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1. Introduction

The more I went into depth with my research, the more I discovered the diversity and complexity of metareference. The concept originally derived from literature and describes an artwork's self-conscious act of laying bare its own artificiality. Thereby, the artwork lifts itself on a meta-level in order to gain an objective glance on its medial constructiveness. The specific characteristic of metareference consists in the fact that the analysed medium is used for its own analysis. As a consequence, the medium does not merely transmit information, but is itself turned into the message. As the term *metafiction* was first used in the field of literature and is often considered a literary device, Werner Wolf introduced *metareference* as an umbrella term and revised the original concept by adapting it to all kinds of media.

Metareferential devices can be referred to as doubly encoded signs: They carry a heteroreferential meaning and relate to the extratextual world as well as a metareferential meaning and signal an awareness of their own artificiality. Roland Barthes introduced the concept of a secondary sign system, which allows a simultaneous reading of the original and the secondary meaning of a sign. Based on this principle of doubly encoded signs, a metareferential narration presents a heteroreferential story and simultaneously draws attention to the medium itself. A narrative device gains a metareferential meaning but still functions in its primary encoding. Consequently, the perception of the recipient oscillates between these two possible readings of the newly created metareferential device. I will explore how Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of a reversible figure, i.e. the phenomenon of spontaneously changing interpretations, is applicable to the act of decoding metareferential signs.

One can distinguish between three variants of metareference which apply to any narrative medium. This distinction is based on the well-known opposition of story and discourse. Metareferential devices on the story level draw attention to the artwork's constructedness and examine the relationship between reality and fiction. In case the devices are situated on the level of discourse 1, which concerns purely narrative decisions regardless of the chosen medium, they reflect on the manner of narrating a story. The third variant of metareferential devices comments on discourse 2, which refers to the way how narrative information is channelled through a specific medium. In the course of this process the medium is turned into the message and moves into the focus of attention. I dedicated my thesis to this third variant, which I will refer to as *media-specific metareference*. As I am analysing the medium film, my

aim is to explore how metareferential devices deconstruct the specific building blocks which serve constructing a filmic narration.

The aim of any metareferential device is to distance the audience from anticipating the diegesis and to encourage critical observations on the medium itself. Metareference ideally leads to an emancipation of the spectator, as it turns him/her from being a passive consumer into an active participant who critically engages in the initiated reflections on the medium. This thesis aims to explore the creative potential and rich diversity of metareferential devices which are chosen to achieve this goal. In the analysis of three films by Woody Allen (*Annie Hall*, *Play It Again, Sam* and *The Purple Rose of Cairo*) I discovered a variety of metareferential devices. Each film seems to have found its unique way of gaining an objective glance on its own medial constructedness. In search of a possible classification of these devices I came across Werner Wolf's distinction between explicit and implicit metareference in literature. According to his definition, instances of explicit metareference necessarily contain quotable elements, e.g. the actual wording "the novel". Implicit metareference, in contrast, describes how self-conscious reflections on the medium are hidden between the lines and, therefore, require the cooperation of the recipient in order to be decoded. As the metareferential meaning can be overlooked as well, a certain degree of medium-awareness is required on behalf of the recipient. The main part of my thesis represents an attempt to apply Wolf's distinction between explicit and implicit metareference in literature on the medium film. In Chapter 6 all metareferential devices which are to be found in one of the three films under discussion are analysed and ordered according to their explicitness.

By critically reflecting on and deconstructing filmic techniques, Woody Allen places his films in opposition to the Classical Hollywood Cinema, which, according to the definition of David Bordwell, aims at creating a deceptive illusion of reality and allows the spectator to get immersed into the diegetic world. Whereas these films seek to preserve the spatial and temporal clarity and structure their story according to an internal logic based on the principle of cause and effect, Allen frequently chooses a fragmentary narrative structure in his films. While Hollywood productions centre on the classical goal-oriented hero whose decisions guarantee the narrative movement, Allen opts for a passive character who regards him/herself as the victim of coincidences and is not capable of taking initiative in life. Whereas classical films emphasize the significance of the visual channel, ranging from well-thought out shot sizes to the famous continuity editing, Allen seemingly neglects the range of visual options to transmit narrative information and robs the medium of its dual status as an audio-visual format. As the conventions of Classical Hollywood Cinema have been repeatedly re-

established over history, they have formed an accustomed mode of decoding film. Consequently, the specific mechanisms of filmic narrations are no longer consciously recognized and need to be made visible by means of metareferential devices. By consciously resisting the accustomed style and breaking firmly established conventions, Allen distances the audience from the diegesis and encourages critical observations on the medium. The three films by Woody Allen were chosen as an illustration for exploring the creative potential of media-specific metareference, as they vary significantly concerning the manner in which they induce metareferential reflections in the spectator.

2. Metareference – The Medium is the Message

Originally, the phenomenon was grasped by the term metafiction and was merely analysed in connection with narrative fiction. Metafiction can be defined as the laying bare of fiction, i.e. the construction of illusion, in order to turn the medium into the message. One of the most frequently quoted definitions of metareference was formulated by Patricia Waugh, “*Metafiction* is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.” (2) The work of art lifts itself on a meta-level in order to look upon and analyse its own constructiveness. Metafiction can be described as the act of “explor[ing] a *theory* of fiction through the *practice* of writing fiction.” (Waugh 2) The specific characteristic of metafiction is that the analysed medium is used for its analysis. In other words, the medium is put into the focus of attention through the medium itself. Thereby, the medium does not transmit information, but is itself turned into the message. Marshall McLuhan used the phrase “The medium is the message” in order to refer to the considerable influence of the medium on the message which it conveys, while the medium is usually given little attention and remains invisible. Consequently, he emphasizes the importance of the medium, which significantly shapes the information it transmits. Metafiction goes one step further, as it does not only emphasize how the medium shapes the transmitted information, but actually turns the medium into the message itself.

The term *metafiction* was first used in the field of literature and is often considered a literary device. Werner Wolf deals with a broader understanding of metafiction and emphasizes that a deconstruction and critical observation of the own medium is possible in all kinds of media. As an umbrella term he considers *metareference* to be most appropriate. In this thesis I am going to use this umbrella term, as I regard Wolf's definition as very plausible. In order to clarify its exact meaning, it is helpful to analyse the two compounds separately. The prefix *meta* implicates the creation of a higher level. “As for the prefix ‘meta’ (rather than ‘self’), it seems best to mark the logical nature of the phenomenon under discussion, which implies the difference between an object- and a metalevel.” (Wolf, 2009 15) A work of art puts itself on a meta-level in order to gain an objective glance on itself as a medial construct. This conscious act of descending from the object-level and gaining a new perspective allows critical reflections on the medium itself. The term *reference* indicates a relation between the work of art and the outside world. “*Reference*, in the strict semiotic sense used in linguistics, means the relation of verbal signs to the extralingual world.” (Wolf, 2009 17) When applying the

concept of *reference* to all kinds of media, it does not only consider verbal (i.e. symbolic) signs, but also includes iconic and indexical signs. Consequently, “‘reference’ will be used as an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of realizations from a simple ‘pointing to’ a referent to complex cases of relations between sign and referent (or between signifier and signified).” (Wolf, 2009 17) The term *reference* describes semiotic relations of symbolic, iconic and indexical signs. Furthermore, Werner Wolf points out that the term *reference* does not only describe the relation of a sign to the extradiegetic world but can also indicate a relation within the medium or work of art.

To further clarify his understanding of metareference Wolf differentiates between *heteroreference* and *self-reference*. “‘Heteroreference’ [...] means the ‘normal’ intended quality of signs, namely to point to, or designate, elements of what conventionally is (still) conceived of as ‘reality outside’ a semiotic system.” (Wolf, 2009 18) Accordingly, heteroreference describes the relation between the intradiegetic and extradiegetic world. While reading a novel we automatically place it in context with our understanding of the world and, thereby, establish a relation between the story within the novel and the world outside. Within the field of cultural studies especially poststructuralists critically examine this concept, as it would separate the diegesis, respectively language or discourse, from the “world outside”. Poststructuralists, however, claim that nothing exists outside discourse. Proceeding on the assumption that the “world outside” is discourse as well, the text would simply relate to a different sign system. However, as the ordinary reader is not aware of existing within and gaining meaning through discourse, the concept which is based on the general idea of separating the intradiegetic and extradiegetic world can be regarded as true and useful to explain the term *heteroreference*.

Heteroreference is, then, placed in contrast to *self-reference*, which describes a relation within the same sign system. This can either be a relation within the same work of art or cover the entire medium. Metareference is, consequently, a phenomenon of self-reference, as it refers to its own medium and thereby makes it visible. “Metareference goes one step further: it establishes a secondary reference to texts and media (and related issues) as such by, as it were, viewing them ‘from the outside’ of a meta-level from whose perspective they are consequently seen as different from unmediated reality and the content of represented worlds.” (Wolf, 2009 22-23) Consequently, so called meta-signs carry a heteroreferential meaning, as they relate to the extradiegetic world, and secondly, a metareferential meaning, as they include a commentary on the medium, i.e. the sign-system, itself. This double-encoding

of the sign is of particular interest for my diploma thesis and will be the object of a detailed analysis in chapter 4, which deals with film as a semiotic system.

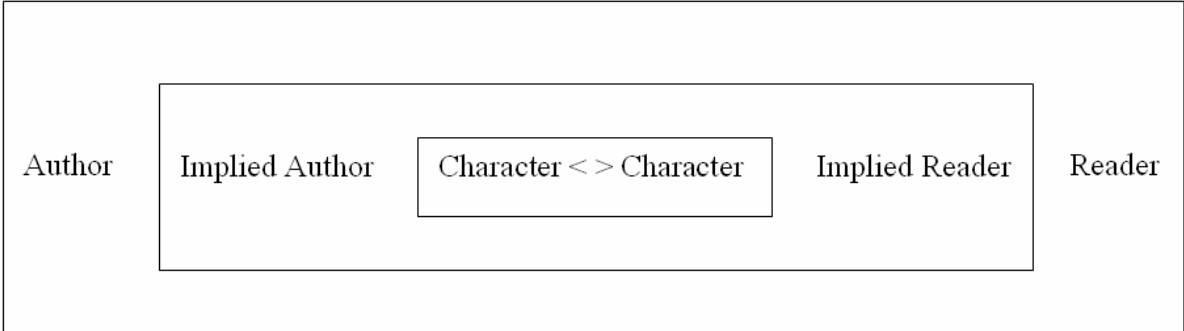
One can distinguish between three variants of metareference, depending on the aspect which they relate to, i.e. to which aspect the recipient’s attention is drawn. The third variant concerns *media-specific* metareference, which I dedicated my thesis to. To further specify these three categories, it is necessary to explain the distinction between story and discourse.

