu* での小さきものが物ではなく犬として設定されていることは、Donna Haraway がその論考において、サイボーグから伴侶種たる犬へと議論を接続していることを想起させる。あるいは、*Timbuktu* で人の獣性について描く際、登場人物のユダヤ性が言及されていることに鑑みれば、Auster 作品における物から、作家自身のルーツを読み込むこともできるかもしれない。本論文において明確になったことは、Auster が作品内で物を書くとき、彼が目指すのはその物自体を正しく描写することではない。むしろ、その物を使って言葉を紡ぎ、その言葉たちが逃れることのできない虚構性を進んで受け入れるということである。

Synopsis

In the Country of the Smallest Things: Objects Embracing Fictionality in Paul Auster's Works

Mami Uemura

If we survey the oeuvre of Paul Auster, we cannot help finding objects. This is because objects are connected to Auster's earliest memories, as he writes in *Report from the Interior*. The things that exist in his daily life—the trivial and little things—for him have names, voices, and can walk. These earliest memories influence Auster's works, and he gives objects various roles. Auster attempts to listen to the voices of the smallest things, just like Miles Heller in *Sunset Park*. This thesis elaborates on the depiction of objects and analyzes their function in Auster's works.

Chapter 1 focuses on the transfiguration of stones in Auster's career. In his poetry, Auster often uses stones to represent silence—or the inability of language. However, this does not apply to the stones described in Auster's novels and movies, especially *Moon Palace* and *Lulu on the Bridge*. The stone in *Lulu on the Bridge* differs from the stones depicted in Auster's poetry, as it magically affects the protagonist, Izzy, and his girlfriend, Celia. They fall in love so deeply that they suspect each other to be a creation of their own imaginations. To examine the difference between the stone in *Lulu on the Bridge* and the stones in Auster's poetry, this discussion proceeds to *Moon Palace*, in which an enormous stone glows and floats in the sky. The moon in *Moon Palace*

is represented not by the moon itself but by a neon sign and a painting. Their glow is the same kind of light that Nathaniel Hawthorne describes in “The Custom-House” as giving artists imagination. Given this, the ill-matched couple’s rapidly deepening relationship is a result of seeing the light of the stone, whose function is to give them imagination so that they create each other as their ideal lover. The stones that represent silence in Auster’s poetry become a muse that gives imagination.

Chapter 2 pays attention to the representation of bodies. Starting with an examination of the expression “une nature morte,” which is used for Titus’s corpse in *Man in the Dark,* we survey Auster’s description of bodies, especially in *The Invention of Solitude, Sunset Park, The Brooklyn Follies, Travels in the Scriptorium,* and *Leviathan*. When Auster writes the death of a character, he rarely depicts the cruelty of death or the appalling bodies. In *Man in the Dark*, however, he describes Titus’s death in detail and expresses the corpse as an object. *The Invention of Solitude* shows that Auster finds two things when people die. One is the image of the dead, and the second is the body. The dead body does not exist as a part of the dead; instead, it is found as an unknown object. This difference leads to two types of descriptions of characters’ deaths. Expressing Titus’s body as an object makes it possible for Katya to read human emotions from the video of Titus’s execution.

Chapter 3 takes up *The Music of Chance*, *In the Country of Last Things,* and *Oracle Night* to examine the act of collecting objects. In *The Music of Chance*, Nashe spends his days piling stones. The stones begin to take on the role of

a diary, and Flower's collection, which initially seemed meaningless, begins to take on meaning. In *In the Country of Last Things*, Anna lives in a dystopian world where things are disappearing and survives by picking up objects. The objects Anna picks up are almost garbage, because they do not function as they are meant to. As well as Anna's objects, the Woburn House collection is meaningless, as it consists of luxurious things that are not useful in the country, yet Boris gives each of them a meaning. We see a similar development in *Oracle Night*, where stories whose materiality is emphasized are collected. Orr, who collects these stories that seem to have no connection to each other, comes to find a connection between each of them. When we gaze at the catastrophic developments in these three novels, we find the allegorical function as explained by Walter Benjamin.

Our concern in Chapter 4 is rooms. By examining descriptions of rooms and analyzing the relationship between rooms and writers, Auster shows us that rooms, not writers, are creative. In *The Book of Illusions, The Locked Room, Leviathan,* and *Travels in the Scriptorium,* the protagonists are writers. The point they have in common is that they feel isolated from the world when they are in their room and feel that being in their room is like being in prison. The writers, who are in a position to describe their room, are, in fact, trapped in their room and forced to write. This is obvious when we see *Travels in the Scriptorium,* where the characters whom Mr. Blank has written force him to proceed with the story.

Even if we closely scrutinize the pages of *Timbuktu*, we cannot find objects that work effectively in the story's

development. This is because the smallest thing in *Timbuktu* is the protagonist's dog, Mr. Bones. Chapter 5 focuses on the objectivity of a dog in human society. Examining the point of view of the narrative shows us that Mr. Bones is a dog who can think. *Timbuktu* disturbs the dualistic relationship between dogs and humans by depicting dogs as beings capable of thinking, while foregrounding the bestial nature of humans.

In the concluding chapter, I argue for the promising development of object theory in Auster's works. Given that the smallest things vary from material objects to dogs, we could apply Donna Haraway's development of her cyborg theory to animal theory. It would also be fruitful to search the objects in Auster's works for Jewishness. In the end, this thesis clarifies how Auster is not trying to capture objects in the world; instead, he simply enjoys their fictionality.

Contents

Introduction:
In the Beginning, There Was an Object

Paul Auster has many faces. He is a poet, critic, translator, detective novelist, postmodern novelist, and film director. In these many roles, he has created many works, and in all of them, the smallest things are at the end of his gaze. When discussing his childhood memories, especially his inner memories, in *Report from the Interior* (2012), Auster indicates that his earliest thoughts were about things.

> In the beginning, everything was alive. The smallest objects were endowed with beating hearts, and even the clouds had names. Scissors could walk, telephones and teapots were first cousins, eyes and eyeglasses were brothers. (*Groundwork* 561)

Auster's relationship with objects, which has existed for as long as he can remember, has greatly influenced his writing. When we turn pages of *Sunset Park* (2010), for example, the complicity between the writer and the object becomes apparent. The protagonist, Miles Heller, who works as a cleaner of abandoned buildings, takes pictures of the things left behind by families forced to flee their homes due to bankruptcy or default:

> Then, always, there are the objects, the forgotten possessions, *the abandoned things* . . . He had no idea why he feels compelled to take these pictures. He understands that it is an empty pursuit, of no possible

> benefit to anyone, and yet each time he walks into a house, he senses that the things are calling out to him, speaking to him in the voice of the people who are no longer there, asking him to be looked at one last time before they are carted away. (5, italics original)

This thesis is motivated by a question; what Auster writes when he hears the voices of such small things.

Each chapter, except chapter 5, covers three or more works that address common issues. Chapter 1 discusses the representation of stones in Auster's works. He uses stones frequently in his poetry to express the impossibility of description. Later in his career, in his second movie, *Lulu on the Bridge* (1998), Auster presents a glowing and floating stone. Reviewing *Moon Palace* (1989) helps to analyze this drastic change in his use of stones. The stones presented in his earlier works evolve into a glowing stone in the sky, which represents the imagination, not the impossibility of words.

In chapter 2, I examine Auster's representation of the body as a physical object, starting from an expression in *Man in the Dark* (2008) and expanding my analysis to five other works. When Auster writes about death, he usually depicts grief and sadness but does not describe its naked cruelty. In *Man in the Dark*, however, Titus's corpse is described as "une nature morte," an unreserved reference to the fact that the living has become an object. Taking this as a starting point, I follow Auster's representation of the body through five works: *The Invention of Solitude* (1982), *Sunset Park* (2010), *The Brooklyn Follies* (2005), *Travels in the Scriptorium*

(2006), and *Leviathan* (1992).

Chapter 3 focuses on the practice of collecting objects in *In the Country of Last Things* (1987), *The Music of Chance* (1990), and *Oracle Night* (2004). The stories in these three novels develop to catastrophic ends, all of which relate to the collecting habits of their characters. These characters collect objects that hold no meaning to them, but as the stories develop, the objects assume meanings and connections.

In chapter 4, I examine *Book of Illusions* (2002), *The Locked Room* (1986), *Leviathan* (1992), and *Travels in the Scriptorium*, considering the room as a material object that embraces human beings. When reviewing Auster's oeuvre, readers realize that rooms represent the characters' humanity. What we need to analyze here is the writers' rooms where they create their works. Critics, graduate students, and novelists write a wide variety of texts, but in this chapter, I consider them simply as writers and examine how rooms affect them.

Chapter 5 is an exception, as it covers only one novel: *Timbuktu* (1999). This is because the material objects in *Timbuktu* do not seem explicitly related to the story. However, that is plausible because the smallest thing in *Timbuktu* is Mr. Bones, the protagonist's dog. In this chapter, I thus consider the dog among the smallest things and discuss the objectivity of Mr. Bones.

Taken together, these chapters comprehensively examine the small objects that Auster uses in poetry, movies, and novels. Examining how these objects are effectively intertwined with the stories demonstrates how Auster's works are driven by the smallest things.

Chapter 1
To Listen to the Silence of the Stones: Representation of Stones

Before Paul Auster produced many novels, which received favorable reputations, he wrote poetry. Critics agree that Auster's poetry is difficult to understand. As the author himself states, especially with regard to his early poems, his poems "resembled clenched fists; they were short and dense and obscure, as compact and hermetic as Delphic oracles" (*Conversations* 23). Auster often uses stones as a symbol of silence, like clenched teeth. Auster's birthplace in New Jersey was located near a quarry. Using this as a springboard, the stone in poetry has been discussed in terms of his Jewishness, along with the equally frequent motif of the wall.[1]

In contrast, the stones after the poetry, which has been dealt with through his career in novels and films, are not properly discussed in criticism. For example, in *Leviathan*, published in 1992, the narrator Peter Aaron recounts the memory of his best friend Benjamin Sachs. Sachs's life changes when he falls down the fire escape of an apartment building on July 4th, which becomes a turning point in his life. Sachs decided to abandon his career as a writer, which had been smooth sailing, although there was a faint hint of a decline. Sachs observes, "If I don't take hold of things now, I'm going to down. I'm going to sink like a stone to the bottom of the world" (*Leviathan* 137). The difficulty Sachs was facing at that time, as Aaron analyzes, was that he himself was becoming obsolete as a writer. He feared that if

he continued, as he was in a situation where his voice as a writer was becoming unheard, he would become completely silent like a stone. Two years later, in a scene from Mr. Vertigo, published in 1994, Auster, who was consistently producing work at this time, depicted the following. The protagonist Walt has just been attacked by his uncle Slim while on his world tour with Master Yehudi. Walt, who had been knocked unconscious for a while by the impact of the car's rollover, recollects, "[t]he first thing I saw when my eyes blinked into focus was an ant marching over a small stone" (*Mr. Vertigo* 205). Here, the stone is set in the scene as one of the "smallest things" that has no power, which makes the ants that Walt overlays himself with even more prominent.

In the 2000s, too, for Auster, a stone was an indispensable tool for depicting bleak scenes. In *The Book of Illusions*, when Sylvia Mears, his sex show's partner, discovers his true identity and threatens to expose him, Hector travels to Sandusky, Ohio, which he once claimed to be his hometown in an interview. There, he tries to go to Cedar Point, an amusement park, but ends up getting lost and not reaching there. As the narrator, Zimmer, recounts what Alma had told him, "a feeling of nullity" (*Book* 192) occurs to Hector. As Zimmer explains,

> Bricks and cobblestones, his breath gusting into the air in front of it, and the three-legged dog limping around the corner and vanishing from sight. It was a picture of his own death, he later realized the portrait of a soul in ruins. (*Book* 192)

The stone also continued to express stillness, as it did in the poetry. In *The Brooklyn Follies*, Nathan Glass suddenly finds himself in charge of his niece, Aurora's, nine-year-old daughter, Lucy. Lucy had a rule that she must not talk to anyone, but there was a time when she woke up in her sleep and forgot about the rule that she had imposed on herself. When Nathan greets her and asks if she slept well, she tells him that she slept "[r]eal good. . . [l]ike a big old stone at the bottom of a well" (*Brooklyn* 143).

The above are only some examples. In addition, *Lulu on the Bridge* treats a stone as an important part of story development. Unlike *Smoke* (1995), a well-received film directed by Wayne Wang and written by Auster, *Lulu on the Bridge* was not only criticized at the Cannes Film Festival, where it was screened, and by the participants of the Montreal Film Festival (Barron n.pag., James 12, *Quart* 85), but it also received a cold reception in subsequent Auster studies. After the film's opening in Cannes, it was discussed almost exclusively since the negative reviews came out. The audience may be left behind by the incomprehensible storyline and the passionate love between a middle-aged man and a young girl, but *Lulu on the Bridge* is a film that counts when we analyze the stones in Auster's works. This chapter details the representation of the stone in *Lulu on the Bridge*, *Moon Palace*, and the poetry and explains how the stone, which was silent in the poems, grew to become a moonlighting stone that guides the artist in Auster's career.

Stones in Poetry

Auster's poetry is, as Finkelstein, a poet friend of Auster's and author of the introduction to *Collected Poems* (2004), states, "dauntingly abstract" (11), and as James Peacock observes "[e]ncountering an Auster poem, then, is hard work" (169), difficult contrary to his novels. Different from prose, as Kellman explains, Auster's poetry challenges "the inadequacy of language" (227). In the poem "Interior" in *Wall Writing*, Auster himself states "[i]n the impossibility of words, in the unspoken word that asphyxiates, I find myself" (*Collected Poems* 67). Poems are written to feel the limitations of language. There, stones appear in much of the poetry. We will look at some of the most striking parts. *Spokes*, written in 1970, depicts the defeat of a stone in a quarry. This defeat is a defeat that bears the impossibility of expressing anything. In the fifth stanza, Auster writes,

> Picks jot the quarry—eroded marks
> That could not cipher the message.
> The quarrel unleashed its alphabet,
> And the stones, girded by abuse,
> Have memorized the defeat.
> (*Collected Poems* 25)

The message that the picks try to write down in the quarry never reaches anyone, and the stone is defeated in the impossibility of language. Jacques Dupin said of Auster's poem that it was a "cold duel with language" (Dupin 8; trans. by Hugonnier)[2]; this defeat is nothing more than a defeat in the battle against the "possibility of words," and in that battle, it is determined to lose. Therefore, the impossibility

of language is memorized in the stones.