3. Story vs. Discourse

Based on the assumption that story-telling is communication between author and reader, story can be referred to as information which is transmitted from a sender or addresser to a receiver or addressee. The various possibilities of transmitting this narrative information are what is referred to as discourse.



The figure illustrates how Roman Jakobson designed a model for communication. He refers to the transmitted information as message, which needs to be put in a context. Furthermore, Jakobson points out the necessity of a code, i.e. a set of rules, according to which the message is encoded by the addresser and decoded by the addressee. The final requirement for communication is the contact between addresser and addressee, either physical or via a particular medium, e.g. the telephone. Based on Jakobson’s model for verbal communication, Jakob Lothe describes the transmission of a story from the author to the recipient as narrative communication.



Jakob Lothe defines narrative communication in literature as “process of transmission from the author as addresser to the reader as addressee.” (11) The information which is transmitted in a narrative text is called story. Furthermore, it is interesting to consider HOW the story is transmitted, which is referred to as discourse. Gérard Genette originally coined the terms *histoire* and *discours* and used them in the field of literature. Whereas *histoire* refers to the content of a narrative, answering the principle issue “Who does what to whom?”, *discours* labels the form of a narrative, responding to the question “How is the story transmitted?” In English the terms *story* and *discourse* were chosen to refer to this differentiation. While story is described as the chain of events in a fictive text, discourse concerns the selection and order in which these events are narrated, but also deals with the medium through which the story is transmitted. Similar to literature, the distinction between story and discourse is also relevant in film. According to Jakob Lothe, “[f]ilm should be considered as a variant of narrative communication: the fiction film is narrative in the sense that it presents a story, but in contrast to literary fiction it communicates filmically.” (11) Just as a novel can be told either chronologically or in retrospect, film offers various possibilities to narrate the same story in different ways.

The distinction between story and discourse is also considered relevant in the writings of the Russian formalists. In particular, they drew a comparison between literary and filmic narration and applied the concepts of story and discourse on the medium film. Victor Shklovsky initially formulated this distinction and used the terms *fabula* and *syuzhet*. Fabula is defined as a series of events which are either connected through space and time or logically related on the basis of the principle of cause and effect. “Shklovsky’s original definition of the fabula implied that the level of story actions comprises the raw material of the narrative work, functioning as a kind of pre-existing schema or core structure.” (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 73) Its artistic organization is, then, what he refers to as *syuzhet*. In other words, the story is given a form through discourse. Robert Stam points out that there are two slightly different understandings of the relationship between fabula and *syuzhet*. I have so far only mentioned the first possible understanding, according to which the fabula is “understood as the raw material or basic outline of the story, prior to its artistic organization. Another way of understanding it is to view the fabula as an imaginary construct which the viewer or reader creates or abstracts from the various cues and evidence provided by the narrative.” (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 72) This second understanding of fabula was, then, taken up by David Bordwell, who uses slightly different terms for the distinction between story and discourse, namely story and plot. He defines them as follows, “‘Story’ will refer to the events

of the narrative in their presumed spatial, temporal and causal relations. 'Plot' will refer to the totality of formal and stylistic materials in the film. The plot thus includes all the systems of time, space, and causality actually manifested in the film." (12) According to this definition, it is made clear that Bordwell alludes to the same differentiation, specifically refers to the medium film, but uses different terms. While the viewer perceives the plot on the screen, he/she independently constructs the story in his/her mind. "The plot is, in effect, the film before us. The story is thus our mental construct, a structure of inferences we make on the basis of selected aspects of the plot." (Bordwell 12) As a skilled film audience we are trained on picking up the necessary cues, drawing the right conclusions and constructing a narrative within our mind. So, the primary function of the plot is to present the story.

However, I decided to use the terms *story* and *discourse*, as I focus on the process of how the story, as the raw material, is presented in an artistic organization and transmitted as narrative information to the recipient. I regard story rather as the source material instead of the mental end product. Discourse, on the one hand, refers to the selection and order of the given events, which are decisions independent from the used medium, and on the other hand, also relates to the differences of narrative modes which are due to the chosen media. Every medium contains specific narrative devices and building blocks, which have a significant impact on the structure of the presented story. Consequently, one can distinguish between the two different types of discourse, depending on whether the question of HOW a story is narrated is affected by the medium or not. Whereas *discourse 1* includes the decisions concerning the selection and order of events independent from the chosen medium, *discourse 2* refers to the medium-specific characteristics.

Metareference can be situated on all three levels. First of all, metareferential devices on the story level can draw the spectator's attention towards the constructedness of fictional films by breaking conventions. If a story contains too little action or too many events the spectator is hindered in his/her mental participation in the fictional world and his/her empathy towards the protagonists. Through the disassociation of the ongoing events the spectator gains an objective perspective which facilitates a conscious reflection on the construction of filmic illusion. Secondly, metareferential devices can refer to discourse 1, i.e. the purely narrative decisions regardless of the chosen media, and thematise the manner of narrating a story, whether it is e.g. narrated chronologically or includes flashbacks. In Woody Allen's film *Melinda and Melinda*, for instance, a group of literary scholars discuss the distinction between comedy and tragedy and agree on narrating the same story in both modes. Next, the two stories, including the same protagonists, are alternately shown, which sheds light on the

specific characteristics and common narrative devices of either a comedy or tragedy. The title *Melinda and Melinda* is cleverly chosen, as it alludes to the young woman called Melinda, who is the main protagonist in both stories. The duplication of the name in the title illustrates the duplication of the female protagonist as a comic and tragic character. Finally, metareferential devices can also comment on discourse 2, i.e. including reflections on the medium through which the story is told. I decided to refer to this third variant as *media-specific metareference*. Discourse 2 refers to the manner how narrative information is channelled through a specific medium.

As I am analysing the medium film, my aim is to deconstruct filmic conventions and to examine how they can be broken or used in an alienated manner, in order to draw the spectator's attention towards their usual function and towards the fact that these devices are building blocks in constructing filmic narration. Media-specific metareference can be described as the film's self-conscious act of "pointing to" its own medium. "[S]elf-reflexivity within the cinematographic arts [...] [is] any device that intentionally reveals (by showing or hinting at) the enunciative apparatus of film itself." (Limoges 392) In other words, the film exposes how the narrative communication model by Jakob Lothe works in the cinematic medium. It makes the apparatus visible which transmits the information, i.e. the story, from the addresser to the addressee. Thereby, it moves the discourse into the foreground. Before analysing how metareferential devices draw the spectator's attention towards the building blocks or significant characteristics of filmic narration, one needs to figure out what these building blocks consist of.

Russian formalists posed the question as to how film narrates. How does a narration work and in particular how does a filmic narration work? The Russian formalist Boris Eikhenbaum is concerned with the distinction between filmic and literary narration.

Although film language is essentially different from language in literature, however, the most important components of the definition we have given of a narrative – time, space, and causality – are central concepts in film theory as well. Narrative terms such as plot, repetition, events, characters, and characterization are also important in film – even though the *form* of presentation and the way in which these concepts are actualized vary greatly in these two art forms. (Lothe 8)

Accordingly, story as well as discourse 1 function independently from the medium which is used to transmit the necessary information. Discourse 2, which Eikhenbaum calls the *form of presentation* points out the differences between literary and filmic narration.

First, we need to understand, how filmic narrations function and which cinematic devices can be used, i.e. which cues the spectator is given so that he/she constructs a story in his mind. Only then can we discover how Woody Allen uses these filmic devices in an unconventional

manner and, thereby, deconstructs filmic narrations. The following chapter aims at analysing the building blocks of filmic narration by exploring film as a semiotic system.

4. The Semiotic System “Film” – The Language of Cinematography

Film as a semiotic system operates with signs in order to transmit information. Similar to what B.S. Johnson asserts at the end of “Albert Angelo”, namely “a page is an area on which I place my signs I consider to communicate most clearly what I have to convey” (Waugh 7), the white screen is the area on which a filmmaker places signs, which need to be read and understood by the viewer. However, while watching a film we are not aware of how this complex semiotic system works and how the information is actually transmitted to the recipient.

The participation of the recipient plays an important part in the process of decoding the given signs. In his text about Classical Hollywood Cinema Bordwell also acknowledges the importance of the viewer's activity who is given the plot and constructs the story. When Alvy Singer stands right beside Annie Hall in the queue in front of the cinema and then suddenly sits on one of the comfortable chairs watching a four-hour black-and-white documentary about the discrimination of Jews, the spectator is not confused and asks him/herself, “How did he suddenly get into the cinema hall? I just saw him standing outside.” In the spectator's imagination Alvy and Annie waited probably a few more minutes. Then, the doors opened and the crowd streamed into the dark room, choosing a chair and waiting for the film to start. Suddenly music was to be heard and the film started, giving the titles first and then proceeding with the documentary. That is the moment when the spectator is given the next cue: Alvy and Annie are sitting in the cinema watching the documentary. Whereas only parts of a story are presented to the spectator, he/she unconsciously creates the whole story in his/her mind. This is an important aspect of how film works and also alludes to the fact that the mental participation of the recipient is necessary for the construction of a narrative in film. Referring to its technical basics film consists of separate still images. However, the most astonishing achievement of film (in the period of Early Cinema), in contrast to photography, is movement. Therefore, films were originally referred to as moving or motion pictures. The movement, however, is found in the gaps between the separate still images and is in fact a mental delusion: Quickly succeeding images only create the illusion of movement. The cooperation of the recipient is essential, as his/her imagination fills the gaps with meaning.

Similarly, the scene in *Annie Hall* illustrates how the recipient imagines omitted scenes and, thereby, is involved in the creation of the story. The spectator is only informed about particular events happening within the diegesis and independently constructs the connections. One can conclude that film is an art of omission and requires the participation of the recipient in order to create meaning.

As we already figured out that the spectator is given information in order to independently construct the narrative, it is interesting to consider which nature this information is. Whereas literature operates with writing, the film apparently uses moving images and sound (consisting of dialogues, music and noise). A short overview of different theories dealing with how information is transmitted through a particular medium, i.e. a sign system, should provide the basis of further argumentation concerning how meaning is created in films.