In addition, *Unearth* describes the poet's ability to describe the world as stripped away.

> From one stone touched
> to the next stone
> named: earth-hood: the inaccessible
> ember. You
> will sleep here, a voice
> moored to stone, moving through
> this empty house that listens
> to the fire that destroyed it. You
> will begin. To drag you body
> from the ashes. To carry the burden
> of eyes. (*Collected Poems* 85)

As Iino points out, "there is a disconnection between seeing and writing" (107; my trans.) in Auster's poetry. In many poems, the eyes symbolize seeing, while the voice and mouth symbolize writing. Here, too, the voice and eyes are written in contrast. While the eyes capture the image before the fall, the voice cannot escape the fall as we can see in this: "No one's voice, alien to fall, and once gathered in the eye that bled such brightness" (*Collected Poems* 60). There are already "named" and "written" stones, and on the other side of these devastated words, the eye that captures images that have not yet been verbalized bears an additional burden due to the impossibility of verbalization. The voice, which is impossible to represent the world and yet has been put into words, and thus stripped of its original image, is always with

the stones.

Then, we will look at *Disappearances*, published in 1975, when Auster himself said his poetry was changing. In the impossibility of language, the poet begins to weave words again.

Out of solitude, he begins again—

as if it were the last time
that he would breathe,

and therefore it is now

that he breathes for the first time
beyond the grasp
of the singular.

He is alive, and therefore he is nothing
but what drowns in the fathomless hole of his eye,

and what he sees is all that he is not: a city

of the undeciphered
event,

and therefore a language of stones,
since he knows that for the whole of life
a stone
will give way to another stone

to make a wall

and that all these stones
will form the monstrous sum

of particulars. (*Collected Poems* 107)

Although the poet is drowning in the image-capturing function of his eyes, he sees the impossibility somewhat positively. Here, more clearly, what is to be described is presented as something other than oneself, and it seems that the poet is ready to confront the world. "Therefore," he decided to take on the challenge, using the language of stone.

Stones in *Lulu on the Bridge*

So far, we have seen that Auster has continued to use stones consistently, not only in poetry but also after moving to prose. In *Lulu on the Bridge,* stones have featured. The film, which stars Harvey Keitel as Izzy Maurer, begins with a scene in which Izzy shoots while playing saxophone in a bar. Ninety-eight minutes later, at the end of the story, the audience realizes that the story so far had been a dream that Izzy had seen at his last moment. When Izzy's heart stops beating, the sirens of the ambulance stop, and Celia, the heroine played by Mira Sorvino, calmly crosses the street as the ambulance passes by. The audience knows that they are strangers who just happened to be passing by.

Here, we should briefly review the story line. Izzy, who was shot but survived, was recovering both physically and

mentally with the help of those around him. One night, he is invited to dinner by his ex-wife, and on his way home, he finds a dead body. When he falls, he reflexively grabs a bag that had fallen beside the corpse and brings it back. When he gets home, he inspects the contents and finds trivial things, such as a paper napkin with a phone number on it and a receipt. Among them is a stone in a box. It is an ordinary stone at first glance, and Izzy goes to bed that night. When he turns off the light and is lying in bed, suddenly the stone glows blue, floating a few inches and illuminating the room. The next morning, he calls the phone number on the paper napkin, which leads to Celia's home, where he visits her and questions her about her relationship with Stanley Mar, the name written on the credit card, and the stone. Rather than trying to explain to Celia, who knew nothing about it, Izzy decides to show her the luminescence of the stone. Izzy and Celia witness the luminescence together, and a strange bond is formed between them. Izzy, who had been furious and questioned about the stone and Mar earlier, changes his tune and observes that he can even die for her (0:35:36-0:35:47). They start dating, but soon Celia leaves the U.S. to go to Dublin for filming. Izzy plans to join Celia as soon as he completes the paperwork, but he is locked up by a strange group led by Dr. Van Horn. The group follows the footprints of the stone and finds Celia, but the stone has already been thrown away. Celia, cornered by the group, disappears. After this, the audience learns that what had happened has been Izzy's dream.

The ages of Izzy and Celia are not clearly defined, but Keitel and Sorvino, who played their roles, were 59 and 31,

respectively, at the time. This couple, commented as “an unlikely love affair between Harvey Keitel and Mira Sorvino” (*Quart* 85), is connected by stones and falls in love intensely. The stone acts as an aphrodisiac. Their love has a certain characteristic. They think of each other as something they have created because she/he is so ideal for her/him. In other words, this glimmering stone is a stimulus to the imagination.

A Never Explained Stone

A man stumbles upon a dead body on the streets of New York, and a stone from the dead man’s bag glows and floats. In a science fiction film, the efficacy of the stone would be explained and its source would be explored. However, like *The New York Trilogy*, which is called an unti-detective story in which the mystery is not solved, the mystery of the stone remains unsolved in *Lulu on the Bridge*. The following is a description of the stone in the script, as Izzy removes it from the box.

> *The stone is a stone only in the loosest sense of the term. It clearly doesn’t come from the ground, and it clearly isn’t precious or beautiful or any of the other things one might have expected it to be.* (*Lulu* 32)

The description is so vague that the audience can no longer imagine, as it is not a stone we see often, and it is not like any other stone we can think of. The shape is oval with a flat area on one side, and it has a red cross-like color on it. It seems to make sense, but it also seems to make no sense.

In addition, it is the whispering that gives a vaguer impression. As Izzy opens the box, we hear a whisper, which is barely audible and unrecognizable as a language. As Auster writes in the script,

> *Sound: all through this shot, a vague murmuring of different voices can be heard, male and female alike each one speaking a different language. Nothing can be heard distinctly. Every now and then, a word emerges from the confusion, but only for the smallest flicker of a second.* (*Lulu* 32)

This "vague murmur" is also expressed visually. The box containing the stone contains a packing Excelsior made of "some of the strips of shredded newspaper," which "are written in different languages" (*Lulu* 32).

The group of Dr. Van Horn, who have been following Izzy in search of the stone, do not tell what the stone is. During the interrogation conducted by Dr. Van Horn, the stone is almost never discussed, and only Izzy's past is. When Dr. Van Horn talks about the fireflies Izzy tried to catch as a kid, Izzy could not help but ask, "What is this, Welcome to the World of Insects? (01:08:20-01:08:23)" To this question, Dr. Van Horn responds, "No, it's called *Going back*, or *Delving into the Past* (01:08:24-01:08:30)."[3] What was supposed to be an interrogation to uncover the location of the stone has turned into a self-exploration by Izzy, accompanied by Dr. Van Horn. The only thing what the audience can know is that the stone is precious, which they have spent years reaching to make it glow. That is presumed

if they have been following insistently, and it does not add anything new to the plot. Thus, there is no detailed explanation about the stone.

Power of Magical Stone

The source of the stone is not clearly stated, nor are its effects or any other information. Therefore, we will have to look at the effects that the characters have been subjected to by the stone, which is left as a clue for us to understand. As mentioned above, the stone leads them to fall in love, but here, we follow the details of their relationship before that. Izzy had never met Celia until that moment, when they both witnessed the luminescence of the stone. When he calls her, he is very blunt and gives no indication that he is about to fall in love, nor does he seem pleased that the owner of the phone number is a young woman. There is no difference when they actually meet. Celia is a beautiful woman, whom a restaurant owner Pierre she worked for becomes obsessed with, and an aspiring actress who later wins the role of *Lulu in Wedekind's* act, one of the most famous femme fatales. As Auster explains in an interview, "She's generous, she's fetching, she's desirable—the kind of young woman every man can fall in love with" (*Lulu* 149). However, Izzy does not even smile when she greets him and tells him that she is a fan of his music. Izzy's mood is far from romantic, and he is yelling at Celia and commanding her. Even though Celia is more friendly than Izzy, when she meets Izzy and sees his arrogant attitude, she completely dislikes him. When Izzy suddenly comes to the house and starts ranting, she clearly says to his face that she wants him to leave and that she

does not like having strangers in the house (0:30:53-0:31:14). The two are very tense until they see the stone illuminate.

Their attitudes become quite different as they experience the luminescence of the stone together. We will look at the script to read their expressions.

> IZZY: (*Sinking more deeply into the feeling*) Oh, Jesus. . .
> CELIA: (*Studying him carefully*) It's amazing, isn't it?
> IZZY: (*After a moment, hands the stone back to her. A long silence*) You feel more alive, don't you?
> CELIA: Yes. (*Thoughtful. Looking straight ahead*) More connected.
> IZZY: Connected to what?
> CELIA: I don't know. (*Thinks. Still looking ahead*) To myself. To the table. . . . The floor. . . the air in the room. To everything that's not me. (*Looks at Izzy*) To you. . . .
> IZZY: When I woke up this morning, I didn't even know who you are. The way I'm feeling now, I could spend the rest of my life with you. I think I'd be willing to die for you. (*Lulu* 40-41)

Suddenly, they feel connected and even feel as if they could spend the rest of their lives together. After that, Izzy leaves Celia's house for the time being, but Celia follows him, and they live their life together. There are certain characteristics of this love. They share common feelings for each other. Celia keeps asking Izzy two choices of questions, which she had done with her sister as a child, and then, in turn, Izzy starts to ask her. He asks her very seriously, "*entering a*

different register" (*Lulu* 45), "Are you a real person. . . or a spirit ? (0:39:56-0:40:00)" He loves Celia deeply and suspects that Celia is a spirit because she is too idealistic.

Celia feels the same way, though she expresses it in different words. To Izzy, who said he would work at Celia's workplace to be with her, she says, "Are you real . . . . or did I make you up? (0:44:02-0:44:08)" In other words, they feel each other as if they were products of their imagination. The love generated by the stone makes them think that they have created each other with their own imagination.

The Light of Stone as Moonlight I

So far, we have seen that the details about the stone are not explained, that the audience can only see its effect, and that the effect is something that makes them fall in love with the person, making them think that they have produced the person in their imagination. When it comes to glowing, floating stones that work on the imagination, this stone reminds us of the moon. Hereafter, we will see *Moon Palace* as an auxiliary line to explain that the stone in *Lulu on the Bridge* is Auster's idea of the moon.

Moon Palace, one of Auster's most famous works of the 1980s, is a bildungsroman in which the protagonist Marco Stanley Fogg recalls his half-life. The story is mainly set in 1969, when space exploration was in full swing. Marco watches the TV broadcast of the moon landing. However, the moon has been a constant presence in Marco's life and not just moon landing. His favorite book is Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon,* and Uncle Victor's band is Moon Men. One of the most impressive images is Moon Palace, the

signboard of a Chinese restaurant, which is also the title of the novel. This Moon Palace sign is a neon sign, and it emits glimmering light. Another important moon is Ralph Blakerock's *Moonlight*. Although the moon itself does not appear until the end of the story, its image illuminates the entire novel.

Before we see two of the most striking images of the moon in *Moon Palace*, here we should look at the connection between *Lulu on the Bridge* and *Moon Palace*. These two works, separated by nine years, have more in common than just the appearance of large and small glowing and floating stones. In a small way, we can get a glimpse of the point in Auster's imagination where the glowing, floating stone in *The Lulu on the Bridge* is connected to *Moon Palace*. As mentioned earlier, Izzy found the stone in a bag that had fallen near a dead body on the roadside. In addition to the stone, he found a credit card slip, and the name on that card was Stanley Mar (0:22:09-0:22:49). The name implies Marco Stanley Fogg, the main character of *Moon Palace*. Izzy barged into Celia's house and asked her to tell him what she knew about Stanley Mar. The phone number on the napkin was not in her handwriting, so she was confused and answered Izzy, "If we're talking about the same Stanley—then yes. Now I work in a restaurant. I served him dinner one night, and then he asked me out. And I found him boring. All he did was talk about was money" (0:29:54-0:30:04). From her description, it is hard to think that Stanley Mar is the "same Stanley" as Marco in *Moon Palace*. There are many things that Marco does not care about in this world, but the most impressive of which is money. As if to

resist capitalism, he challenged his way of life without making money. In a film review of *Lulu on the Bridge,* Quart finds a common point with *Moon Palace*.

> This meandering tale of magical stones, an unlikely love affair between Harvey Keitel and Mira Sorvino, and buffoonish gangsters is an emaciated version of themes Auster developed more adeptly in novels such as Moon Palace. (*Quart* 85)

Though these two works are different media and nine years away, they have some points in common thematically.

Thus, we should return to the two impressive moons: the Moon Palace neon sign and *Moonlight.* As mentioned earlier, the moon itself does not appear until the final scene of the story. The moon that constantly appears in the story is moonlight in a sense. One is *Moonlight* by Blakerock and the other is a neon sign working as moonlight, which once Nathaniel Hawthorne elaborated in "The Custom House." The fact that these two moons are depicted with a particular focus on their light is similar to the fact that the stone in *The Lulu on the Bridge* is nothing special by itself but has power only because it illuminates, and the two people are enchanted when they see the light.

We move on to a neon sign. What does it mean that a glaring neon sign functions as a fantastic moonlight? Columbia University required freshmen and sophomores to live in the dorms, and Marco spent the next two years in the dorms with his roommate, Zimmer. In his junior year, his desire to live on her own led her to rent an apartment in

New York. It was not a large or idealistic apartment, as he states, "[i]t was a studio apartment on the fifth floor of a larger elevator building: one medium-size room with a kitchenette in the southeast corner, a closet, a bathroom, and a pair of windows that looked out on an alley" (*Moon* 16). As a young man who lives by himself for the first time, he "felt some pangs at first, small thumps of fear about living" (*Moon* 16) on his own. One of the causes of his fear was that "[t]he air was dim inside, tinged gray throughout, and even on the brightest days it did not exude more than a paltry radiance" (*Moon* 16). Marco was feeling a little uneasy when he made a discovery.

> [Q]uite by accident, I found myself standing between the two windows, positioned at an oblique angle to the one on the left. I shifted my eyes slightly in that direction, and suddenly I was able to see a slit of air between the two buildings in back. I was looking down at Broadway, and the remarkable thing was that the entire area of what I could see was filled up by a neon sign, a vivid torch pink and blue letters that spelled out the words MOON PALACE. I recognized it as the sign from the Chinese restaurant down the block, but the force with which those words assaulted me drowned out every practical reference and association. They were magic letters, and they hung there in the darkness like a message from the sky itself. MOON PALACE. . . . [I]n that first, irrational moment, my fears lost their hold on me. (*Moon* 16)

First, the positioning when he says he made the discovery reminds readers of neutral territory. In addition, the neon sign is described as "from the sky itself," (*Moon* 16) as if it were floating in the sky like the moon. Note that the neon sign has drowned out "every practical reference and association" (*Moon* 16).

He also states the change in the room. An ordinary room turns into "a site of inwardness," which is described as "an intersection point of strange omens and mysterious, arbitrary events" (*Moon* 16). This room is reminiscent of the room bathed in moonlight that Hawthorne described in "The Custom House."

> Moon light, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all visible, yet so unlike a morning or noontide visibility,— is a medium the most suitable for a romance-writer to get acquainted with his illusive guests....all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualized by the unusual light, that they seem to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect. Nothing is too small or too trifling to undergo this change, and acquire dignity thereby. . . . [W]hatever in a word, has been used or played with, during the day, is now invested with quality of strangeness and remoteness, though still almost as vividly present as by daylight. Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairly-land, where the Actual and Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the

other. (*The Scarlet Letter* 36)

The phenomenon that occurred when the light of the neon sign filled Marco's room—that "those words assaulted me drowned out every practical reference and association" and the transformation "into a site of inwardness (*Moon* 16)" is the very rephrasing of Hawthorne's expression: things "seem to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect" (*Scarlet* 36). Auster makes the urban neon sign Moon Palace a postmodern moonlight for the artist's imagination.

The Light of Stone as Moonlight Ⅱ

Another impressively depicted moon is also related to imagination. Marco is trying to survive, not working, by selling his belongings and eating as little as possible. However, such a life cannot last long, and after being evicted for non-payment of rent and living in Central Park, he moves in with his friend, Zimmer. He needs a place to live, a place to work, and a part-time job to live in the home of Barber Effing, an elderly blind man, as a mobility aid and companion suits him. The old man instructs Marco to go to the Brooklyn Museum of Art to look at a painting, as he is having trouble keeping up with Effing's sudden talk about writing his own obituary. This is Ralph Albert Blakelock's Moonlight.

When Marco discovers *Moonlight*, he is a little disappointed, partly because of the difference between his impression and that of his employer. He had the impression that it was a modest little piece. However, after looking at it for a while, he makes a discovery. Marco observes,

> A perfectly round full moon sat in the middle of the canvas . . . and this pale white disc illuminated everything above it and below it: the sky, a lake, a large tree with spidery branches, and the low mountains on the horizon. In the for ground, there were two small areas of land, divided by a brook that flower between them. On the left bank, there was an Indian teepee and a campfire; . . . On the other bank, things were even murkier, almost entirely drowned in shadow. . . . I got so involved in studying these obscure details in the lower part of the picture that when I finally look up to the sky again, I was shocked to see how bright everything was in the upper part. Even taking the full moon into consideration, the sky seemed too visible. (*Moon* 134)

Marco notices that the visibility of this picture is "too visible." Then, it occurs to him that this picture is not painted in realism, "not as a landscape," but as "a memorial, a death song for a vanished world" (*Moon* 135). About this painting, Brown states, "*Moonlight* is no exception; here the moon represents an aperture able to connect the interior self to the exterior world" (92). It works just like the moon itself. Where the moonlight falls, things are transformed while remaining intact.

Illuminating Stones in Darkness

Here, we need to go back to *Lulu on the Bridge* to confirm the details of the scene. There has always been

darkness before the stone glows as if the moon shines only in the dark. In the script of the scene in which Izzy sees the first glowing of the stone, there is "*Obscurity. We see IZZY lying in bed, his eyes open, staring up at the ceiling. . . . After a moment, the shadow disappears, lost in a glowing blue light*" (*Lulu* 36). Then, he turns off the light; everything returns to an ordinary state. To confirm what he sees at that moment, he turns off the light again and witnesses the same phenomenon.

Also, in Celia's house, the light is adjusted. Izzy, who already knows that darkness is needed, orders Celia to "close the curtains" (0:30:44-0:30:45). As he explains, "We have to make it dark in here. . . . The darker the better" (0:30:47-0:30:52). The script states, "*Close-up of the stone on the coffee table, barely visible in the obscurity*" (*Lulu* 39). In addition, when Celia takes the stone out from worrying about Izzy, who does not come to Dublin even after the scheduled date, "*She . . .switches off the lamp. Obscurity*" (*Lulu* 109).

Whenever the stone glowed in *Lulu on the Bridge*, there was always darkness first. As like the moon itself. The moon is associated with Hawthorne's moonlight in Auster's works and plays a role in giving the writer imagination. The stone that was a representation of the inadequacy of language in poetry comes to give the artists the imagination in *Lulu on the Bridge*. The stone ceases to be silent and begins to glow under fictionality.

Chapter 2
Resurrection of "Une Nature Morte": Representations of Bodies

For Auster, writing is inseparable from understanding. The process of understanding is to convert it into words and write it down. As seen in Chapter 1, the object is the outside world, such as stones and cities. The work of living has always been done in the outside world, and writing has always been a way to understand it. In *Winter Journal* (2012), one of a series of essay collections published in the 2010s, Auster states, "[w]hat press in on you, what has always pressed in on you: the outside, meaning the air—or more precisely, your body in the air around you" (11-12). Prior to the publication of *Report from the Interior*, which focuses on the interior of his mind and is based on the writer's own memories from his childhood, *Winter Journal* records a history of Auster's body. The focus is on the activity of the body, as well as the mental activity of the author. While *Winter Journal* focuses on Auster's own body, he has depicted various bodies in his novels. He repeatedly mentions that it was not some literary work or someone's words but the dancers' performances that brought him out of the slump he had fallen into when he was stuck in writing.[4] Chapter 2 focuses on the body in Auster's works.

In *Winter Journal*, Auster examines his body as an outside object in which his mind dwells, and even "puts aside" (*Winter Journal* 1) the writing of novels. When we overview Auster's oeuvre and analyze his depiction of the body, we find a certain characteristic: The bodies of the

characters depicted in the novels are transformed from conscious subjects to objects through some processes. As Auster himself states, "[s]peak now before it is too late, and then hope to go on speaking until there is nothing more to be said. Time is running out, after all (*Winter* 1)," the first is death and old age. The second is gaze. It is bizarre in its style that Auster—who is also a heart-warming storyteller, particularly in his novels— portrays the dead as objects in his works. While death is often portrayed as a memorial to the dead in Auster's novels, the death of Titus stands out, which is brutally and clearly portrayed in *Man in the Dark.* One night in June 2007, the narrator August Brill, unable to sleep, reflects on the past. In 2006, Titus Small, the child of a friend of Brill's and former lover of his grandson Katya, goes to Iraq to work as a truck driver transporting goods. Titus is abducted while on a mission, and his captors demand ransom and the shutdown of BRK, the transportation company Titus works for. Negotiations fail and Titus is executed. The execution was filmed and distributed to the Internet as a silent video. Auster depicts the brutal executions with a fine touch, without covering for readers.

> Mercifully, a hood has been placed over his head. He is sitting in a chair with his hands tied behind him, motionless, making no attempt to break free. The four men from the previous video are standing around him, three holding rifles, the fourth with a hatchet in his right hand. Without any signal or gesture from the others, the fourth man suddenly brings the blade down on Titus's neck. Titus jerks to his right, his upper body

> squirms, and then blood starts seeping through the hood. Another blow from the hatchet, this one from behind. Titus's head lolls forward, and by now blood is streaming down all over him. More blows: fron and back, right and left, the dull blade chopping long past the moment of death. One of the men puts down his rifle and clamps Titus's head firmly in his two hands to prop it up as the man with the hatchet continues to go about his business. They are both covered in blood. When the head is finally severed from the body, the executioner lets the hatchet fall to the floor. The other man removes the hood from Titus's head, and then a third man takes hold of Titus's long red hair and carries the head closer to the camera. Blood is dripping everywhere. Titus is no longer quite human. He has become the idea of a person, a person and not a person, a dead bleeding thing: *une nature morte*. (*Man in the Dark* 175-6; italics original)

Titus's head, which has been continuously sliced and diced even "past the moment of death," has its eyes stabbed out precisely and quickly. After a few seconds, the screen "goes black" (*Man* 176). This description is followed by the sentence "[i]mpossible to know how long it lasted. Fifteen minutes. A thousand years" (*Man* 176). In the next paragraph, Brill does not talk about Titus. Lying on the bed, he listens to the various noises and Katya's breathing, who is sleeping next to him. In the next paragraph, his daughter Miriam comes to announce that the night is over, and the morning comes.

Brill does not spell out his feelings in a rambling fashion, as for Titus's death. Then, is Brill still in the dark, unable to speak about Titus's death? Considering that Miriam and he would be planning a happy family breakfast after Katya woke up, and the darkness was broken by the dawn, it would not be so. So, how did he break his darkness? As Brill does not mention Titus's death, the answer to this question can only be found in the story that leads up to this execution scene, and the phrase "une nature morte" must be a clue. In this chapter, using *Man in the Dark* as a springboard, I will elaborate on the scenes in which the body is considered an "object" in Auster's works and then conclude that the expression "une nature morte" represents hope.

Objectification by Death, Diseases, and Senility

I mentioned earlier that the depiction of Titus's death in *Man in the Dark* stands out in Auster's works, but we should elaborate on that here. First, the moment of death is not often portrayed, and its brutality is often described barely. Death is usually described as mourning. For example, when Isabel, a lady who helped Anna in *In the Country of Last Things*, dies, the narrator Anna observes her death and states, "[s]he[Isabel] had been so apologetic about getting sick, so ashamed at having to rely on me for everything, but the fact was that I needed her just as much as she needed me" (*Country* 80). Also in a novel published in the 1990s, *Mr. Vertigo*, Walt recollects the death of Mater Yehudi in memorial. He reflects on Yehudi's last words: "'Remember the good times', he said. 'Remember the things I taught you'. Then, swallowing once, he shut his eyes and squeezed the

trigger" (*Mr. Vertigo* 211). In this way, the dead are mourned, and they are not depicted as only objects. This is much different from the depiction of Titus.

This difference is due to the fact that Auster thinks that death divides a person into two.

> Death takes a man's body away from him. In life, a man and his body are synonymous; in death, there is the man, and there is his body. We say, 'This is the body of X,' as if this body, which had once been the man himself, not something that represented him or belonged to him, but the very man called X, were suddenly of no importance. . . . Death changes that. This is the body of X, not this is X. The syntax is entirely different. Now we are talking about two things instead of one, implying that the man continues to exist, but only as an idea, a cluster of images and memories in the minds of other people. As for the body, it is no more than flesh and bones, a heap of pure matter. (*The Invention of Solitude* 14)

In *The Invention of Solitude*, Auster writes about the death of his father, Samuel Auster. Death divides the living into the image of the living and the corpse. The image of the living, associated with their past memories, is known to him, but a dead body is an unknown object that is suddenly discovered there. When images of the living are depicted, the descriptions are mournful and have a warm tone. In contrast, unknown dead bodies are depicted as objects.

For example, in *Sunset Park*, the protagonist's father,

Morris Heller, separates himself from the clatter of his surroundings just before the New Year. His thoughts turn to the death of his mother five years ago. When he remembers his mother's death, he refers to her body.

> The body. That is what he is thinking about now, the corpse of his mother lying on the bed five years ago, and the terror he felt when he looked down at her face, the blue-gray skin, the half-open-half-closed eyes, the terrifying *immobility* of what had been once been a living person. (*Sunset* 156-57; italics original)

It is natural to be surprised by the death of a mother who died suddenly of a heart attack. However, his focus is on the corpse and its "terrifying immobility" (*Sunset* 157).

Next, we will see how the body turns into an object, as it is affected by senility and disease. When we list Auster's works according to the narrator, we can classify the works published since 2005 as narrated by old men. The old narrators talk about aging and sickness, which often appear as a prelude to death, lamenting the loss of control over their bodies. The old men are deprived of their control over their bodies, which they have been moving on their own initiative, and the bodies themselves are found as objects.

Nathan Glass, the narrator of *The Brooklyn Follies*, was hospitalized after suffering a gastritis that was thought to be a heart attack. Nathan, who had not been affected by any notable illnesses, refers to this hospitalization experience:

> I have come to being nowhere, to being inside myself and outside myself at the same time. That's what happens to you when you land in a hospital. They take off your clothes, put you in one of those humiliating gowns, and suddenly you stop being yourself. You become the person who inhabits your body, and what you are now is the sum total of that body's failures. To be diminished in such a way is to lose all right to privacy. When the doctors and nurses come in and ask you questions, you have to answer them. (*Brooklyn* 297)

The hospital is a peculiar place in which the body is moved by others' direction, without question. Even though it was agreed upon by both, the subjectivity of the body has shifted to the doctors, nurses, and treatment providers, rather than the patient, who should have been the original owner. Here, Nathan is being transformed into an object, a body, deprived of its subjectivity.