4.1. Making Meaning through Signs – Different Sign Theories

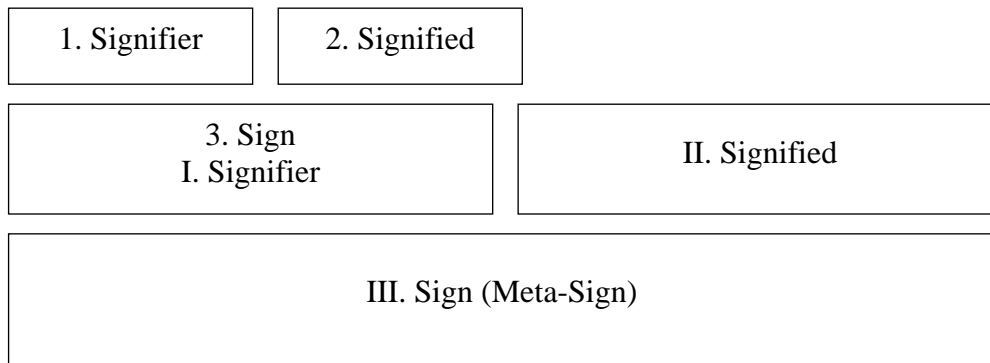
There are various theories which try to explain how signs relate to the “real” world and how they are made to form meaningful entities.



According to the common understanding, signs replace and refer to real objects. A clear connection between the sign and the actual existence is thereby thought to exist. A sign is believed to represent present objects in their absence. Ferdinand de Saussure, however, revised this model and distinguished between a signifier, i.e. letters or sounds, and a signified, i.e. the mental concept. They constitute the sign in relation to each other.



The relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary, i.e. without containing a visual or acoustic equivalence, but culturally determined and conventionalized. Meaning is created through the difference of the individual signifiers. Jacques Derrida coined the term “différence” in order to describe this quality of signifiers.



Roland Barthes described myths as a secondary system of signs, as meta-signs. The sign is deprived from its common meaning and gains a new, secondary meaning. As the first meaning can still be decoded simultaneously, one can refer to this process as partial amnesia. The original meaning is only partially forgotten. The recipient's understanding oscillates between the first and the secondary meaning. Consequently, the sign functions as a reversible figure. (The phenomenon of the reversible figure in relation with meta-signs will be discussed in the following chapters in more detail.)

4.2. Symbol, Icon, Index

Before comparing different concepts of meta-signs, it is interesting to illustrate the distinction between three basic types, namely symbolic, iconic and indexical signs. Symbols, e.g. verbal signs, are characterized through their arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified. Furthermore, they need to be placed in relation with other signifiers in order to create meaning through their difference to each other. In contrast to a symbol, which refers to an object by a convention or habit, an icon is characterized through its similarity with the actual object. It inherits parts of the qualities of the described entity and is usually understandable all over the world. According to an indexical relation, the signifier becomes meaningful through the act of "pointing to" its signified, e.g. smoke would be indexical of fire.

The video clip *The Child* by the French musician Alex Gopher proves to be a useful illustration of the basic distinction between symbolic and iconic signs. My second aim for mentioning this video clip is to explain the concept of a reversible figure, i.e. the phenomenon of spontaneously changing interpretations, which also occurs in connection with meta-signs.

The story of this short film covers the journey of a pregnant woman in a taxi through the streets of New York, including causing a car accident, the pursuit through the traffic police and the arrival at the central hospital. I chose to mention this video clip, as it very clearly illustrates the difference between literature and films concerning the signs with which they

operate. Strictly speaking only writing is visible in the short clip. However, the letters stand in a particular position within the given space as well as in relation to each other and differ in colour, shape and movement. Consequently, houses, streets, cars and trees become visible. So to speak, the video clip consists of symbolic as well as iconic signs.

Language consists of symbolic signs, i.e. the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, and thereby only functions on the basis of a cultural agreement. Consequently, language needs to be decoded and understood on the basis of this cultural knowledge. An icon, in contrast, is defined through its similarity with the real object. The letters in this video clip function as icons through their position within space and in relation to other letters, on the one hand. Accordingly, the letters CAR move above the letters STREET. On the other hand, the letters function as icons through their appearance. The letters LEAF, for instance, are characterized through their squiggly typeface and the use of the colour green. This shows how icons gain meaning through inheriting certain qualities of their referent.



Figure 4.2.1.

The first screenshot shows that the taxi, which is the “protagonist” of this video, is stuck in a traffic jam. The yellow letters TAXI are surrounded by various CARs, which differ in their colour, typeface and use of small or big letters. In the foreground the black and white PEDESTRIANCROSSING is clearly visible. On the right side of the picture the edge of a tree is shown, as green coloured letters saying LEAF protrude into the camera sight. The picture can either be understood through reading the verbal signs or through watching the iconic signs. The colour and typeface of the letters mirror significant characteristics of the signifieds to which the signifiers build up an iconic relation. Moreover, the position of the letters within space as well as towards each other transmits significant information. This screenshot also proves the importance of movement, as it notably contributes to the construction of meaning. The letters LEAF are moving in the wind, while the letters CAR and TAXI travel over STREET and cross PEDESTRIANCROSSING. Therefore, I strongly recommend watching *The Child* in order to better understand how movement is a significant aspect of the iconic signs in this video.

The second screenshot illustrates how human beings are portrayed in this video. It shows the pregnant woman sitting with her husband in the backseat of the taxi. She is characterized through the words BROWNSHAIR, PRETTYFACE, WOMAN, PREGNANT, which are situated according to human physiognomy. The letters have a light orange colour and are portrayed in a more fragile – one can interpret more female – typeface. Her husband is described as BLACKHAIR, PLEASANTFACE, HUSBAND. In the foreground of the picture the taxi driver is made visible through two words in claret colour characterising him as a DREADLOCKMAN and RASTAMAN. In contrast to the husband's dark blue and elegant letters, a simpler typeface is chosen for the driver. In the background, fragments of the yellow letters TAXI form the back window, through which one can read the letters SPEED CONTROL, which are chasing the taxi in this scene. The detailed analysis of this image shows the complexity of one single frame in the video. Information is transmitted in the foreground and background, on the level of symbolic as well as iconic signs. A further channel of information, which I have not mentioned so far, is operating with acoustic signs. In-between the music the people are occasionally uttering short phrases and thereby make the intradiegetic world, which consists of letters only, even more lively. Speech is based on symbolic signs. The separate acoustic signifiers stand in no logical relation to their signifieds. Similar to letters, sounds only become meaningful through the cultural agreement and through being placed in relation to each other. However, I want to concentrate on the visual signs of the video clip.

As already mentioned, the perception of the spectator constantly oscillates between reading and watching the film, i.e. between decoding symbolic and iconic signs. Interestingly, one can never read the letters *and* perceive the constructed objects as images simultaneously. In other words, the film functions similar to a reversible figure.



Figure 4.2.2.

This example of a reversible figure shows how one can either see the young woman or the elderly lady, but never both simultaneously. Similarly, one has to stop reading in order to see the city in *The Child*. Usually the area of written signs and of iconic signs is strictly separated, e.g. in cartoons. The area containing symbolic signs is usually placed next to and separately from the area of iconic signs, which is not the case in this video clip.

According to Ludwig Wittgenstein, a reversible figure is a phenomenon of spontaneously changing interpretations. This change is not situated in the picture (or film) itself, as it is a stable artefact, but takes place within the perception through the spectator. Consequently, one needs to draw a distinction between the spectator's perception and the perceived stimulus. This phenomenon of oscillating interpretations also applies to the concept of meta-signs. Roland Barthes talks about a secondary sign system, through which a sign gains an additional meaning, i.e. is additionally encoded on a meta-level. Both meanings exist simultaneously and cause the perception of the recipient to constantly oscillate between the two possibilities of decoding the sign.

Another model including a secondary sign system, i.e. dealing with meta-signs, was designed by Winfried Nöh, "A *sign* [...] is related to an object or *referent* [...] as well as to a *meaning*, the idea associated with this object." (Nöh 91) He defines *sign* as the sequence of letters which can be read, regardless of whether the reader understands its meaning or not. The *referent* would be the object to which the reader refers by means of the sign. The *meaning* of the sign is the mental concept associated with the sign and its object. "*Reference* is the property by which a sign refers to its referent. [...] *Metareference* is the property by which a metasign refers to its referent, which is itself a sign. A *metasign* is evidently also a sign with a referent and a meaning of its own." (Nöh 92) Meta-signs contain reflections upon the sign as a sign, which creates metareferential awareness in the recipient.

Werner Wolf also refers to the doubly encoded sign. As already mentioned previously he distinguishes between heteroreference and self-reference. While heteroreference denotes a relation to the extradiegetic world, self-reference describes a relation within the same semiotic system. "In fact, real signs are never entirely self- nor entirely heteroreferential, but rather show a mixture of both aspects to varying degrees." (Wolf, 2009 23) In a representational medium like film, signs always refer to a specific aspect of the world outside and can simultaneously contain a self-referential meaning. On an additional level a sign gains a metareferential meaning, but simultaneously functions in its primary encoding. The spectator's perception oscillates between these two variants of decoding the sign. Because of

the double-coded nature of signs, a metareferential film actually shows a heteroreferential story during its act of drawing the spectators' attention to the medium itself.

Let us keep this in mind, while coming back to the primary sign system of the medium film. After having analysed the primary and secondary sign system of literature or media in general, the question needs to be asked, with which signs does film operate and how can these signs gain a secondary meaning by being placed on a metareferential level. The following chapter aims at deconstructing the filmic language.

4.3. Filmic Signs

The attempt to describe film according to the three sign categories is problematic. A symbolic relationship exists only in the sense, as film consists of dialogues on the acoustic level. Sounds gain meaning in connection with each other through the conventional agreement of a speaker community. In its origins, however, film developed as a merely visual medium. Sound was not added until 1922 with the invention of sound film. Thereupon, film gained an additional channel for transmitting information and was extended to the multimedial sign-system which it is today. Does film, then, operate as a "pointing to" real life and would consequently consist of indexical signs? Or does film rather involve a relationship of similarity as in the case of icons? Or does film resist being categorized at all as consisting of one of these three signs?