Another old man, Mr. Blank, had a similar experience. In *Travels in the Scriptorium*, the narrator, Mr. Blank, is in a hospital-like facility that is never clearly defined. He has no memory of anything before that and cannot determine whether he is being held captive. When James Patrick Flood visits him and asks him about the report on Fanshawe, Mr. Blank cannot remember anything about the report he supposedly wrote. He feels sorry about it and says, "I don't remember Fanshawe. I don't remember reading his novel. I don't remember writing the report. I wish I could help you, Flood, but the treatment they're giving me has turned my

brain into a lump of rusty iron" (*Travels* 54). Furthermore, when he tries to go to the rest room, he fails to control his bladder. This is because he puts off going to the bathroom because he enjoys the feeling of sliding across the floor, which results in him falling and losing his control from the pain and becoming incontinent. This vividly expresses how he has lost control over his own body.

So far, we have seen scenes in which the bodies are objectified by death, diseases, and senility. Death takes life away from the living, and those who are left behind discover two things: the image or memory of the dead and the dead bodies. The images of the dead are preserved along with the memories of the living and are depicted in a mournful and warm tone, while the corpse, as an object, tends to be depicted in an indifferent manner. However, once this problem is sorted out, it does not solve the problem of why Auster writes corpses as objects. Titus's death should be described, but the mystery of it being expressed as "une nature morte" remains unresolved.

Objectification by a Gaze

To solve the issue of depicting a dead body as an object, we will next look at the objectification of the body by the gaze. It is not only through death, diseases, and senility that the body becomes objectified. In Auster's works, gaze is one of the factors that objectifies the body. There is a politics in the structure of the gaze between the subject who sees and the object who is seen. However, in Auster's works, the hierarchical relationship of gaze can be reversed.

In *The Book of Illusions*, Alma, who has a birthmark

on her left cheek, has been seen by many people in her life. As Zimmer observes her, "Her hair was cut in such a way as to obscure most of it, and she held her head at an awkward tilt to prevent the hair from moving. It was an ingrained gesture, I supposed, a habit acquired after a lifetime of self-consciousness, and it gave her an air of clumsiness and vulnerability" (*Book* 100). She has long been seen as an object, and she has adapted to it. Alma is the object of others' curiosity, and in being seen by others, she has no subjectivity.

In Alice Bergstrom's explanation of being an object of gaze, in *Sunset Park*, she is conscious of the fact that she is being objectified by the gaze. Alice is worried about her recent discordance with her boyfriend, Jake Baum. She believes that the cause of their cold relationship is her own body. She cannot help but think that because she has gained weight, she is no longer the object of Jake's sexual interest.

> [S]he blames herself for what has happened, she can't help believing that the fault rests entirely on her shoulders. . . . Her body now repulses her now, and she no longer has the courage to look at herself in the mirror. I'm fat, she says to Jake. Again and again she says it, I'm fat, I'm fat, unable to stop herself from repeating the words, and if she is repulsed by the sight of her own body, imagine what he must feel when she takes off her clothes and climbs into bed with him. (*Sunset* 95)

Alice's consciousness shows that it is the outside, the body,

that she feels is being seen. Even though "she knows better than to think that love is simply a question of bodies, the size and shape and heft of bodies" (*Sunset* 95), she cannot escape the obsession with the object of the body seen by Jake.

Alma and Alice, as objects to be seen, are deprived of subjectivity. However, Maria Turner in *Leviathan*, as her name implies, brings a new turn to this relationship. Maria is an artist who develops a deep relationship with the narrator, Peter Aaron, and with the protagonist, Benjamin Sachs. One of her many experimental projects was to go out with her skin exposed. By revealing her body, she tries to attract the attention of men. The reason she did such an eccentric project is because "she wanted to affirm the reality of her body, to make heads turn, to prove to herself that she still existed in the eyes of others" (*Leviathan* 71). She is confirming the existence of the body through eyes other than her own, and she is doing this consciously. As Aaron explains, "[s]he was consciously turning herself into an object, a nameless figure of desire" (*Leviathan* 72). Unlike Alma and Alice, who are seen only by others, Maria is subjectively trying to become an object. The politics of the gaze gives subjectivity to the viewer and makes the seen an object, but Maria's project produces an oxymoronic state—a subjective object.

Resurrection of the "Une Nature Morte"

In the discussion so far, we have seen that the body in Auster's works is objectified by death, diseases, senility, and the gaze. The politics of the gaze is described as reversible.

Here, we should return to the first question. Why does Auster, who is a heart-warming storyteller, depict the body as an object by the death of a person in his novels? As *Man in the Dark* is considered one of the responses to 9/11 in Auster's works, it is possible to interpret it as a bare depiction of the cruelty of death. However, considering how a happy breakfast is planned right after that description and that the light shines on the darkness when the morning comes, it is hard to think that the body is represented as an object to write about the severity of death. Then, the gaze, which is poured into the object of the corpse and is another function of the objecting body, needs to be analyzed.

As mentioned above, Titus is described as having become an "une nature morte" after his execution. It literally means the state of his body that he is "one dead nature." Titus becomes a corpse—an object. In addition, given the fact that the video of his execution is being distributed on the Internet, his corpse, objectified by death, seems to be doubly disgraced, as it is also made the object of public gaze.

Note that "une nature morte" ("a still life" in English) is also a term used in painting.[5] This implies that Titus is the object of the painting. Titus, who is expressed similarly to "still life," has much to do with painting. Titus's parents, David and Elizabeth, were both painters, and his name is the name of the son of Rembrandt van Rijn (*Man* 2).

We will see how the expression "une nature morte," which seems to further emphasize that Titus is dead in the flesh and is a victim of terrorism, can be a hope. What does it mean to be made into an object, beyond becoming an object that is depicted in a painting? The answer is hidden in the

way Katya, who is attending a film school in New York, interprets films. Katya, who has been absent from school since the shock of Titus's death, makes it a habit to watch movies with Brill. Katya lectures Brill about the three movies they watched that night: *Grand Illusion, The Bicycle Thief, and The World of Apu*. Her comments "tend to focus on the technical aspects of the film (*Man* 15)," but on that day, she surprises Brill. They discuss the contents in detail. This is how the conversation begins: "Inanimate objects, she said. / What about them? I asked. / Inanimate objects as a means of expressing human emotions. That's the language of film" (*Man* 16).

From this point on, Katya picks up and discusses the scenes from all three films in which the lifeless object represents human emotions. A bucket in *The Bicycle Thief* by Vittorio De Sica, dishes in *Grand Illusion* by Jean Renoir, and hairpins in *The World of Apu* by Satyajit Ray serve a function in expressing the characters' emotions.

We will see the discussion on *Bicycle Thief,* which was covered first in her analysis. She states,

> Think about the opening scenes of *The Bicycle Thief*. The hero is given a job, but he wouldn't be able to take it unless he gets his bicycle out of hock. He goes home feeling sorry for himself. And there's his wife outside their building , lugging two heavy buckets of water. All their poverty, all struggles of this woman and her family are contained in those two buckets. The husband is so wrapped up in his own troubles, he doesn't bother to help her until they're halfway to the

> door. And even then, he only takes one of the buckets, leaving her to carry the other. Everything we need to know about their marriage is given to us in those few seconds. Then they climb to the stairs to their apartment, and the wife comes up with the idea to pawn their bed lines so they can redeem the bicycle. Remember how violently she kicks the bucket in the kitchen, remember how violently she opens the bureau drawer. Inanimate objects, human emotions. (*Man* 16)

The scene discussed above is followed by the scene of a pawn shop. Katya also discusses the sheets that his wife went to sell in terms of objects. At the pawn shop in *Bicycle Thief*, "[a]t first, the shelves don't seem very high, but then the camera pulls back, and as the man starts climbing up, we see that they go on and on and on, all the way to the ceiling" (*Man* 17). As Katya points out, in a shot of these bundles of sheets, "we're given a picture of whole society living at the edge of disaster" (*Man* 17).

Katya continues this discussion, observing that "I'm on to something, since I saw examples in all three films" (*Man* 17). The discussion moves on to the dishes in *Grand Illusion*. At the end of the story, Jean Gabin has to leave for Switzerland, leaving his lovers behind for the war. There is a possibility that they will part ways for this lifetime. After they say their goodbyes, we watch a shot of Gabin and Dalio running through the forest. After that, the camera returns to the house of a German woman. Katya states that Renoir is a genius for making this switch without following the men going to war. There, the woman is performing a very simple

task: washing dishes. As Katya explains,

> The men are gone now, and because they're gone, those dishes have been transformed into a sign of their absence, the lonely suffering of women when men go off to war, and one by one, without saying a word, she picks up the dishes and clears the table. (*Man* 18)

This emotion is not expressed through words at all, as the woman does not say anything. Katya performs this interpretation through objects alone.

Katya also develops her theory on *The World of Apu*. She states, "The curtains and the hairpin. A transition from one life into another, the turning point of the story" (*Man* 18-19). In addition to the curtains and the hairpin, Katya claims that the window, the potted flowers, and her saris represent that Apu and his wife are in love. Katya points out that "Ray makes it happen without using a single word of dialogue" (*Man* 21), the same as Renoir. Katya can read human emotions from inanimate objects, not from words.

Katya, who is closer to Titus than Brill and therefore more deeply hurt than him, says nothing about Titus's execution similar to Brill. A theory about these three films can be considered a reference to Titus's death. Also, the way Katya and Brill look at Titus's corpse is not the curious shooting look we saw earlier. Katya, Brill, and Miriam, Brill's daughter and Katya's mother, feel like it is "an obligation, a sacred duty (*Man* 175)" and decide to watch the video.

> We all knew it would go on haunting us for the rest of our lives, and yet somehow we felt we had to be there with Titus, to keep our eyes open to the horror for his sake, to breathe him into us and hold him there—in us, that lonely, miserable death, in us, the cruelty that was visited on him in those last moments, in us and no one else, so as not to abandon him to the pitiless dark that swallowed him up. (*Man* 175)

The gaze described above is a gaze that shoots the object, but the gaze of Katya, Brill, and Miriam is a gaze that inhales Titus and tries to hold him there. As we saw in Maria's example, given the reversibility of the politics of gaze, Katya's gaze on Titus is not a shooting of the object but a reading eye of human emotions from it. Titus, who became "une nature morte," is interpreted by Katya's gaze because she can "read" inanimate objects.

Chapter 3
The Allegory of Collection:
Progress and Collapse of the Narrative

In Auster's works, readers sometimes encounter a collector of objects. The collectors in his novels usually collect seemingly unvalued things, in other words, small things. In *Moon Palace*, Solomon Barber, a protagonist Marco's father, collects various headgears: "bowlers and fezzes, baseball caps and fedoras, pith helmets and cowboy hats, whatever captured his fancy, without regard to style or convention" (*Moon* 236-37). The most notable collector among the critics is Peter Stillman, Senior in *City of Glass*. As the narrator Daniel Quinn observes, "the objects Stillman collected were valueless. They seemed to be no more than broken things, discarded things, stray bits of junk" (*City* 59). The objects are, for example, "a collapsible umbrella shorn of its material, the severed head of a rubber doll, a black glove, the bottom of a shattered light bulb, several pieces of printed matter, a torn photography, anonymous machinery parts" (*City* 59). They collect seemingly "valueless" objects "without convention."

In this chapter, I focus on *The Music of Chance*, *In the Country of Last Things*, and *Oracle Night*, in which the characters collect seemingly meaningless objects. These activities involved accumulating stones, picking up broken objects, and collecting letters written on paper. In this way, we can find the act of collecting in several of Auster's works.

As depicted in his works, this act of collecting is in line with the function of allegory. While symbols, similar to

allegories in their function, consist of correspondence between semantic content and form. Allegories attempt to depict an ongoing relationship between things. The function of the allegory is highly compatible with the act of collecting depicted in Auster's novels, in which the objects are given a context as a whole and begin to take on meaning as the story progresses, even though they could not make sense on their own. The collected objects are things that have no meaning to the characters, and since these objects are given meaning as the story progresses, that is different from metaphors. From that perspective, this chapter focuses on the allegorical effects of collecting in Auster's novels, especially *The Music of Chance, In the Country of Last Things,* and *Oracle Night*. First, we will see that collecting is an allegory of narrating and then examine giving meaning to the collected objects and the catastrophic developments that follow.

The Music of Chance

The Music of Chance depicts the act of collecting, of piling up stones. The protagonist, Jim Nashe, an ex-firefighter who inherited his father's estate as other Auster's characters, participates in a poker game with Jack Pozzi, who is called Jackpot with a talent for gambling as his name suggests. Their opponents are millionaires William Flower and William Stone. So, if Nashe and Pozzi won, they could make a fortune, but they lost miserably and ended up in debt. As a result, Nashe and Pozzi are forced to work at Flower and Stone's house, rebuilding the walls out of stones originally used in an old Irish castle.[6] They spend their lives piling up stones every day. Beginning with Pozzi's failed

escape or the assault on Pozzi under the direction of Flower and Stone, the story's conclusion sees the deaths of three people, Nashe, the house servant Calvin Murks, and his son-in-law Floyd.

Initially, Nashe and Pozzi work together to pile up the stones, but Nashe must work silently alone since Pozzi drops out in the middle of the story. As he continued to accumulate the stones in solitude, Nashe began to record the number of stones he had gathered each day and began to think of it as a kind of journal.

> Every night before going to bed, he would write down the number of stones he had added to the wall that day. The figures themselves were unimportant to him, but once the list had grown to ten or twelve entries, he began to take pleasure in the simple accumulation.... At first, he imagined it was purely statistical pleasure, but after a while he sensed that it was fulfilling some inner need, some compulsion to keep track of himself and not to lose sight of where he was. By early December, he began to think of it as a journal, a logbook in which the numbers stood for his most intimate thoughts. (185-86)

The act of writing down the number of stones he had collected is equated with the act of writing a journal in which he talks about his inner thoughts. We can see that the work of accumulating stones takes on a spiritual connotation.[7] Nashe was meticulously calculating his working hours and repayment amount to pay off the debt on

his birthday. Setting such a goal gives meaning to the lengthy accumulation process.

In addition to the quote above, there was another change in Nashe at this time. Nash would frequently think about Flower's collection, which he had seen around the house before the game had begun. Flower's collection includes the following items:

> The telephone that had once sat on Woodrow Wilson's desk. A pearl earring worn by Sir Walter Raleigh. A pencil that had fallen from Enrico Fermi's pocket in 1942. General McClellan's field glasses. A half-smoked cigar filched from an ashtray in Winston Churchill's office. A sweatshirt worn by Babe Ruth in 1927. William Seward's Bible. The cane used by Nathaniel Hawthorne after he broke his leg as a boy. A pair of spectacles worn by Voltaire. (76)

Before he began accumulating the stones, Nashe saw Flower's collection as a collection of meaningless objects, saying, "It was all so random, so misconstrued, so utterly beside the point" (76).[8] They are called a collection because they are kept in a glass case, but for Nashe, they are a collection of unconnected objects as he states, "there was little to get excited about" (75). As the work of accumulation moves forward, these objects that seemed to be nothing more than trivial fascinate Nashe, and one by one, the items in Flower's museum come to life in his mind.

> In the long run, however, the impression that lingered

> of that room was quite different from what Nashe had imagined it would be. In the weeks and months that followed, he often found himself thinking back to what he had seen there, and it stunned him to realize how many of the objects he could remember. They began to take on a luminous, almost transcendent quality for him, and whenever he stumbled across one of them in his mind, he would unearth an image so distinct that it seemed to grow like an apparition from another world. (75-76)

What was a meaningless collection to Nashe before gathering the stones became attractive and meaningful objects.

When Nashe finds meaning in the seemingly meaningless rocks, the story comes to a catastrophic end. On the day he pays off his debt or sees an end to his journal, Nashe has a car accident. On his way home from an outing with Murks and Floyd, Nashe crashed into an oncoming car at a high rate of speed, taking Murks and Floyd with him. Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory is relevant in considering this tragic development caused by finding meanings in objects. Benjamin explains allegory, expanding on his own early theory of language. In his earlier theory of language, Benjamin pointed out its arbitrariness and then attempted to recover it as a substance. He says that "language before it was arbitrarily given meaning" is metaphorical for the happiness of Adam and Eve before the Paradise Lost, while "language after it was given meaning" is in a state of inescapable grief. What brings language to that state of mourning is nothing less than the function of

allegory. Benjamin distinguishes language before it is given meaning from language after it is given importance, describing it as a state "to be named."

> To be named – even if the name-giver is god-like and saintly – perhaps always brings with it a presentiment of mourning. But how much more so not to be named, only to be read, to be read uncertainly by the allegorist, and to have become highly significant thanks only to him. (224-25)

Benjamin's state of mourning is the catastrophic development in Auster's work. The allegory gives meaning to things that initially had no meaning and leads the story to a catastrophic end. The dismantling of the original castle and the rebuilding of it as a new wall in *The Music of Chance* give new meaning to the stones. Likewise, Flower's collection of objects used by the great figures is nothing more than an act of ripping things out, things that had significance in the history of the person and putting them in a new context. The allegory gives meaning to these objects, deviated from their original context, and depicted in *The Music of Chance* through Nashe's accumulation of stones.

Although Auster's allegory is consistent with the one theorized by Benjamin, it does not fall within its scope. This is because the allegory argued by Benjamin essentially aims to destroy the arbitrary meanings attached to things, give them new meanings, and return them to the state of "named" through the fixation of these meanings. Meanwhile, the stuff in Auster's works refuses to fix its purposes and never

return to its origins. In *The Music of Chance*, the story takes a catastrophic turn when things stripped of their original meaning begin to take on new meaning in accordance with Nash's accumulation of stones. In Auster's work, the objects escape new meaning and dissipate just before the act of collecting and attaching importance to them is completed.

In the Country of Last Things

The development that does not fit into the conventional allegory can also be seen in the other two novels. The narrator, Anna Blume, travels to a dystopian world, the country of last things, where things are disappearing one after another. To survive, she collects objects.

In that country, people do various activities to live. Anna chooses to be a scavenger to earn a living. The scavengers pick the things that can be sold to traders even though they are almost like garbage. Below is what Anna states about her work as a scavenger:

> For nothing is really itself anymore. There are pieces of this and pieces of that, but none of it fits together. A pulverized apple and pulverized oranges are finally the same thing, aren't they? You can't tell the difference between a good dress and a bad dress if they're both torn to shreds, can you?... It is a clump, a mote, a fragment of the world that has no place: a cipher of it-ness. As an object hunter, you must rescue things before they reach this state of absolute decay. (35-36)

The work of scavenging, like Flower's collection in *The Music of Chance,* is an act of collecting fragments that do not have meaning. It should be noted that the objects that are picked up are reused as Shiloh points out, "the broken and discarded objects littering the streets of the city of last things are somehow retrieved, mended, and put to new use" (153). In the hands of traders, these objects take on new meanings and are reborn as something new. In this novel, collecting and subsequent selling are symbolic of giving new meaning to things that have lost their meaning.

The act of collecting *In the Country of Last Things* presents an alternative to the narrative. Only after she has finished her work as a scavenger does Anna talk about the story of her life in the dystopian world. Considering what Peacock points out, "to string units of language together into sentences and paragraphs is a physical act of traversing space" (Peacock 88), for Anna, writing means moving, and collecting, which she does by parading around the city, seems to function as an alternative to storytelling.

Furthermore, skill as a scavenger is compared to language ability. After working for a time as a scavenger, Anna meets Isabel, another scavenger. Isabel has an extraordinary talent for scavenging, and Anna learns Isabel by searching with her. As for absorbing the knowledge about scavenging, Anna describes the process as "the same way you learn a new language" (56). The act of collecting and reproducing fragmentary objects is associated with language and gives Anna's collecting more allegorical touch.

So far, we have seen the symbolic function of collecting objects and giving meaning to them in *The Music of Chance*

and *In the Country of Last Things.* It should be added that there is a difference between the collecting acts in these two novels. In *The Music of Chance,* the story takes a catastrophic turn as the object collecting progresses. However, in *In the Country of Last Thing,* Anna's collecting act is in her everyday life, which means she collects and sells to reproduce repetitively. While the accumulation of stones in *The Music of Chance* finally begins to take on traits of narration at the end of the story, the meaning of the collected objects in *In the Country of Last Things* is repeated at short intervals from the beginning of the story. This is because the country Anna lives in is a dystopian world. In a world always in a state of ruin, the collected objects always have added meaning.

However, there is a little happiness even in the country where destruction is permanent. Anna comes to live a life with people in Woburn House. However, a catastrophic development will take that life away. In a catastrophic world, while the collection of materials and the concomitant impartation of meaning are normalized, the act of collecting expands in scale as the story progresses, and the action of "imparting meaning" is depicted in this process. In a catastrophic world, while the collection of objects and the giving of meaning are normalized, it expands in scale as the story progresses.

Early in the story, Anna, as a scavenger, collects objects, but in the latter part of the story, after moving to Woburn House, she sells things. The Woburn House, which Dr. Woburn left, and his daughter Victoria now leads functions as a kind of hospital.

Anna met Boris Stipanovich, another collector in Auster's oeuvre, in Woburn House. Boris' room is an accumulation of things he has collected over the years, the most notable of which is a collection of headgear. The collection is noteworthy because Boris refuses to give an interpretation for them. As Anna states,

> There were cowboy hats and derbies, fezes and pith helmets, mortarboards and berets—every kind of headgears you could imagine. Whenever I asked Boris why he collected them, he would give me a different answer. Once he said that wearing hats was part of his religion. Another time he explained that each of hats had once belonged to a relative and that he wore them in order to communicate with the souls of his dead ancestors. (153)

As in the quote above, every time Anna asks why he collects hats, Boris gives her a different answer, as if he refuses to assign each hat meaning. Boris's collection differs from Flower's in *The Music of Chance,* though they are collected under the category of headgears, Boris, as the owner, refuses to attach any roles to them. The way he gives a different answer to each question is his refusal to let the collection take on a precise meaning.

Boris himself had an essential role in Woburn House, unlike his hats. The funds of their charity were a collection of Woburn's. He was in charge of selling the Woburn family's collection to raise funds. Anna accompanies Boris to sell the collection. What is important here is that Boris tells a story

about each item when he promotes the objects.

> His stories were preposterous, but he invented them so quickly, came up with such elaborate details, kept talking with an air of such conviction, that it was hard not to find yourself getting sucked in. “my dear good man,” he would say, for example. “Take a careful look at this teacup. Hold it in your hand, if you wish. Close your eyes, put it to your lips, and imagine yourself drinking tea from it—just as I did thirty-one years ago, in the drawing rooms of Countess Oblomov. (149)

The Woburn family’s collection was not the trashy stuff that Anna had sold as a scavenger earlier in the story, but luxury goods like a tea set. However, demand for luxury goods was extremely low, so they were meaningless. Boris gives meaning to things that are no longer needed by transplanting the objects to the other context. To give meaning to objects is specifically indicated here.

As mentioned above, Anna found a partner Samuel Farr, got pregnant. Even in this dystopian world, she could now feel happiness. However, the story begins to take a catastrophic turn when it is revealed to the government that Anna and other members of Woburn House committed the crime of burying their bodies, illegal in this country, when their fellow members have been killed. To escape punishment for the crime of burying a corpse, Woburn House exhausts most of its funds. The entire collection of the Woburn Family had been sold, and in the process, all kinds of meaning were attached to the items. Just when all the objects in the

collection are given purpose, the shooting at Woburn House occurs. Several people were killed or injured, and Woburn House was closed down. Anna and the members continued to live in Woburn House, but it was far from where she once felt happy.

> We've kept ourselves warm by dismantling portions of the house and throwing the pieces into the furnace.... We've taken apart the banisters, the door frames, the partitions. There was a kind of anarchic pleasure to it at first—chopping up the house for fuel—but now it has become merely grim. Most of the rooms have been stripped bare, and it feels as though we are living in an abandoned bus depot, and old wreck of a building slated for demolition. (185)

After the objects are given context, the novel's story goes to ruin. Since Anna is attempting to escape from a country filled with meaning-given objects, those objects will be discarded again, waiting to be picked up by new scavengers.

Oracle Night

The objects collected in *Oracle Night* are different from those in *The Music of Chance* and *In the Country of Last Things*. The objects are physical letters. *Oracle Night* is a story about writer Sidney Orr's recovery from illness and contains other storylines as mise en abyme. After being discharged from the hospital, Orr purchased a blue notebook and began collecting many unrelated stories in it. These unrelated stories come to connect at the end of the story, and

then the story moves on to assault, death, and miscarriage.

Here, it is necessary to mention the materiality of letters. In his theory, Benjamin aimed to restore the relevance of letters. Allegory works to recapture the relevancy of words by focusing on letters as substances whose role is to have meaning.

> This is what determines the character of allegory of as a form of writing. It is a schema; and as a schema it is an object of knowledge, but it is not securely possessed until it becomes a fixed schema: at one and the same time a fixed image and a fixed sign. The baroque ideal of knowledge, the process of storing, to which the vast libraries are monument, is realized in the external appearance of the script. (184)

Letters become ideal knowledge when they are stripped of their original meanings and given new meanings by allegorists.

In *Oracle Night*, the materiality of letters or text is illustrated in the following points. The description of the blue notebook in which Orr collects his stories shows the number of pages and the places where he has written, reminding readers of text as material objects. In addition, annotations are added in *Oracle Night*, so the readers need to shift their eyes to other parts of the book each time. Every time they move their eyes and hands to the footnotes, sometimes to other pages, they face the book's materiality.[9] As Pia Masiero Marcolin points out, "[m]uch of the details of characterization is entrusted to the footnotes" (189),

important information is given in the annotations. Therefore, the readers are forced to physically move their eyes to understand the story.

The most prominent example of material letters is the moving letters. Orr wrote a film script for *The Time Machine* (1895), and in the script, he depicts the physical movement of letters. When a time traveler interferes with a person's actions in the past, the writing on a book page changes in the present.

> The name Lee Harvey Oswald, for example, would suddenly disappear from every work on Kennedy assassination. Imagining that scene, I understood that those alterations could be turned into a striking visual effect: hundreds of words scrambling around and rearranging themselves on printed pages moving back and forth like tiny, maddened bugs. (136)

It is a depiction that emphasizes the relevance of letters.

Here, we will look at the stories collected in the blue notebook. In the notebook, there are five unrelated stories. The one is written by Orr, a story about Nick Bowen. The second is Nick's story titled *Oracle Night* by Sylvia Maxwell, which Nick reads as an editor. The third is an essay on a newspaper article about a baby who died in a toilet. The fourth story is a film adaptation of Wells' *The Time Machine,* which is not technically written in the notebook but inspired by it. The last is the short story "The Empire of Bones" by John Trause, a writer in *Oracle Night,* which finally ends without being written, but Orr thought to write in the

notebook. It is noteworthy that they are unrelated and that most of them are not finalized. Orr was unable to continue the story when he found Nick trapped in an underground shelter. Maxwell's *Oracle Night* was also only outlined, and Orr's adaptation of *The Time Machine* was rejected by the film company and never made it to the world. As for "The Empire of Bones," which John gave Sidney to adapt and handed the manuscript, readers never know the whole story because Orr loses the manuscript.