Film is often described as a mirroring image of reality and creates meaning through its relation of similarity to the outside world, which Werner Wolf has defined as the heteroreferential meaning of a sign. In her essay "The Movies and Reality" Virginia Woolf wrote about the deceiving similarity between film and reality, "[S]hall we call it (our vocabulary is miserably insufficient) more real, or real with a different reality from that which we perceive in daily life? We behold them as they are when we are not there. We see life as it is when we have no part in it. As we gaze we seem to be removed from the pettiness of actual existence." (Woolf 87) According to Virginia Woolf, film is characterized through a relationship of similarity or even congruence with reality. Likewise, Jakob Lothe talks about film and its status as a deceiving reality, "The fiction film shows us an illusory real world that resembles to the point of confusion the world we know ourselves, a world into which we are free to peep for a couple of hours without participating." (11) Interestingly, both emphasize the passive role of the spectator who becomes witness of this illusory world and is tempted to take it for real life, but is actually reduced to his/her gaze and cannot interact further with this secondary world.

The question whether film is an image of reality can be discussed in connection with the phenomenon of simulacra. According to Jacques Derrida, everything is a construct of images behind which reality does not exist anymore. In other words, images always refer to other images in an endless chain and reality behind them remains an illusion. Jean Baudrillard originally coined the term *simulacra* for copies without originals in postmodern society. A simulacrum can be defined as a copy of innumerable copies behind which no original exists.

When we decide that something is unreal, the real [...] can just as well be a dramatization of events [...] or a rehearsal of the dramatization, or a painting of the rehearsal or a reproduction of the painting. Any of this latter can serve as the original of which something is a mere mock-up, leading one to think that which is sovereign is relationship - not substance. (Waugh 30)

We can only describe something as unreal or fictional, if we perceive it from a standpoint which we consider as real and, consequently, use this standpoint, i.e. our *real* world, as a contrast to the perceived *fictional* world. The fictional world, which we encounter e.g. in a film, appears to us like a copy of our real world. Usually in all films (except fantasy and science fiction) a scriptwriter and/or director invents fictional characters and places them in situations mirroring real-life surroundings. "Literary (or cinematic) realism appears to be a continuation or extension of this 'commonsense' world." (Waugh 87) Therefore, our cultural knowledge which derives from the real world is essential for decoding films correctly. Cinematic realism is a continuation or extension of our "commonsense" world and appeals to our cultural knowledge. According to Derrida, a film would only be a copy of a copy, i.e. a representation of a representation. The only difference between literary fiction (or cinematic fiction) and reality is that the former is constructed entirely through language (or through pictures and sounds). These thoughts are rooted in postmodernist theories.

Accordingly, film is characterized through a strong relationship of similarity to the outside world. It seems to construct a deceptively exact image of reality. (Whether reality itself is perceived as real or as a copy without original shall remain unanswered, as it would fill another thesis.) Thereby, film makes use of images, which can be interpreted as iconic signs (relationship of similarity) on the one hand and as indexical signs (pointing to the extradiegetic world) on the other hand. Furthermore, film consists of speech in the dialogues and occasionally writing in e.g. subtitles, which are both based on symbolic signs (arbitrary relationship, based on a convention). Similarly, the film theorist Peter Wollen emphasizes film's status as a system of signs and "argued in *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (1969) that cinema deploys all three categories of sign: icon (through resembling images and sounds); index (through photo-chemical registering of the "real"); and symbol (in the deployment of speech and writing)." (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 30-31) This leads to the

conclusion that film as a multimedial sign-system transmits its information visually as well as acoustically, and makes use of symbolic, iconic and indexical signs. The term multimedial is usually attributed to film because it is a combination of visual and acoustic media. Film originally developed from photography. The new achievement consisted in the illusion of movement through the quick succession of still images. Only in 1922 sound was added and completed film in its existence as an audio-visual medium.

A further approach aiming at the deconstruction of filmic signs (not with regard to the differentiation between symbolic, iconic and indexical signs) was formulated by the Russian formalist Boris Eikhenbaum. He differentiates between the literary and filmic mode of reception as follows,

It must be emphasized that literary and screen texts are in many ways very different. The cinema audience is, as the Russian formalist Boris Eikhenbaum stressed as early as 1926, placed in completely new conditions of perception, which are to an extent opposite to those of the reading process. Whereas the reader moves from the printed word to visualization of the subject, the viewer goes in the opposite direction: he moves from the subject, from comparison of the moving frames to their comprehension, to naming them; in short, to the construction of internal speech. (qtd. in Lothe 8)

Interestingly, Eikhenbaum views the filmic mode of reception as a reversal of the literary reading process. The recipient does not construct mental images while decoding symbolic signs, but on the contrary transforms the perceived images into an internal speech. The psychologist Lev Vygotsky originally used the term inner (or internal) speech in his investigations concerning the speech behaviour of pre-school children. He formulated the following definition, "Inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure meanings. It is a dynamic, shifting, unstable thing, fluttering between word and thought." (Vygotsky) Eikhenbaum then used this concept of inner speech and applied it to his reflections on the medium film. He "posited inner speech as a kind of discursive glue which holds the meaning of films together in the spectator's mind. The director constructs the film in such a way as to elicit the appropriate inner speech in the consciousness of the spectator." (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 12) This again alludes to the distinction between story and plot, according to which the spectator is given various cues and thereby constructs the story in his mind by filling in the gaps.

Russian formalists devoted their work to discovering how filmic narration is structured and thereby approached the medium as a system of signs. "Their consistent emphasis upon the *construction* of artworks led them (particularly Jakobson and Tynianov) to an understanding of art as a system of signs and conventions rather than as the registration of natural phenomena." (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 11) Similarly, metareferential devices in film aim at emphasising the construction of the filmic artwork and in further consequence

lead to an understanding of film as a multi-medial sign system structuring its narratives through conventions. Shklovsky regards the transmission of a metareferential meaning as an important function of an artwork. “The essential function of poetic art, for Shklovsky, was to shock us into awareness by subverting routinized perception, by making forms difficult, and by exploding the encrustations of customary perception. Defamiliarization was to be achieved by the use of unmotivated formal devices based on deviations from the established norms of language and style.” (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 11) In order to emphasize the impact of metareferential devices, Shklovsky even uses the phrase “to shock us into awareness”. The spectator is violently torn out of his mental participation in the ongoing events and distanced from the diegetic world. Thereby, his/her perception, which has already become an established custom, “explodes in its encrustations” and he/she is forced to observe the construction of the artwork. This metareferential observation is achieved through destroying the filmic illusion. “[P]ostmodernist fiction [...] is above all illusion-breaking art; it systematically disturbs the air of reality by foregrounding the ontological structure of texts and of fictional worlds.” (McHale 221) Thereby, the spectator is hindered from being immersed into the diegetic world of the story and made aware of the discourse. His/her attention is drawn towards the ontological structure of a text, to its narrative conventions, but also to the fact that films are semiotic systems which operate with visual and acoustic signs. We often forget in the pleasant experience of watching a colourful picture flood, through which we participate in the illusion of an imaginative world, that these pictures are merely signs which transmit information.

In contrast to metareferential films, Classical Hollywood Cinema aims at maintaining the illusion of reality and at allowing the recipient to get lost in the diegetic world. With his films Woody Allen consciously resists the techniques to fake an alternative reality and to preserve the illusion in film. Instead he aims at breaking conventions, deconstructing filmic devices, distancing the audience from the diegesis and making the medium itself visible. Thereby, his films gain a metareferential meaning. They still function in their heteroreferential relation to the outside world, but are additionally encoded with a secondary meaning, throwing light on their own fictionality and constructedness. In other words, film or more precisely certain building blocks of filmic narration are double-coded and function as meta-signs. The perception of the audience oscillates between decoding the device in its original (heteroreferential) and its secondary (metareferential) meaning. The following chapter sheds light upon the classical techniques of Hollywood films, the conscious resistance of Woody Allen against these guidelines and their deconstruction in three of his films.

5. Deconstructing Classical Hollywood Cinema

David Bordwell coined the term Classical Hollywood Cinema and used it to describe the structure and conventions which developed to be significant for Hollywood films. In *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* he formulated the basic characteristics, which I want to point out shortly.

One of the major concerns of Hollywood productions is the maintenance of spatial and temporal clarity as well as of the narrative causality. Every scene should follow the internal logic of the film according to the principle of cause and effect. “Action triggers reaction: each step has an effect which in turn becomes a new cause.” (Bordwell 17) The use of coincidence, chance or deus ex machina is considered a cheap narrative device to achieve the desired ending. The actions of a protagonist, which lead to the conclusion of a film, should be psychologically motivated and reasonable for the audience. Coincidence or impersonal causes, e.g. war or a natural catastrophe, are only legitimate at the beginning of a film and can function as the starting point of further actions. However, the more a story progresses the less likely it is to be intervened or even resolved by coincidence. Classical Hollywood Cinema also refers to Aristotelian notions of plausibility and probability. Consequently, the filmic narration should be credible and intelligible in the eyes of the beholder. An essential element of Hollywood films is the protagonist, who possesses individualized character traits. These psychologically deep characters are introduced in the exposition and should remain consistent in their decisions and actions, which are considered to be outward expressions of their inner feelings. Character development in the course of the film needs to be psychologically motivated and credible. Furthermore, the main protagonist is given a goal in the exposition and strives for its fulfilment during the story development, which guarantees the movement of action. The goal-orientated hero can be described as a “man of deeds. In the first act his goal is set; in the last act he reaches it. Everything that intervenes between these two acts is a test of strength.” (Bordwell 16) In most Hollywood films the protagonist is given two goals, which derive from the structure of two separate story lines. The first goal is rooted in the “action plot”, the second goal is usually achieved in the “love plot”. In the end the protagonist reaches both, one or neither goal. The ending does not necessarily have to be a typical happy ending, but should represent a “definite conclusion to the chain of cause and effect.” (Bordwell 18)

As the most famous film industry world-wide structures filmic narrations according to these guidelines, which have developed in the course of the past century, they were reproduced through uncountable films, written down in various scriptwriting handbooks and have, in further consequence, significantly shaped the perception of the film audience. An average Western-world spectator is already used to watching films that follow the classical principle of cause and effect. If a film consciously breaks this convention, it is often criticised as being illogical and uncomprehensible. In other words, the guidelines of Classical Hollywood Cinema have already become criteria of judging films, which strengthens the monopoly of the Hollywood film industry. Thereby, it cuts out films d'auteur or national cinema productions and marks them as art films, which have no place in the mainstream market.