The fact that these stories are adaptations of earlier works also reinforces their fragmentary trait. Also, these collected adaptations are far from the context of the original works. Although Nick's story was inspired by Dashiell Hammett's Flitcraft in *The Maltese Falcon*,[10] Orr depicts Nick's world based on Flitcraft and intentionally deviates from it to illustrate the story about his wife Eva. In the script for the adaptation of *The Time Machine*, Orr also pointed out the logical flaws in the original work and changed the number of characters and the setting of time travel, which were related to the story's main plot. Maxwell's *Oracle Night* is not an adaptation, but it highlights the differences between the actual writer's work in Nick's story, Sylvia Monroe. When it comes to Trause's "The Empire of Bones," Orr eventually does not know the original story. Thus, the adaptations depicted in *Oracle Night* consciously deviate from the context of the original work. The stories collected in the blue notebook, like the stones and Flower's collection in *The Music of Chance*, and the objects in *In the Country of Last Things*, are collections that refuse to fit into a conventional context.

Oracle Night takes a catastrophic turn at the end of the story when fragments of the story have been collected, and they find the connection. Orr has been collecting the stories without relating them to each other, but before Jacob's assault on Grace, he sees a connection between them.

> At certain moments during those days, I felt as if my body had become transparent, a porous membrane through which all the invisible forces of the world could pass—a nexus of airborne electrical charges transmitted by the thoughts and feelings of others. I suspect that condition was what led to the birth of Lemuel Flagg, the blind hero of *Oracle Night*, a man so sensitive to the vibrations around him that he knew what was going to happen before the events themselves took place. I didn't know, but every thought that entered my head was pointing me in that direction. Stillborn babies, concentration camp atrocities, presidential assassinations, disappearing spouses, impossible journeys back and forth through time. The future was already inside me, and I was preparing myself for the disasters that were about to come. (223)

After Orr feels everything is connected, the catastrophic events of Trause's death, the assault on Grace, and the resulting abortion unfold. Collected stories refuse to be given coherent meaning and dissipate like a notebook returning to a piece of paper.

From the perspective of collected objects, this chapter observes that the act of collecting is an allegorical action in

three novels, *The Music of Chance, In the Country of Last Things, Oracle Night*. In Auster's works, the act of collecting is the driving force of the story, but these collected objects are not stored. The allegorical fixation of the meaning does not occur in Auster's works. These objects are scattered after the destruction and drift around, possibly infused with meaning by the allegorist again and placed in a new context. Auster's way of using allegory is an allegory that is not stable like traditional allegories but always reconfigurable in meaning. Austerian allegory, which refuses to be given meaning, leaves words dissipated and invites the writer to tell more stories because it does not converge.

Chapter 4
Creative Agency: Representations of Rooms

In the previous chapters, we have seen that various objects constitute fictionality in Auster's oeuvres. This chapter analyzes the rooms in Auster's works and reveals how they affect the stories. The relationship between Auster and New York is often discussed, as *New York Trilogy* is set in New York City, and the author himself has lived in New York for many years. The curiosity to see what happens if you put the same person in a different environment is the impetus for writing about the life of Archibald Ferguson in four different ways. Throughout his career, Auster has believed that the environment affects characters strongly.

This chapter focuses on the rooms that were written, especially in Auster's novels. Mark Brown explains the important relationship between the environment and Auster's works. In his book, *Paul Auster*, Brown analyzes Auster's works from the aspects of a place. As he observes, "[f]or Auster, art—poetry, fiction, dance, music and painting—is a means by which the individual may place her- or himself in relation to the environment: a way of being in the world" (Brown 15). Brown also examines the rooms in Auster's works, but his focus is on poetry and *The Invention of Solitude*.[11] This chapter elaborates on the description of the room, especially in Auster's novels, and reveals that the room not only represents the characters, but rather the room forces the characters to write stories.

Rooms as Representations of Characters

Objects often function as representations of characters in literary works. Auster uses the room in the same way in certain situations. In particular, the rooms of people whom the narrator has newly met, or who have already died, represent them.

In *The Book of Illusions,* the narrator Zimmer, whose name means room in German, meets Alma dramatically. Alma is waiting for him in the parking lot of Zimmer's house, and as soon as she enters the house, she forces him to come to New Mexico and pulls a gun on him. They meet in a volatile situation and leave for a trip to New Mexico the next day, so they do not get enough time to get to know each other. On their way to New Mexico, Alma mainly explains the half-life of Hector after his sudden disappearance. Zimmer, who is suddenly made an outsider in the cremation of Hector's films by Frida, "decided to kill time by looking at everything else in the four rooms she inhabited" (*Book* 283). He conducts a self-room tour and examines "the food in the refrigerator, the clothes in the bedroom closet, and the collections of books, records, and videos in the living room" (*Book* 283). As he observes, "I learned that she drank skim milk and buttered her bread with unsalted butter, favored the color blue (mostly in dark shades), and had wide-ranging tastes in literature and music—a girl after my own heart" (*Book* 283), Zimmer learns who she is from the appearance of the room. In addition to this example, the following quote is from Zimmer spending time in Alma's bathroom.

> I found it pleasant to be in Alma's bathroom, standing among the tubes and jars that lined the shelves of the

> medicine cabinet, that crowded the top of the small wooden chest by the window. The red toothbrush in its slot above the sink, the lipsticks in their gold and plastic containers, the mascara brush and eyeliner pencil, the box of tampons, the aspirins, the dental floss, the Chanel No. 5 eau de cologne, the prescription bottle of antimicrobial cleanser. Each one was a sign of intimacy, a mark of solitude and self-reflection. (*Book* 281)

The male characters in Auster's works often find pleasure in spending time in the female characters' bathrooms; this is another example. From this description, which reminds the readers of the scene in which Zimmer opens his deceased wife Helen's closet and sprinkles eau de cologne on himself, we see he feels the pleasure as if stepping into the inner part of that person.

The room not only represents the character of its owner but also how the narrator sees that person. The narrator "I" in *The Locked Room* deals with the manuscript of a novel *Neverland* left behind by the missing Fanshawe and works with a publishing company. Because of the novel becoming a hit, it is rumored that the author of *Neverland* might actually be the narrator himself. Editor Stewart Green advises the narrator to write a biography of Fanshawe in order to quash the rumor. To prepare for Fanshawe's biography, the narrator went to Fanshawe's parents' house, and he "was stunned by the accumulation" of the materials that belong to Fanshawe. As he observes, "In fact, I was frightened, overwhelmed by the sheer bulk of what was

there" (*The Locked Room* 258). The narrator spent his time alone in Fanshawe's room and felt the following quote:

> I settled down behind the desk. It was a terrible thing to be sitting in that room, and I didn't know how long I would be able to take it. Fanshawe's baseball glove lay on a shelf with a scuffed-up baseball inside it; on the shelves above it and below it were the books he had read as a child; directly behind me was the bed, with the same blue-and-white checkered quilt I remembered from years before. This was the tangible evidence, the remains of a dead world. I had stepped into the museum of my own past, and what I found there nearly crushed me. (*Locked* 258)

At this point, when the narrator was writing Fanshawe's biography, the narrator had already published a novel written by Fanshawe, married Fanshawe's wife Sophie, and was raising Fanshawe's son Ben with her. He had been entangled in Fanshawe's life. The narrator's identity crisis, which resulted in the collapse of his marriage to Sophie, had already begun at this time, which was unknown to the narrator himself. The narrator was oppressed and frightened to live not his own life, Fanshawe's life.

Rooms Representing Relationships

The rooms also represent the relationships between the characters. In *Leviathan*, Benjamin Sachs is forced to change the direction of his life after falling down from a fire escape. Sachs, who can no longer be the person he used to be,

both professionally and in his marriage, moves to a cabin in Vermont, with the excuse that it is for a certain period. Fanny does not agree with their divorce but sends him away because of his work. The relationship between them is expressed using the metaphor of a room.

> They had talked about keeping the door open, but now it seemed as if the door had vanished. it wasn't that it had closed, it simply wasn't there anymore. Fanny found herself looking at a blank wall, and after that she turned away. They were no longer married, and what she did with her life from then on was her own business. (*Leviathan* 154)

In *The Locked Room*, there is a door that can be locked. Fanshawe and the narrator feel each other's presence, and both think that there is a relationship that they should confront at some point. However, while Fanny and Sachs are still married, they know that their relationship is over. The key to opening the door, and even that door, has disappeared in their relationship.

Similarly, the relationship between *Leviathan*'s narrator, Peter Aaron, and his first wife, Delia, is also represented in their rooms. Their marriage is not going well because of the pressures of parenthood and financial insecurity on their shoulders. Delia asks Aaron to get her glasses from her room, and there Aaron comes across her diary. Aaron reads her diary because "[t]he pages were open on the desk, and Delia had just asked me to go into the room for her" (*Leviathan* 61). He interprets her action as follows:

"it was almost as if she was inviting me to read what she had written" (*Locked* 61). Permission to enter the room is permission to look at her open diary and an invitation to her mind. In other words, her room represents her mind. The contents of the diary Aaron reads on that day are terrible, full of complaints about him. Even though their relationship has already been ill, and Aaron manages to save their marriage, he decides to leave the house by reading the diary or entering her room. "The deed had already been done, and there wasn't any room for second thoughts" (*Leviathan* 62).

Another couple is also an example of this representation. As he continues to live in the cabin, Sachs ends up killing Reed Dimaggio. To make amends, Sachs decides to deliver Dimaggio's money that to his wife, Lilian. Sachs begins a strange family life with Lilian and her daughter Maria. Sachs leads the life that Dimaggio would have led, which will lead to the bombing of the Statue of Liberty. In other words, "Sachs takes the place of the man he has killed: as husband to Dimaggio's wife, and father to his daughter" (Brown 88). Before Sachs joins them, Lilian and Maria's house is in a state of disarray. He decides to clean and repair the house.

> There was nothing he could about the tattered furniture, of course, or the cracked ceilings in the bedrooms, or the rusted enamel in sinks, but at least he could make the place clean. Tackling one room at a time, he scrubbed and dusted and scoured and rearranged, progressing methodically from back to the front, from the first floor to the second, from large

> messes to small. . . . Last of all, he repaired the legs of the dining-room table, fastening them back into position with an assortment of nails and screws he found at the bottom of the kitchen drawer. (*Leviathan* 219)

Basically, he does get rid of and eliminate stain or dust. While sweeping the floors and walls, in fact, what he "scrubbed and dusted and scoured" (*Leviathan* 219) off are marks of Dimaggio in the house. As Aaron observes, "his goal was to make the house spotless, to turn it into a model of domestic order and tranquility" (*Leviathan* 219). After the thorough cleaning of the house, "[l]ast of all, he repairs the legs of the dining room table (*Leviathan* 219)," he says "[t]here was nothing he could do about the tattered furniture" (*Leviathan* 219).

To Be Written Is To Be

Thus far, the personalities of the characters and the relationships between them have been represented using rooms. However, the narrators' memories of the room and environment are sometimes vague.

Zimmer, who explores Alma's room and her disposition, tells readers that his memories of New Mexico are actually vague. Zimmer and Alma arrive at Hector's ranch in the evening and visit his house. Frieda lets him in and takes him to Hector's room. His observations of it are inadequate: "[t]here was no time for anything but the most cursory look around, the briefest of first impression. . . . No time to make any observations about the house" (*Book* 221). It is not only

that he does not have enough time to observe the house. His memory of the environment is also vague.

> It was the first time I had been to New Mexico. Under normal circumstances, I would have gawked at the landscape, pointing to rock formations and demented-looking cacti, asking the name of this mountain or that gnarled shrub, but I was too caught up in Hector's story to bother with that now. . . . I would travel that road several more times in the days to come, but I remember almost nothing what I saw on that first trip. But the land itself is invisible. It had been there, but I wonder now if I ever bothered to look at it. Or, if I did, if I wasn't too distracted to register what I was seeing. (*Book* 200-01)

In this quotation, Zimmer emphasizes how absorbed he is in Alma's story of Hector and in Alma herself, as he can only hear her voice. Because of the development of the story in which Zimmer falls in love with Alma and will meet the actual Hector, he highlights their relationship, but the important point is that he does not remember the scenery. He does not even know if he saw it. On the environment of the film *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*, which was shot on Hector's ranch, he observes, "I wasn't sure if I had watched the wind closely enough, if I had paid enough attention to the trees" (*Book* 273). Zimmer particularly misses the work environment. Zimmer's attitude toward the environment is seen repeatedly during his trip to New Mexico.

Chapter 7 of *The Book of Illusions* starts with the line

"There was no moon in the sky that night" (*Book* 220). In that chapter, Zimmer's statements of his "principles" (*Book* 221) about vision and perception are slipped in at times.

> Eleven years later, I still wonder what would have happened if I had stopped and turned around before we reached the door. What if, . . . I had stopped for a moment. looked at the other half of the sky, and discovered a large round moon shining down on us? Would it still be true to say that there was no moon in the sky that night? If I didn't take the trouble to turn around and look behind me, then yes, it would still be true. If I never saw the moon, then the moon was never there. . . . Like it or not, I can only write about what I saw and heard – not about what I didn't. This is not an admission of failure so much as a declaration of methodology, a statement of principles. (*Book* 221)

Zimmer is not being distracted while showing his excitement to fall in love with Alma or to see Hector, whom he thinks is dead. What he insists on is that human perception is not perfect. Or he thinks that only what he perceives exists. Zimmer's principle, the moon that is not seen does not exist, implies George Berkeley's *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710). Auster puts Berkeley's name in the reading assignments of Clair (*Book* 250), who is a heroin in Hector's film *The Inner Life of Martin Frost*. In *The Book of Illusions*, as for the memory of New Mexico, Zimmer describes only what he sees. His statement, "I can only write about what I saw and heard –

not about what I didn't" (*Book* 221), conversely means what he writes is what he perceives, and for him, what he writes is what exists there.

Then, should we interpret Zimmer as a Berkeley idealist? Berkeley's idealism, whose basic principle is "*esse* is *percipi*" ("To be is to be perceived" in English) (Berkeley 42) is a thought that there is nothing but God and perception, so there are only ideas of perceived things not things themselves. To apply this to Zimmer, everything he sees and perceives is only an idea and does not physically exist. It is not plausible to think that Zimmer wrote *The Book of Illusions* with such thoughts. Rather, it is the contrary. As the title implies, *The Book of Illusions* is about various illusions, and what he writes is about the dead, who do not have their physical bodies. Zimmer inscribes their existence by writing about Hector, who is considered already dead for some decades by the world, and Alma, who was to write Hector's biography. In his statement, what was written was there.

Creative Room

When the narrators in Auster's works describe the rooms, there is a lingering ambiguity in their perceptions. However, what is written is true to them. So far, we have seen that rooms are used to represent the characters' personalities or the relationship between the characters. The accuracy of this perception is not important, and the emphasis is on what is written. How, then, is the relationship between narrators and their own rooms? In the above section, I stated that the room is meant to be described and used as a representation;

however, if we look into the narrators' rooms, we will see that the rooms were rather what made them write and the space was creative.

In *Leviathan,* Sachs and Aaron are both writers. There are many descriptions of writing works and criticism, and the writers emphasize the writing location. Sachs' novel *New Colossus* was written while he was in prison, where he was put because of refusing to go to the Vietnam War. Sachs is humble to say that "the author was very young when he wrote his book. Maybe too young, in fact. Sometimes he feels sorry it was published" (*Leviathan* 21). However, he also states, "[i]f I have any interest in it now, it's only because of where it was written. The book itself doesn't mean much, but I suppose I'm still attracted to the place where it was born" (*Leviathan* 21). The place where it is written is important. Aaron, who is surprised at Sachs's remark, asks, "With locked cells and bars? (22)," prison would not seem attractive to people. Sachs's reference to the writing location is not only about *New Colossus*. In the days that followed, location was still important to him. Sachs tells Aaron about his writing career after moving to Vermont.

> As he [Sachs] put it to me in one of our late-night conversations, it was a bit like being in a prison again. . . . It's odd," he continued, "but the two times I've sat down and written a novel, I've been cut off from the rest of the world. First in jail when I was a kid, and now up here in Vermont, living like a hermit in the woods. I wonder what the hell it means. (*Leviathan* 157)

For Sachs, the place of writing is important.

Aaron also explains the importance of the writing place. Aaron actually writes at the cabin in Vermont, the same place as Sachs. It was originally owned by Sachs and Fanny, but after Sachs disappeared, it was given to Aaron, who comes to have a baby. As Aaron observes about the cabin, which Sachs once said was secluded from the world like a prison, "the great lure of the house is its remoteness. It sits on top of a small mountain, for miles from the nearest village by way of a narrow dirt" (*Leviathan* 10). They both like the fact that the cabin is secluded from the world.

Zimmer in *The Book of Illusion* is also conscious of the relationship between writing and the secluded room. He states, "[i]f I meant to write the book, I would need a place to hole up in" (*Book* 27), and he almost never leaves Brooklyn except to go out for daily needs for nine months of writing a research book about Hector's film, *The Silent World of Hector Mann*. His life at that time "was like living in a padded cell, but of all the lives I could have lived at that moment, it was the only one that made sense to me" (*Book* 55). Here, we find another prison. The authors are not voluntarily confined to their rooms, but they are imprisoned. Rooms have power over them.

Author's Dilemma

When we speak about an author in prison, the focus should be on *Travels in the Scriptorium*. In this novel, the characters who remind the readers of previous characters in Auster's works appear. The protagonist, Mr. Blank, does not remember anything, and he finds himself in a room where he has been taken to or come willingly. Sometimes people come to visit him, making efforts to understand his current

situation. He finds out that they are agents he sent for difficult missions.

One of them, James P. Flood, visits Mr. Blank and asks him to recall the story of *Neverland.*[12] In the story mentioned in the report about Fanshawe, there is a following account: "*Montag's house in chapter seven; Flood's dream in chapter thirty*" (*Travels* 52; italics original).[13] As Flood explains, Fanshawe uses him in *Neverland*, but he never leaves any further explanation but the above quotation. Flood complains, "[m]y whole life depends on it. Without that dream, I'm nothing, literally nothing" (*Travels* 53). To hear the flood so earnestly plead, Mr. Blank laughs at him. That makes Flood say harshly that "I blame you for what's happened to me" (*Travels* 53). As he mentioned in the report about Fanshawe, Mr. Blank should have read *Neverland*, and that is the only thing Flood asks him to do. However, the agent's complaint against him is that denunciation is exactly the denunciation from the characters to the author.

Mr. Blank is being treated by Dr. Samuel Farr, who is a character in *In the Country of the Last Things*. Dr. Farr forces Mr. Blank to tell him what he thinks is going to happen next. He tries to concentrate, but he cannot:

> What's wrong? Farr asks, with a look of concern on his face.
>
> The dammed specters, Mr. Blank says. They're back again.
>
> Specters?
>
> My victims. All the people I've made suffer over the years. They're coming after me now to take their

revenge.
(*Travels* 80-81)

Farr asks about Mr. Blank's health, but he immediately says "[w]e have to get on with the story" (*Travels* 81).

The writers in Auster's works put the burden of representation on the room. In contrast, they need to lock themselves in a room to write, and that room is described as a prison. These writers are the prisoners of the room, and they are actually forced to write their stories by the ghosts in the room.

Chapter 5
A Subjective Object: A Dog in *Timbuktu*

So far, this paper has focused primarily on material objects and examined how the smallest things work to compose fiction in Auster's works. When we inspect the quotation from *The Book of Illusions* in Chapter 1, we find another object.

> Bricks and cobblestones, his[Hector] breath gusting into the air in front of it, and the three-legged dog limping around the corner and vanishing from sight. It was a picture of his own death, he later realized, the portrait of a soul in ruins. (*Book* 192)

This is a scene in which Hector lost his way, both physically and mentally, and they are the objects he saw. Auster uses one of the smallest things, a dog, in this scene. A dog is not literally a thing; however, it was written as an object in novels. This chapter focuses on dogs, objects in a society where humans have subjectivity. In the novella *Timbuktu*, Auster uses an omniscient narrator. Points of view shift seamlessly, and one of them is put on Mr. Bones.

Set in contemporary America, *Timbuktu* depicts the interspecies companionship between the owner, William G. Christmas, and his dog, Mr. Bones. While it uses an omniscient narrator, the point of view is mainly on Mr. Bones. As Ittner points out, "[w]riting from the animal perspective tends to be dismissed as a trivial enterprise"

(181). Compared to the preceding novels, *Leviathan,* a highly political novel, and *Mr. Vertigo*, a novel about America as a melting pot, *Timbuktu,* published after five years, seems unimportant to critics. *Kirkus Reviews* wrote, "Shockingly bad, especially for someone of Auster's stature." (n.pag.) Alan Cheuse states the plot is tedious and observed, "Paul Auster has a great following in Europe. Maybe a flat story like this just reads a lot better in translation" (n.pag.). In a review of *The Book of Illusions*, Adrienne Miller, who is sending praise to *New York Trilogy,* and *The Book of Illusions,* writes that she feels "hate" even three years after the publication of *Timbuktu* (78). *Timbuktu* has not been discussed as much as Auster's other works over the years. Chapter five analyzes the view of Mr. Bones, who is not only an object but also a subject of his life.

What is a Dog?

Animals have appeared in many American literary works. Herman Melville's *Moby Dick or, The Whale* (1851) depicts one man's deadly battle with a giant whale. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) pulls the reader into a battle of wits with an orangutan. These works show that American literature has always been accompanied by animals.

However, there are not a lot of animal stories that were not made into human stories. In addition to the two novels in American Renaissance, for example, in *White Fang* (1906), which stars a wolf-dog called White Fang, Jack London begins a story by interacting with Native Americans. By setting the life of Weedon Scott, the eventual master of

White Fang, in the civilized society of California, the novel depicts the history of man in America.

While many stories depict animals, few use animals as point-of-view characters, which is not surprising given that animals have been a part of human history. In American literature, where people live with nature, animals have been represented, as Poe's orangutan and Melville's whale, but their inner world has not been the focus. As Carrie Rohman explains, "Traditional narratives do not register the eruption of animality through the eruption of language" (40), depicting the inward of animals has been neglected. Though animals have always been mere representations, Auster adopts them as point-of-view figures to shed light on their inner lives.

Timbuktu consistently uses the third-person narrator, but the point of view switches irregularly between the omniscient narrator and Mr. Bones.[14] For example, the story begins with the line "Mr. Bones knew that Willy wasn't long for this world" (3), as Mr. Bones reminisced about his past with Willy before the death of his master. At the end of the story, the scene depicting Mr. Bones' suicidal traffic accident adopts the omniscient narrator's view, "[w]ith any luck, he would be with Willy before the day was out" (186). Thus, the perspective of the story is not stable.[15]

To confirm the use of Mr. Bones as the viewpoint character, we will look at the scene where he misunderstands the situation, which is the most explicit indication. After Willy's death, Mr. Bones spends a few days with Henry Chow, a boy he met in the park. Henry, a baseball fan like Auster, made it a habit to buy *The Baltimore Sun* and report the

results of games to Mr. Bones. Mr. Bones, who had never heard about baseball from Willy, could not understand what a baseball team was.

> Orioles fought with tigers, blue jays battled against angels, bear cubs warred with giants, and none of it made any sense. A baseball plyer was a man, and yet once he joined a team he was turned into an animal, a mutant being or a spirit who lived in heaven next to God. (110)

It depicts a misunderstanding that cannot happen from an omniscient point of view. In a later encounter with the Jones family, Mr. Bones makes a similar mistake. He listens to a girl named Alice reporting to her mother Polly, "Look what Tiger found" (126), and worried, "Where was this tiger she was talking about and how could a tiger be prowling around out here where people lived?" (126)

If a dog is a viewpoint character, then the character's ability to think and speak is an issue. In *Timbuktu,* Mr. Bones is one of Auster's responses on what and who animals are.

Animality of Mr. Bones

Here, we will examine how Mr. Bones is portrayed in *Timbuktu*. Although a point of view for Mr. Bones, he is a dog, and his canine animality is evident. Mr. Bones' beloved master, Willy, passes away in the middle of the story. Prepared to die, Willy, accompanied by Mr. Bones, had come to Baltimore searching for his high school teacher, Bea Swanson. At the time of his death, one of Willy's missions

was to leave his manuscript to Swanson, who had encouraged Willy in his writing since high school.

Mr. Bones, who travels with the ailing Willy, is portrayed as "a good, loyal dog" (7). Followed by the observation that "[h]e didn't whine about not having eaten in the past thirty-six hours; he didn't sniff the air for female scents; he didn't stop to pee on every lamppost and fire hydrant," Mr. Bones is depicted as a rational dog in the face of his master's crisis. However, this is the attitude that Mr. Bones has about his master's situation. On the contrary, he is usually a beast who only thinks about defecation, mating, and food.

Mr. Bones is portrayed as an animal and also as an object. Significantly, Mr. Bones is a stray dog who has lost his master at a place where he has not lived. If Willy had died without leaving his house, the neighbors would have seen Mr. Bones and known that he is a former pet, not a stray "dog." However, he is now nothing more than a stray dog who is objected by officers.

> Willy had been cautioning him about this for many days now, and Mr. Bones knew the drill by heart: how to avoid the dogcatchers and constables, the paddy wagons and unmarked cars, the hypocrites from so-called humane societies. No matter how they talked to you, the word *shelter* meat trouble. It would begin with nets and tranquilizer guns, devolve into a nightmare of cages and fluorescent lights, and end with a lethal injection or a dose of poison gas. (4)

This part explains the brutality of human society and the overwhelming weakness of dogs' position as an object in it. The vulnerable position of dogs is portrayed even better because Mr. Bones is a stray dog.

A Subjective Object

So far, we have looked at Mr. Bones' nature as an animal, an objective existence in human society. Here, we will also look at Mr. Bones as a subjective object. In other words, he takes the initiative in his act.

Daniel Bronson states that "Mr. Bones is silent, but he is also more sentiment than the human characters around him. He thinks, feels, dreams, and even dreams within dreams" (363). Also, Steven Kellman, because of the dreams within dreams, which Bronson mentioned, suggests that Mr. Bones is a being that can "reason" like a human being (223). Kellman quotes Auster as saying in an interview that people can be in two places at the same time because they can think. Mr. Bones dreams within a dream about being in two places at the same time and concludes, therefore, he is a thinking dog (223).

That Mr. Bones is a thinkable dog is most clearly shown in the part where he explains how he, on whom the point of view is set, came to know about Willy's past. Willy's history is told from the perspective of Mr. Bones, but he went to the Gurevitch family seven years ago and had no way of knowing about it. Mr. Bones reconstructs the stories told by Willy and his mother, Mrs. Gurevitch.

Mr. Bones could vouch for the things he'd seen with his

> own eyes, the events he'd experienced in his own flesh, but he and Willy had been together for only seven years, and the facts concerning the previous thirty-eight were more or less up for grabs. If Mr. Bones hadn't spent his puppyhood living under the same roof with Willy's mother, the whole story would have been shrouded in darkness, but by listening to Mrs. Gurevitch and measuring her statements against her son's, Mr. Bones had managed to stitch together a reasonably coherent portrait of what Willy's world had looked like before he came into it. (12-13)

Not only did he listen to Mrs. Gurevitch, but he was also very careful to verify what she said by comparing it to Willy's own statements. Mr. Bones is portrayed as a thinkable dog.

We have reviewed the scenes depicting Mr. Bones as a thinkable dog, but one point must be added here. As Ittner states analyzing Virginia Woolf's *Flush: A Biography* (1933), the emotions of dogs in literary works tend to be projected by the thoughts of their masters, even in works with dogs as viewpoint characters (184-85). However, Mr. Bones is not a viewpoint character. Willy is "a master who did not treat him as an inferior" (*Timbuktu* 6), and even though Mr. Bones does not speak English, Willy always listens hard to make sure he does not miss a word when Mr. Bones tries to express his thoughts.