One could say that through their frequent repetition and application in Hollywood films, these guidelines have already defined a code which significantly structures the way of reading films in the Western world. According to the narrative communication model by Lothe, the code plays a decisive role in the transmission of a message (the story) from the sender (scriptwriter or film director) to the receiver (spectator). The message "refers to the meaningful sequences generated by the coded processes of communicative utterances." (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis 31) The term *code* can be further specified as a set of "conventionalized systems which remain constant across numerous and various particular messages." (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis 31) Similarly, the Classical Hollywood Cinema has created a code, simply through applying this set of conventions in innumerable films for many years. Consequently, the spectator has become accustomed to this specific narrative style and a stable code has developed. As these conventions are already firmly established in the accustomed way of reading films, they are no longer consciously recognized by the spectator and, therefore, need to be made visible through metareferential devices.

It needs to be pointed out that a certain code is usually formulated in retrospect and is not inherent in the artworks themselves. "Within textual analysis, a code is always a construction of the analyst, and not something inherent in the text or found in nature." (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis 31) The conventions of Hollywood films are in fact a construction of people who subsequently analyse these films and ponder over the structures of filmic narration. Accordingly, the average spectator is not aware of the code, but the conventions unconsciously structure his/her way of reading films. Especially two groups of people devote their interest to the filmic code, namely (1) film scholars who analyse and deconstruct films in retrospect and (2) authors of manuals for scriptwriting who aim at deciphering the filmic code and writing it down as helpful instructions for scriptwriters and directors. Through their

theoretical examination of the filmic code they actually create and constantly recreate the code.

Woody Allen resists adapting to the accustomed code and consciously breaks conventions which have become firmly established and turned invisible over the years. His films do not follow the classical dramaturgy, but deconstruct and critically reflect on it. Whereas the principle aim of the Classical Hollywood Cinema is the creation and maintenance of illusion, Allen's metareferential films seek strategies that destabilise and deconstruct this illusion.

In his essay about *Annie Hall* Thomas Schatz contrasts the classical model with modernist tendencies. "Modernism is opposed to one of several terms – traditional, classical, realist, conventional – that designates a narrative system whose function is to conceal its codes (its formal and narrative conventions) and sustain a hermetically closed, logically consistent, formally transparent fictional world." (123) Traditional forms seek to maintain the illusion of an autonomous fictional world and hide their narrative mechanisms, whereas metareferential artworks deconstruct this illusion and move the medium-specific mechanisms in the foreground. Modernist tendencies subvert the codes which are applied in traditional artworks. However, one cannot speak of two separate categories, as the metareferential potential of an artwork is rather a matter of degree. "The difference between the classical and modernist text is essentially one of *degree* and not of *kind*, in that the qualities of modernism are latent in all narratives." (Schatz 124) Accordingly, an artwork might simultaneously create the illusion of a fictional world and obtain a self-reflexive perspective by highlighting the used mechanisms. In other words, "metafiction explores the concept of fictionality through an opposition between the construction and the breaking of illusion" (Waugh 16). An artwork, e.g. a film, preserves a balance between the innovatory, i.e. breaking narrative conventions, and the traditional, i.e. confirming the viewer's expectations. According to Patricia Waugh, "Metafiction [...] offers both innovation *and* familiarity through the individual reworking and undermining of familiar conventions." (12) To use the terminology of Thomas Schatz, metareferential artworks offer elements of both classical and modernist texts. This combination of seemingly contradictory elements can be again compared to the phenomenon of a reversible figure, which was originally formulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein. The spectator's empathy for the characters and his/her passive participation within the plot oscillates to a critical and distanced attitude towards the narration and the other way round. Consequently, the film is "[r]efusing to allow the reader the role of the passive consumer or any means of arriving at a 'total' interpretation of the text" (Waugh 13).

Roland Barthes even points out that it is inevitable for a metareferential artwork to participate in the conventions of the form and to adapt to traditional means of expression. Only then, the artwork can bear a self-reflexive message.

Without participating in the conventions of the form, the writer-creator is without a means of expression; 'to write' becomes virtually inconceivable. Barthes further posits that the author's participation in the conventions of his or her form, far from being a creative restriction, actually determines the communicable as well as the aesthetic basis for the work's apprehension and evaluation. (Schatz 124)

Interestingly, the usage of conventional means of expression does not imply a creative restriction, but provides the aesthetic basis for metareferential reflections. Thomas Schatz describes this stage of self-reflexivity as "a stage at which its conventions are subverted in a fashion that is pleasurable for both artist and audience." (126) This quote points out the importance of the humorous effect in metareferential art. Especially post-modernists emphasize the playful aspect of dismantling well-known narratives or conventional genres. Allen's films are a perfect example of such a comical deconstruction of the medium film. The following three chapters shortly summarize the content of the chosen films with a particular focus on their deviations from the guidelines of Classical Hollywood Cinema.

5.1. *Annie Hall*

Annie Hall was shown in the cinema in 1977 and marked a turning point in Woody Allen's career as film maker. At this point he started attributing a new level of seriousness to his films instead of simply relying on humour. The German film title *Der Stadtneurotiker* is a suitable description of the main character in numerous films by Woody Allen, namely the neurotic living in a big city like New York. Allen himself describes *Annie Hall* as "a romantic comedy about a contemporary neurotic." (Curry 26) The story revolves around Alvy Singer's problematic relationship to women, which is also a frequent topic in Allen's films.

Unique for this film is the fragmentary narrative structure which can be described as the filmic equivalent of a photographic collage. "*Annie Hall* is a kind of collage film, jumping back and forth in space and time but also in different narrative levels." (Allacher 111) The film includes mental reflections on Alvy's life which feature humorous self-irony. In the narrative flow Alvy precedes from one association to the next, by which means the unique rhythm of the film is created. During his homodiegetic narration reality and fiction become blurred. Alvy, for instance, stages his break-up with Annie in form of a theatrical scene. Similarly, past and present events become blurred. Alvy appears as an adult in the flashbacks of his own childhood and comments on the happenings. In one of the first scenes of the film Alvy names the reason for this unusual narrative structure, "I have a hyperactive imagination.

My mind tends to jump around and I have some trouble between fantasy and reality.” (*Annie Hall* 00:03) In this way he comments as an intradiegetic character on his own mentally created narration. The audience witnesses the character formulating his own autobiography, in which he (deliberately) confuses reality with his imagination. The narrative technique has similarities with a stream of consciousness narration. Woody Allen, similar to his idol Ingmar Bergman, explores

the principle of composition which Strindberg adumbrates in his preface to the *Dream Play* – the principle of allowing the play’s action to express, directly and without mediation or excuse, the vagaries of the main character’s dreams or imaginings: ‘On a flimsy foundation of actual happenings,’ explains Strindberg, ‘imagination spins and weaves in new ideas, fantastic absurdities and improvisations, and original inventions of the mind.’ *Annie Hall* says Allen, was conceived as ‘a stream of consciousness showing one individual’s state of mind, in which conversations and events constantly trigger dreams, fantasies and recollections.’ (Librach 160)

Accordingly, the film does not adapt to a classical dramaturgy, as it is to be found in Hollywood Cinema, but embarks on a journey from one bizarre association to the next, proceeds from one peculiar fantasy to the following. Thomas Schatz refers to the narrative mode, which is based on the associations of the narrator’s hyperactive imagination instead of following a chronological pattern, as a stand-up comedy format. “[T]he events depicted follow an associative, metaphoric pattern of construction rather than the sequential, chronological pattern of most classical Hollywood narrative films.” (128) Alvy Singer, from whose brain these fantasies originate, finds himself on the same ontological level like all the other characters who partake in his fantasy world of its own rules. “What *Annie Hall* makes clear, however, is the fact that those people are mirror reflections of people in Woody Allen’s audience – of people in the *real* world.” (Librach 164) This impression emerges from the documentary style of the film, through which it also resembles a real autobiography. The long duration of the individual shots and the slow montage contribute significantly to this documentary style. The actors seemingly do not care which selection the camera is showing. Whereas mainly the dialogues and voice-over monologues by Alvy push the narrative forward and lay the foundation of the associative narrative structure, the visual channel transmits only little information. In one scene, for instance, the spectator witnesses a conversation between Alvy and his colleague Rob. On the visual level an ordinary street is shown, as it is illustrated in the first screenshot. Occasionally a passenger crosses the camera’s view or a car passes at the side of the picture. However, the two talking protagonists are not visible.



Figure 5.1.1.



Figure 5.1.2.

Only after a while they appear from the background and slowly walk towards the camera, which then finishes in a backward tracking shot of the two men. It seems as if the framing was chosen accidentally and without much consideration, simply out of the necessity that film as a multi-medial sign system is not only based on sound and would not be complete without its visual level. This stylistic decision of Woody Allen, namely to seemingly attach little value to the visual level, forms a clear contrast to the Classical Hollywood Cinema, which attaches great importance to a perfectly thought-out film editing. The term *continuity editing* constitutes an essential guideline for Hollywood films: Shots are intended to be put together logically and cuts should be placed in a way that they remain invisible and do not disrupt the picture flow. An adherence to the continuity editing contributes to the creation and maintenance of illusion and enables the spectator to get lost in the deceptively real diegetic world. However, Woody Allen chooses only one shot for the whole scene, which most of the time shows either the empty street, cars or people who are completely irrelevant to the ongoing action. In other words, he does not consider the rich potential of the visual channel to transmit information, while Hollywood films are anxious for feeding the audience only with relevant information. Furthermore, Hollywood films try to convince with a quick montage and fear that otherwise their audience will become bored, whereas Allen lavishly chooses endless shots and, thereby, displays that in his position as the film director he has all the time in his self-made fictional world.

In addition to the uncommon use of the visual channel, Allen also opposes classical conventions on the acoustic level. Even though the protagonists were much further away in the beginning of the scene and only slowly approach the camera, the volume of their voice remains unchanged on the acoustic level. This leads to a slight irritation of the spectator, who is accustomed to a film's aim of constructing an illusion of reality, according to which a person standing closer to the camera must be heard louder than a person further away. Through ignoring this convention, the film breaks the internal logic of the diegetic world, disappoints the spectator's expectation of being shown a mirroring image of reality and

hinders him/her from getting immersed in the fictional world. This scene serves as one of numerable examples how Woody Allen consciously resists the principles of Classical Hollywood Cinema and aims at producing anti-illusionist films instead.

The use of only one film shot creates congruence between the discourse and story time within this scene. This stylistic choice marks one aspect of how the film bears resemblance to documentaries, which use long shots simply out of the necessity that the shown events usually happen only once. To a certain degree this lets the fictional autobiography of Alvy Singer appear to be taken from real life. The medium film provides the opportunity to easily jump between space and time through editing. If this opportunity is not taken, the illusion that the film portrays a realistic image of the extradiegetic world is strengthened. Therefore, *Annie Hall* resembles a documentary film in its stylistic realization. Also the characters seem to be taken out of real life and placed in Alvy's unique universe. This is shown, for instance, in the following scene:

When he stops one couple, for example, to find out why they don't have the kinds of problems he has, the man replies blithely that it's because he hasn't a brain in his head and is thoroughly shallow; "And so am I," chirps in the girlfriend. It's not simply the inspired silliness of the lines that makes the vignette so funny; the comic effect also results from the fact that they are as real and as familiar as *our* world, but which is transformed instantaneously into the perfect image of Woody Allen's unique and irregular universe. They're also spoken by people who seem at first to be just like *us* but who suddenly utter the magic words which whisk them away into the looking-glass world that Woody Allen has waiting for them. (Librach 164)

This example shows how Allen on the one hand creates the illusion of a real autobiography by imitating the stylistic features of a documentary film, but on the other hand destroys this illusion again by e.g. letting his characters utter magic words which can only make sense in the surreal universe of Alvy's fantasy.

The story of the film actually is secondary, as mainly the stylistic features, i.e. the discourse, are unique for *Annie Hall*. Shortly summarized the story focuses on Alvy's relationship with Annie, including their first encounter, break-up, reconciliation and finally their second break-up in mutual agreement. Alvy cannot leave New York, whereas Annie sees her future in Los Angeles. The main reason for their second break-up lies in their recognition that they have simply distanced themselves from each other, not only geographically but also emotionally. The narration of this realistically portrayed relationship is frequently interrupted by flashbacks of Alvy's childhood, his beginning career as a comedian and his previous relationships. As their paths coincidentally cross after years of separation, Alvy and Annie arrange to meet for lunch and talk about the good old times. While music is playing, the highlights of the film are shown in short sequences. Thereby, the spectator is placed in their position and also remembers the seen events.

In order to transmit this story via the medium film, Woody Allen does not follow the guidelines of Classical Hollywood Cinema. Instead of a linear narrative the film seems to consist of Alvy's chains of associations. As an artwork it rather resembles a collage instead of a finished painting. One cinematically displayed thought results in the next without considering the principle of cause and effect. The narration follows Alvy's associations, jumps from past to future and switches between reality and fantasy. Thereby, the film strives against adjusting to the classical dramatic composition. The dramaturgy of Aristotle, ranging from the exposition to the denouement, laid the foundation for any dramatic artwork and also serves as a guideline for Hollywood films, but is not applicable to *Annie Hall*.

Furthermore, Hollywood films mostly centre on a goal-oriented hero who is also referred to as the man of deeds. However, Allen's main characters are seldom given a goal. Instead they seem to aimlessly pass their daily routine and feel comfortable in the static situation. Even though this situation seldom proves to be ideal, they still prefer it instead of opting for change. Furthermore, Allen's main characters would never refer to themselves as heroes. Instead they complain of their miserable situation and simultaneously emphasize their inability to accomplish change. Can they, therefore, be referred to as anti-heroes? The following film also circles around such an anti-hero and city neurotic.

5.2. *Play It Again, Sam*

Play It Again, Sam, which is also known under the title *Aspirins For Three*, was originally released in 1972. The film was in fact not directed by Allen himself, but by Herbert Ross. Allen wrote the script and played the role of the film critic Allan Felix. (Note the slightly different spelling of Allan and Allen.) The title actually refers to a misquotation in *Casablanca*.

After the separation from his wife Nancy, Allan falls into a deep depression. While drowning in self-pity and lethargy he continuously ponders over the reasons why Nancy might have left him. His friends, the couple Dick and Linda, have pity on him and try to arrange several dates with different women, but because of his insecurity and lacking self-confidence he ruins them every time and frightens or disappoints his new acquaintances. As an enthusiastic cineaste Allan imagines talking to Humphrey Bogart from his favourite film *Casablanca*. While he is preparing for his blind dates he is talking to Bogart, who gives him advice on how to impress women. Allan imagines acting like Bogart, repeating his words while smoking a cigarette and being admired by women.

The only woman he can really talk to without ruining everything by behaving nervous and insecure is Linda. During his search for a new girlfriend he is having long (telephone) conversations with her. As she is his best friend's wife, it is out of the question for him to fall in love with her and he simply does not realize that he is already developing emotions for her. So he apparently has no reason for behaving awkwardly, as she simply represents a good friend to him and not a woman he intends to impress. During one of their numerous telephone conversations Allan talks about his great idol:

Allan: You know who's not insecure. Bogart.

Linda: Allan, that's not real life. You set too high a standard.

Allan: If you're gonna identify, who am I going to pick? My rabbi? You know, Bogart's a perfect image.

Linda: You don't have to pick anybody. You are you. I know that you can't believe that.

That is what Allan realizes in the end. In the final scene Allan has a last conversation with Bogart, in which he tells him, "I guess the secret's not being you, it's being me." (*Play It Again, Sam* 01:20) This statement indicates that Allan has finally found himself and no longer aims at imitating an illusory idol.

Similar to the stream of consciousness technique in *Annie Hall*, the narration of *Play It Again, Sam* also follows the chaotic thoughts of the main character. "*Play it Again, Sam* [...] prefigure[s] Allen's experiment in both *Annie Hall* and *Manhattan* – the transformation of the 'real' world into the kind of absurdist world which the typical Allen protagonist always envisions and whines about." (Librach 160-161) The associative style of narrating is not as developed as in *Annie Hall* and the spectator is still able to draw clear boundaries between Allan's imagination and his real life. After finally confessing his love to Linda and spending a night with her, Allan is ridden by guilt and fear. He imagines how his best friend Dick might react to this shocking news: While dramatic music is playing in the background, Dick gives a heartbreaking soliloquy and drowns himself in the sea. This parodistic enactment of melodramatic scenes in Hollywood films is followed by a slapstick scene mirroring an Italian drama. Dick comes rushing in an Italian bakery, swears to take revenge on the "bastardo" who seduced his wife and kills Allan in the role of a scared baker. As Allan is an enthusiastic cineaste, his fantasies are strongly influenced by films. Accordingly, the film contains parodistic reflections of well-established film genres. It, thereby, picks up on conventions and characteristic techniques of various film genres. This will be analysed later in more detail.

As already mentioned in the previous chapters, the main character of a classical Hollywood film usually ensures the story movement through striving for a specific goal, breaking through obstacles and finally getting rewarded for his/her courage or failing at the outer circumstances. The goal either consists of an improvement or restoration of the initial

situation. “The hero desires something new to his/her situation, or the hero seeks to restore an original state of affairs.” (Bordwell 16) In Allen’s films, however, the main characters distinguish themselves through their passivity. They are dissatisfied with their current situation, but not able to change it. In *Play It Again, Sam* the main protagonist Allan Felix was left by his wife Nancy and falls into a deep depression. His emotional distress seems to bring him to a complete standstill. Allan is unable to do anything except wallow in self-pity. The first scenes of the film show Allan Felix during his daily activities which he draws little attention to. Instead, he still ponders over the reasons why his wife abandoned him and complains that his psychiatrist left for holiday at a time when he would need him so urgently. Allan remembers Nancy complaining that all they were doing was watching movies. She criticized that he is “one of life’s great watchers.” Nancy, in contrast, occupies an active position. As she felt suppressed in their relationship, she took active steps and broke out of what she referred to as imprisonment. In contrast to Allan, she describes herself as a “doer”. The poignant remark of being “life’s great watchers” also implicates that the employment of Allen’s characters is often situated in the film business. While Alvy Singer in *Annie Hall* works as a television comedian, Allan Felix earns his money by being a film critic. As his job mostly consists of watching films, he has already become deeply rooted in the role of the passive spectator and forgot how to play an active role in real life. Therefore, this statement emphasizes the general passivity of Allen’s main characters. They are dissatisfied with their current situation and simultaneously unable to change it. Therefore, they seek to remain in their current state of being, no matter whether it is beneficial or depressing. Allan Felix was satisfied in a relationship which in fact already ceased to exist, as they distanced themselves from each other concerning their interests and emotions. His wife, in contrast, has driven this dissatisfying state to pursue her strong desire for change, whereupon she finally filed for divorce. Consequently, Allan’s balance in life is severely disrupted. His friends seek to release him from his lethargy by arranging dates with different women. Only slowly the idea of setting a goal for the main character develops, as Allan realises that he has fallen in love with his best friend’s wife. However, it is not a goal which he strives at. Instead, he finds himself in an unpleasant situation. All of his following actions are only taken out of the necessity to find a solution without significant effects on the others, in order to re-establish the original balance, no matter whether this balance was satisfying or not. Thereby, he downplays the slowly developing conflict which constitutes the story, i.e. a man falls in love and seduces his best friend’s wife. In many of his films Allen’s main characters flee from conflict. This aspect is most noticeable within the dialogues, as they quickly intend to talk

their way out of conflict-laden conversations. During one of his rendezvous Allan Felix encounters a group of rowdy bikers who have cast an eye on his date. The following conversation clearly shows how Allan seeks to avoid any conflict, as he denies any interest in the woman in order not to be seen as their concurrent. According to Classical Hollywood Cinema, however, conflict constitutes the basis of action. Without conflict the ongoing action cannot develop and the principle of cause and effect does not come into play. Without conflict the characters do not get into trouble and are not forced to find a solution. In this respect Allen's film resists the classical dramaturgy by placing passive characters without a real goal in focus. Can Allen's films, therefore, be described as anti-dramatic? Just before the ending Allan Felix realizes that Dick and Linda need each other and decides not to stand in their way. Accordingly, in the last ten minutes of the film a goal of the main character is set, i.e. the reunion and reconciliation of the couple. With the aid of Bogart's advice Allan finally reaches his goal and walks away as the hero before the closing credits set in. In other words, the film adapts to a classical dramaturgy within the last ten minutes.