An impressive example of Willy's respect for Mr. Bones' intelligence is "the Symphony of Smells" (35) when Willy tries to make "an olfactory art" (41). Mr. Bones was Willy's

first dog, and until then, Willy did not have the opportunity to observe a dog for some length of time. As they spend time together, Willy realizes Mr. Bones, not only using smell as information, but enjoys it. As a result of observation, "Willy was convinced that Mr. Bones had a soul, did it not stand to reason that a dog of such spiritual inclinations would d aspire to loftier things—things not necessarily related to the needs and urgencies of his body, but spiritual things, artistic things, the immaterial hungers of the soul" (40)? Willy thinks that if humans use words and music as a medium of art, then art for dogs is expressed through smell. Willy does not consider dogs intellectually inferior but simply acknowledges that they have different recognition.

Animality of Humans

In addition to portraying the dog as an intellectual being, Auster foregrounds human animality and blurs their boundaries. Willy had started writing poetry in high school, and his talent was such that Swanson encouraged him to submit his work to literary magazines.[16] Since living with Mr. Bones, he has been writing. In addition, his intelligence was such that he received a full scholarship to Columbia University. Such an intelligent person is portrayed as a dog-like human being.

Willy, who is "a man with the heart of a dog" (30), "a rambler, a rough-and-ready soldier of fortune" (30), loves to take a walk. When looking for Swanson to give the manuscript, Willy does not use the phone to contact her but walks 300 kilometers to find her.

> A phone call would have done the job in half a minute, but Willy had a philosophical aversion to using the telephone for important business. He would rather walk for days on end than pick up one of those contraptions and talk to someone he couldn't see. So here they were two hundred miles later, wandering around the streets of Baltimore without a map, looking for an address that might or might not exist. (8)

It may be common for artists to distrust civilized machines, but at the same time, it also reminds us of animals that are incompatible with machines. In addition, the fact that he continues to walk without a map even though he has an address to go to reminds of Mr. Bones, who continues to search for Timbuktu without a map after Willy's death.

Willy is not the only one depicted with animality in *Timbuktu*. Willy's family is Jewish-American, with his father and mother having experienced the Holocaust and immigrated to the United States. Like Auster himself, the protagonists of most of his works have Jewish origins, and in *Timbuktu*, Jewishness is considered to be related to animal nature. Immigrants and animals are minorities, and those held in concentration camps are described as people who have lost their lost their subjectivity as well as their human dignity.

Neither of Willy's parents entered the camps, but they held the fear of the camps as a Jewish memory. It is evident that Mrs. Gurevitch "went wild, erupting in a tantrum of tears and angry disbelief" (22) to see Willy's tattoo. It is plausible "given what role the tattooing of Jewish skin had

played in her life-time[sick]" (22). When Mr. Bones complained about having been chased by a man with his rifle, Willy explained to Mr. Bones in a dream,

> Well, they tried to kill her, too. They hunted her down like a dog, and she had to run for her life. People get treated like dogs, too, my friend, and sometimes they have to sleep in barns and meadows because there's nowhere else for them to go. (122-23)

The experiences of Mr. Bones after Willy's death overlap with those of the Jews. Willy is not the only one compared to Mr. Bones and portrayed as a dog.

In addition, what needs to be emphasized is that the persecution of the Jews was not only an event that dehumanized the persecuted but also an event that highlighted the bestial nature of the persecutors. The Jewishness of the characters in *Timbuktu* plays a role in foregrounding human animality.

Dismantling Objectivity

This chapter explained that in *Timbuktu*, the dog is written as a subjective being, not just an object of one of the smallest things. Mr. Bones, as a subjective being, has the ability to think. To analyze the last scene, we must examine the word "Timbuktu," also the novel's title.

The word "Timbuktu," which Auster favors and repeatedly uses in this novel,[17] means "where the people went after they died" (48). On the verge of death, Willy tells Mr. Bones a story about the afterlife. There is one thing

worth mentioning about Timbuktu. In fact, in Timbuktu, being equal to humans is always mentioned in conjunction with being able to speak the language. Mr. Bones guessed from Willy's story, "in Timbuktu dogs would be able to speak man's language and converse with him as equal" (50). Later, in a dream, Mr. Bones is convinced during a conversation with Willy.

> ... and yet pleasurable and well-crafted as this dream was, it was no more than a prelude to something far more important.
> "What thing is that?" Mr. Bones heard himself say, and suddenly he was aware of his ability to speak again, to form words as clearly and smoothly as any two-leg yapping in his mother tongue.
> "That, for one thing," Willy said.
> "What *that*?" Mr. Bones said, not understanding at all.
> "What thing?"
> "What you are doing now."
> "I'm not doing anything. I'm just lying here with you on the sand."
> "You're talking to me, aren't you?"
> "It feels like talking...."
> "When the time comes, you don't have to worry."
> "What time, Willy? What are you talking about?"
> "When the time comes for you to go to Timbuktu." (181)

In Timbuktu, dogs can talk, and because they can speak, they are equal to humans. There, dogs can relate to people subjectively, not objectively.

Jacques Derrida once questioned and explored anthropocentrism that does not acknowledge that animals have reason. Derrida's observations of his cat led him to question whether animals really do not understand human language; in other words, whether the movements they make in response to our words are simply reactions to sounds or responses that we do not understand.

Taking Alice's statement in *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) as an example, Derrida supposes responsibility as something that clearly separates people from animals (3-8). If Mr. Bones can talk in Timbuktu, then he is a dog with responsibility.

However, the line between response and subordination is exceptionally blurry. If animals are responding to their masters, it is because they are submissive. In other words, the only way for a dog to become truly subjective is by not responding to its master. Auster portrays Bones as an escapist in this dog-man relationship.

When the Jones family goes on vacation, Mr. Bones gets sick at the pet hotel and escapes.[18] Initially, his goal was the Jones house, but his physical condition didn't allow him to reach it. Mr. Bones falls to the ground, dreams of Willy, and tries to return to Dog Heaven following his master's advice. After a while, he hears the sound of a car and anticipates that if there is a highway nearby, he might be able to drive back to the hotel. Nonetheless, Mr. Bones runs to the road to go to Timbuktu.

> All he had to do was step into the road, and he would be in Timbuktu. He would be in the land of words and

> transparent toaster, in the country of bicycle wheels and burning deserts where dogs talked as equals with men. (185)

Mr. Bones does not respond to Willy's advice. He dismissed Willy's suggestion and never returned to Dog Heaven to wait for the Jones family to return. Instead, Mr. Bones goes to Timbuktu and assumes responsibility by not following his master's order, or in other words, by being irresponsible.

Conclusion:
The Possibility of Developing Objects in Auster's Works

The preceding five chapters have provided an overview of the objects in Auster's works, arguing that the "smallest things" appear in the form of stones, bodies, trinkets, rooms, and a dog. Chapter 1 discussed the representation of stones in Auster's poetry, *Lulu on the Bridge*, and *Moon Palace*, analyzing how it transformed from an impossibility of language to a guiding force of imagination. Chapter 2 examined the poetics of "une nature morte" in representing the body as an object in *Man in the Dark* and Katya's discussion about objects. Chapter 3 demonstrated that the collecting of objects is intertwined with the development of Auster's stories, thus forming an allegory. Chapter 4 looked into the writers' rooms, discovering that they made them write. Chapter 5 considered Mr. Bones as no longer a human object but a subjective being.

As I considered the points of connection between chapter 5 and the others, Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" and *Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* came to mind. Her discussions, which start in biology, lead her to cyborgs, a fusion of humans and objects, and also to human-animal relationship. The smallest things, such as objects and animals, have great influence on human existence. When we eliminate the "leaky distinction . . . between animal-human (organism) and machine" (Haraway "A Cyborg" 174)—the wording Haraway uses to describe cyborgs—we can discern a

further subjective movement of objects. Or, as we saw in *Timbuktu*, given that animality is associated with Jewishness, it may be possible to read Jewishness into the objects in Auster's works.

However, Auster's imagination is not composed only of contemporary philosophy. Before establishing himself as a novelist, Auster wrote many essays on the objectivist poets. In describing John Ashbery's poetry, for example, he wrote that "the starting point is the world of things" (*Talking* 40), which is also true of Auster's works. In *Sunset Park*, Auster treats objects as more significant, and in this sense, it could be said that he has become more devoted to objects in recent years, but they have always been in his imagination.

In this paper, I have analyzed Auster's works from the perspective of objects—from stones to dogs. The poet, who uses words to understand the outside world, has suffered from the inability to describe things. However, one day, this poet realized that words cannot describe things, stating, "Language is not truth. It is the way we exist in the world" (*Invention* 173). We cannot capture the outside world with language. When he realized this, however, Auster did not stop playing with the words.

> Still, the power of rhyming words, of word transformations, cannot altogether be dismissed. The feeling of magic remains, even if cannot be connected with a search for the truth. (*Invention* 172)

Auster recognized that he could not capture the truth, but he could use words and objects to tell stories, to spin tales.

Auster writes with using objects to embrace the fictionality of words.

Notes

[1] James Peacock argues that "certain recurring images" (171) such as wall and stones "evoke Auster's Jewish heritage" (171).

[2] For this translation, I referred to Hugonnier, François. "Speaking the Unspeakable: Auster's Semiotic World." *The Invention of Illusions,* Edited by Stefania Ciocia and Jesús A. Gonzúlez, 2011, pp.259.

[3] Italics and capitalization are shown in the script of *Lulu on the Bridge* which is written by Auster.

[4] Auster mentions this performance in *Winter Journal*: "The dancers saved you. They are the ones who brought you back to life that evening in December 1978, who made it possible for you to experience the scalding, epiphanic moment of clarity that pushed you through a crack in the universe and allowed you to begin again. Bodies in motion, bodies in space, bodies leaping and twisting through empty, unimpeded air. . . (220)" and also in an interview he states "Then in December of 1978, I happened to go to an open rehearsal of a dance piece choreographed by the friend of friend, and something happened to me. A revelation, an epiphany—I don't know what to call it. Something happened and a whole world of possibilities suddenly opened up to me. (*Conversations* 24)"

[5] Lowenthal explains "The term 'still life' came into use only around 1650, when it appeared as still-leven in Dutch inventories, describing a painting of a motionless model." (6)

[6] Auster also uses such reconstruction in *Leviathan*. He inserts the episode of Statue of Liberty which were build in France, dismantled to carry to the United States, and reconstructed.

[7] Regarding the point that these stones are originally old Irish castle, Tim Woods states "The erection of the wall thus also signifies the nostalgia for the Old World, the yearning for the "possession" of a "true" history" (153).

[8] Ilana Shiloh analyzes Nashe at this time as being in a state of mind before being influenced by Flower and Stone's capitalist values, and states that these objects have a "sheer

materiality" (187) for Nashe.

[9] About the function of notes in *Oracle Night*, Mark Brown states "Auster continually draws attention to the practice of writing by punctuating the narrative with footnotes, which shift backwards and forwards from book's present, and between Sidney's 'real' world, created by Auster, and the fictional worlds which Sydney, as a writer is creating" (95). He points out not only physical movement but also shifting of the phase in the story is induced.

[10] Mark Brown points out Nick's story is also inspired by Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Wakefield" (1835) (Brown 95).

[11] In his book *Paul Auster* which analyzes Auster's works from the aspect of place, Mark Brown takes up *Leviathan*. However, his paper focuses on the novel from the viewpoint of downtown.

[12] *Neverland* is a title of a novel written by Fanshawe in *The Locked Room*.

[13] This quotation is exactly the same Auster writes in *The Locked Room*: "Montag's house in chapter seven; Flood's dream in chapter thirty" (276).

[14] Motoyuki Shibata states "the good point of *Timbuktu* which uses a dog as a viewpoint 'character' is that Author does not enjoy the fact a dog is a viewpoint character and does not try to entertain readers too much by the setting" (232; my trans.)

[15] Jutta Ittner observes it is difficult to distinguish where the point of view is set in *Timbuktu*. (191)

[16] Toby Mundy observes Willy looks similar to Doc in *Hand to Mouth: A Chronicle of Failure* (1997) and his discourse is a collage of quotation (49).

[17] As Mark Brown also points out this use (112). In *Mr. Vertigo*, Yehudi uses pseudonym "Tim Buck", and Walt uses "Tim Buck Two" (160).

[18] When Mr. Bones is welcomed by Jones family, he is named "Sparky" which Mr. Bones himself is not accustomed to. In

his dream, Willy translates his new name into Latin "Sparkatus." As Jim Shepard points out, this is dog's name which free the slaves in Rome (11).

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Errata

Page.	Line.	Error.	Correction.
1	14	*Groundwork* 561	561
4	2	To Listen	Listening
4	26	down	drown
8	12	you	your
8	14	85	50
10	17	shoots	was shot
14	18-19	*Lulu in Wedekind's*	Lulu in Wedekind's
15	2	illuminate	illuminates
18	28	her own led her	his own led him
21	23	Moonlight	*Moonlight*
22	5	for ground	foreground
22	15	134	133-34
26	4	fron	front
32	20	body now repulses	body repulses
35	5	*Grand Illusion*	*The Grand Illusion*
35	6	*and*	and
39	12	Stillman, Senior	Stillman Senior
44	20	and	is
45	4	Nash's	Nashe's
46	11	collecting *In*	collecting in *In*
49	5	my	My
53	7	Sydney	Orr
60	7	it	It
61	2	*Locked*	*Leviathan*
61	23	could about	could do about
66	15	Aaron,	As Aaron,
73	6	plyer	player
73	14	worried	worries
74	8	hydrant,"	hydrant" (7),
74	25	meat	meant
76	21-22	a viewpoint character	one
81	21	didn't	did not
89	18	---. *Groundwork*	---. *Report from the Interior.* 2012. *Groundwork*
89	19	2020.	2020, pp. 559-639.