A further characteristic of Classical Hollywood Cinema is the principle distinction between hero and villain, which is the primary source of any conflict. In Allen's films, however, there are neither heroes nor villains, neither protagonists nor antagonists. One might most likely describe Allan Felix as the protagonist, as the story is told from his perspective and his thoughts are made accessible to the audience through the voice-over narration. As soon as he seduces his best friend's wife, he suddenly turns into the villain of the story, but does not receive the spectators' antipathy, as they already feel sympathetic towards him through having become witnesses of his inner thoughts and feelings. In the end, however, he occupies the position of the suffering hero who endures emotional pain for the benefit of his friends. Allan Felix seems to have found his way from being one of life's great watchers to the status of a classical hero in the last minutes.

Play It Again, Sam does not only resist Classical Hollywood Cinema in its avoidance of conflict, its character constellation and passive anti-heroes, but also on the stylistic level. Similar to *Annie Hall*, the film consists of shots which are packed with a lot of irrelevant visual information and only leave a small part of the frame for the actual action. The first screenshot shows Allan Felix in the bathroom. In fact, the spectator is only shown his hands and the towel. The visual information in the rest of the picture remains insignificant for the on-going action. Only a small section of the image is used to transmit the relevant information to the audience. Furthermore, the circumstance that Allan is taking a shower at this moment is insignificant as well. The relevant information is merely transmitted on the acoustic level.

Allan still ponders over the reasons why Nancy might have left him and communicates his thoughts to the audience via voice-over. This screenshot shows how the film consciously breaks the conventions of Hollywood which focus more on putting in the essential information, i.e. the action of the ongoing scene, central in the frame.



Figure 5.2.1.



Figure 5.2.2.

Also the second screenshot illustrates very well how only a small section of the image is used for the transmission of information. In this case the significant part is even illuminated through the lamp in the corridor. In this scene Allan has just returned from the weekend with his two friends. He is still carrying his luggage and is lost in his thoughts. Therefore, the relevant information is again transmitted through dialogues and the potential of the visual level is consciously neglected.

In Allen's film one shot usually remains for the whole length of a scene, by which means the film resembles a composition of theatrical scenes, based on the interaction and dialogues between the characters, as it does not focus on profiting from the film-specific technique of montage. The slow rhythm of montage is a typical device in Allen's films, which is reminiscent of his origins in the field of theatre. It again signifies a contrast to the conventional use of montage in the Classical Hollywood Cinema. Allen also made use of this technique in *Annie Hall*. As I already analysed it in the previous chapter, I do not go further into detail here.

The following film differs from the two preceding ones, as Woody Allen does not play the main character himself and the story does not centre on the typical city neurotic, which entails the associative narration through voice-overs, the passive anti-hero, the resistance of dramatic conflicts, the neglect of the visual level nor the emphasis on dialogues. Instead, the film most likely adapts to the conventions of Hollywood in comparison to the previous two.

5.3. *The Purple Rose of Cairo*

The Purple Rose of Cairo was released in 1985 and narrates the life of a poor waitress Cecilia during the Great Depression in the United States. The stock-exchange crash on October 24th 1929, also known as Black Friday, forced many Americans into enormous debts. Many of them lost their entire property over night. The crash led to an economic crisis and eventually to the Great Depression. The consequences were tragic: mass unemployment, wage cuts, poverty and political intolerance. The situation got even worse as the US government had not invested in social services.

During these harsh times Cecilia struggles for existence. She does not only suffer from her joyless and dreary life, but is also suppressed by her violent husband Monk who drowns his sorrows in alcohol and finds distraction in gambling. Consequently, she seeks refuge in the fantasy world of the cinema. After a further dispute with Monk she watches the black-and-white film *The Purple Rose of Cairo* for the fifth time. The basic story line centres on representatives of the rich upper class who spend their day sipping champagne and leading trivial conversations. As a welcome distraction they leave for an exotic vacation to Egypt, where they meet the archaeologist Tom Baxter. This film-within-the-film represents the Hollywood productions in the 1930s, which propagated the image of the American upper class society as the desirable prospect in life. They painted the hope of many when showing how the American Dream, i.e. the successful ascent from rags to riches, has come true for these people. Suddenly the screen character Tom turns his head towards the cinema audience and addresses Cecilia with the words, “My God, you must really love this picture. [...] This is the fifth time you are seeing this.” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:17) He steps down from the screen and transgresses from his black-and-white screen identity to a character of the colour film. Tom confesses his love to Cecilia, who is still paralysed by astonishment. His revolutionary transgression shocks the audience and leads to chaos within the cinema. The two lovers hastily leave and hide in an abandoned amusement park. The news even reaches Hollywood, whereupon the ambitious actor Gil Shepherd travels to the small town with the intention to save his career. The film producer and cinema owner make up plans how to resolve this chaos. All across the country the fictional characters of Tom attempt to leave the screen and rebel against the dictatorship of the film script. Gil pretends to have fallen in love with Cecilia in order to trick Tom back into the film. Consequently, Cecilia finds herself trapped between the two men and is forced to make a decision. As she opts for the real-life Gil, Tom voluntarily returns to the black-and-white film and thereby allows it to end as written in the script. Cecilia finds herself constrained to discover that Gil only pretended to be

in love with her and played a role, just as his acting profession taught him. While Gil returns to Hollywood in the hope that he can continue his career without further interruption, Cecilia is again confronted with the harsh reality of the first scene and finds her only refuge in the cinema.

The Purple Rose of Cairo most likely adapts to a classical dramaturgy as proposed by Aristotle and applied by countless Hollywood films. In contrast to *Annie Hall*, which follows a string of remotely linked associations, this film is structured according to a clear dramaturgy and includes a suspense curve. The story does not focus on a passive anti-hero and his random encounters, but instead divides the characters in two clearly separate groups. The protagonists centre on the couple Cecilia and Tom, whereas the antagonists include the violent husband Monk as well as the ambitious actor Gil and other representatives of the film industry. Furthermore, a goal is set and pushes the action forward. However, this goal is not given to one of the protagonists, but to their major enemy. Even though he is the main antagonist, Gil most likely fits the description of the active hero, as he keeps his goal clearly in sight. His aim is to return Tom on screen in order to proceed in his career. In contrast to him, the two protagonists are rather insecure about their goal. While Tom still needs to find his way in this colourful world which does not function according to a script, Cecilia feels insecure in her decision for one of the two men and has difficulties handling this sudden admiration. Their actual goal would consist in hindering Gil in his self-centred ambition to destroy their love. However, Cecilia realises his evil nature only when it is already too late. In contrast to the two previously discussed films, *The Purple Rose of Cairo* to some extent follows the conventional dramaturgy and only deviates from the classical model in its unexpected ending.

According to the Classical Hollywood Cinema an ending should consist of the restoration of the original balance. Within the first scene the characters usually live in a balance which is not considered as the ideal situation, but still provides acceptable circumstances. Through an unexpected intervention this balance is disturbed, whereupon the main character seeks to restore it and has to overcome a certain number of challenges. In the end the balance is restored and even proves to be a far better situation than in the beginning. In case of a tragedy, however, the ending does not resemble an improvement. In *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, in contrast, the final situation resembles the film's beginning exactly. The passed events resulted neither in an improved balance nor in complete catastrophe. The balance is restored in the form of an exact reproduction of the original state of affairs. Cecilia is once more watching films in the local cinema in order to escape from the harsh reality. Tom is again entrapped in the black-and-white world of the film screen. Gil is flying back to Hollywood, where his

successful career is waiting for him. Cecilia's husband is still living on her costs, drowns his sorrows in alcohol and spends time with gambling. The original balance under which most of the characters severely suffered is restored. It seems that the ongoing action was ineffective and a waste of time, as it brought no change for any character. Thereby, *The Purple Rose of Cairo* forms a clear contrast to Hollywood films which meet the spectator's expectation that the story implies a progression within the characters' lives.

In an interview Woody Allen recounts how he came up with the story. Originally the film comprised the encounter between a woman and her dream man from the screen. As the real-life actor suddenly appears on the scene as well, she is forced to make a decision between reality and fantasy. Allen states that she cannot opt for fantasy, as this would drive her to insanity. Thereby, he already anticipates the outcome of Cecilia's decision. Reality, however, which represents her only choice, does not spare its participants from injuries.

Erst schrieb ich die Geschichte folgendermaßen: Ein Traummann einer Frau steigt aus einer Leinwand, und dann erscheint der Schauspieler im richtigen Leben, und sie muß [sic!] sich zwischen Realität und Phantasie entscheiden. Und natürlich kann sie sich nicht für die Phantasie entscheiden, denn das könnte in den Wahnsinn führen. Wenn sie sich aber für die Realität entscheidet, bleiben die Verletzungen nicht aus. So einfach war das erste Konzept. Alles andere ergab sich in der Schreibphase. [...] Daß [sic!] sie dann in die Leinwand steigt, war ein nachträglicher Einfall. (Woody Allen qtd. in Björkman 168)

This quote shows that the basic contrast between fantasy and reality constitutes Allen's original starting point for writing the film script. Cinema is portrayed as a place of refuge for people suffering under the harsh circumstances of reality. In his essay "Die kleinen Ladenmädchen gehen ins Kino" Siegfried Kracauer examines how the female lower class audience is tempted to lose themselves in daydreams when watching romantic comedies in the cinema. These women usually lack financial security and are forced to work as shopgirls or waitresses. Similar to Cecilia they might be trapped in an unhappy marriage and do not receive the deserved appreciation for their efforts at work and at home. As soon as these personal crises meet a depression on the economic market, the retreat to the cinema spreads among the population and romantic comedies of Hollywood simulating an ideal world are in great demand. Klaus Kreimeier explains the success of glamorous Hollywood films in a time of economic depression.

Fallen die persönlichen Krisen mit denen der Weltwirtschaft zusammen, haben die Glitzer-Movies Hochkonjunktur – jene Filme, die uns das Laissez-faire einer imaginären Upper class präsentieren, eine transparente, gewichtlose Welt, in der es nur schöne Frauen und elegante Männer, charmant betriebenen Müßiggang und weiße Telefone gibt. (Kreimeier)

Within the diegesis a further ontological level is introduced, which reproduces the typical "champagne comedies" of the 1930s and thereby forms a clear contrast to the ongoing action on the diegetic level. These films represent the seemingly carefree and easygoing life of the

upper class and tempt the audience to drown their daily sorrows in the filmic illusion. In his essay Siegfried Kracauer points out that these dull and unreal film fantasies mirror the daydreams and suppressed wishes of society. “Die blödsinnigen und irrealen Filmphantasien sind die Tagträume der Gesellschaft, in denen ihre eigentliche Realität zum Vorschein kommt, ihre sonst unterdrückten Wünsche sich gestalten.” (Kracauer) *The Purple Rose of Cairo* participates in this broad discussion about reality and fiction, life and art, and their reciprocal dependence. At first the film inflames the hopes and fantasies of any spectator who once identified with a fictional character and enjoys being immersed in a filmic world. Then, however, the film suddenly adopts a rational perspective, brings the spectator back down to earth and disappoints his/her free-floating fantasies. It emphasizes the necessity of a clear boundary between the two contradicting worlds, as a transgression would lead either to insanity or to chaos.

Stanley Kauffmann, however, is not pleased with this pessimistic ending of the film and the re-erection of the ontological boundary between fantasy and reality. In his review Kauffmann states that, “He [Woody Allen] gets bright ideas, juggles them in a while, then - unprofessionally, in the sense described - simply abandons them.” (40) He would have rather preferred to witness these fantasies being further developed. Similarly, Arnold W. Preussner criticizes that the film’s original idea, which he considers as brilliant and unique, is shamelessly dropped in the end and the characters are forced to remorsefully return to their beginning monotony and solitude.

Allen’s new-comic plot thus offers us errors, complications, and romantic triangles, but no ‘telos of recovery’. Instead, the film’s conclusion returns Cecilia to the ‘heavy husband’ Monk, the plot’s antagonistic blocking figure, in direct violation of conventional new-comic practice. Allen’s refusal to provide an upbeat, new-comic conclusion thus seems to mute substantially the film’s celebration of its ‘bright idea’. (Preussner 94)

Preussner appreciates the original idea of a screen character rebelling against the black-and-white film world and encountering the real-life audience. While the transgression between these two diegetic worlds is considered a “bright idea”, he perceives the film’s ending as disappointing. Woody Allen, in contrast, mentions in an interview, “If you want a happy ending, you should see a Hollywood movie.” (qtd. in Schwarz 82) He consciously draws a line between his films and Classical Hollywood Cinema and, thereby, justifies the pessimistic ending of *The Purple Rose of Cairo*.

In its juxtaposition of reality and fantasy, life and art, the film contains many possibilities of metareferential reflections.

[The film] offers some of Allen's most important reflections on the medium in which he has now been working for the better part of two decades. The film synthesizes farcial and parodic techniques from

Allen's early films with the serious interest in romantic themes that emerges in most of his more recent pictures. (Preussner 91)

The film explicitly discusses the filmic techniques with which Hollywood films operate. Tom wonders, for instance, why his kiss with Cecilia is not immediately followed by a fade-out. In another scene he attempts to pay a restaurant bill with fake money and realises that the filmic world is constructed upon illusions and deceptions. As long as the banknotes visually resemble real money, it is perfectly sufficient for the screen world, but not acceptable for reality. Similarly, a car drive in reality serves to move from one place to another, whereas Hollywood scenes merely require the illusion of a car drive, which means that actors are communicating in a standing car, while banners illustrating the outside landscape are moved along the car windows. Furthermore, Tom repeatedly wonders that the world does not function according to a prewritten script. He has liberated himself from the dictatorship of the film script and risks to access a world which does not follow an underlying structure or narrative conventions. Instead of one scriptwriter the real world employs every single person as the writer of his/her own life. As this multitude of writers do not always agree and get in each other's way, conflicts, failures and disappointments are predetermined.

This shows that metareference is portrayed in two different manners within *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. On the one hand, the ontological boundary between the diegetic world and the film-within-the-film is crossed and thereby made visible. On the other hand, the transgression of the screen character Tom leads to explicit discussions about filmic conventions. In both cases the awareness of the spectator is drawn to the medium film and its mechanisms.

6. Explicit vs. Implicit Metareference

The aim of any metareferential device is to distance the audience from anticipating the diegesis and to encourage a critical observation on the medium itself. Metareference ideally leads to an emancipation of the spectator, as it turns him/her from being a passive consumer into an active participant who critically engages in the initiated reflections on the medium.

A very common metareferential device is the breaking of conventions and, thereby, the disruption of the accustomed reading of a film. As the average Western-world audience has already become used to the techniques of Classical Hollywood Cinema, they significantly structure the filmic mode of reception. Therefore, one can make these techniques, i.e. the building blocks of filmic narration, only visible by consciously breaking them or by using them in an alienated manner. That way the spectator is distanced from anticipating the narration and encouraged to consciously ponder over the medium itself. This metareferential

observation within the spectator is an intellectual activity. According to Ronald Librach, an “intellectual activity is by its very nature a process of distancing – of ‘stepping back’ from the object of one’s contemplation in order to get a better view” (168). Similar to metareferential films, the desired intellectual activity in Brecht’s theatre is achieved through a process of distancing. “With a technique not unlike that of Brecht’s alienation effect, the parody and self-reflection of narcissistic narrative work to prevent the reader’s identification with any character and to force a new, more active, thinking relationship upon him.” (Hutcheon 49) Brecht’s alienation effect evokes a mentally active participation of the theatre audience. A means to destroy the illusion in film and to distance the spectator from the story consists in the breaking or alienated use of filmic conventions. One can differentiate between narrative and medium-specific conventions. The first type would refer to the story and discourse 1, whereas the latter would apply to discourse 2. My focus lies on medium-specific conventions and I tried to figure out the various ways Woody Allen breaks conventions in the three films under discussion. My analysis of the three films led to the conclusion that metareferential observations within the spectator can be evoked by a multitude of very creative techniques. In the attempt to arrange these metareferential devices in certain categories, I came up with the idea to use Werner Wolf’s differentiation between explicit and implicit metareference in literature and apply it to the medium film.

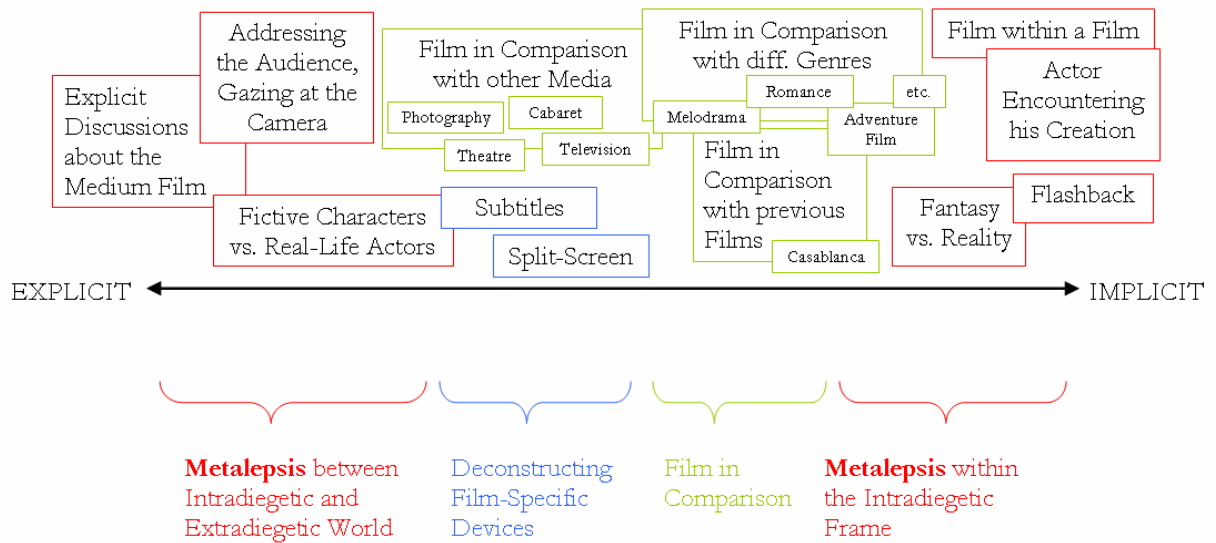
[E]xplicit vs. implicit metareference refers to the semantic distinctness of the metareference as a quotable element: the numerous discussions of storytelling [...] are all examples of explicit metareference, for they contain quotable metareferential phrases such as ‘my reader’ or ‘my work’. (Wolf, 2010 7)

Werner Wolf mentions the criterion of quotability in order to locate a narrative device in the category of explicit metareference. In contrast, a metareferential device can be described as implicit, if “there are more covert devices which also may elicit reflections on the ontological status of the text as a medium without, however, using explicitly metareferential expressions.” (Wolf, 2010 7) Therefore, cooperation on behalf of the recipient is necessary in order to decode these underlying meanings. In other words, whether a specific device is read as metareferential depends on the medium-awareness of the recipient.

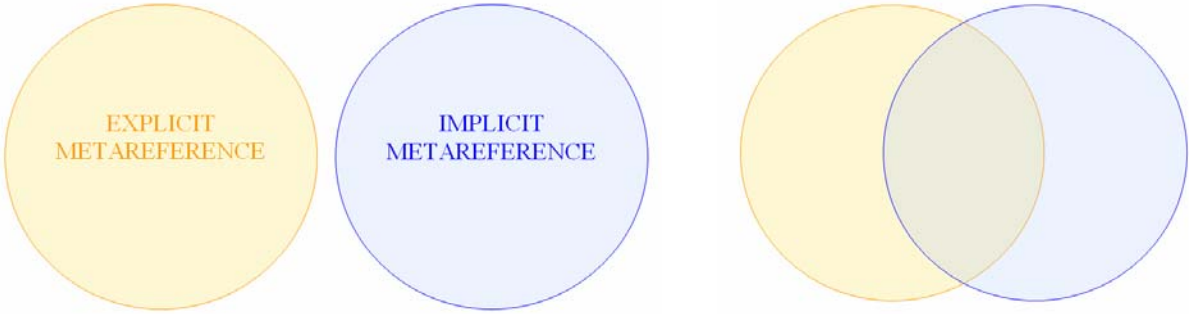
[It] does not mean that implicit metareference is necessarily less strongly metareferential, i.e., that it creates less metasemiotic awareness than explicit metareference. An implicit metasign can lead to as much or even more reflection on the nature of signs as an explicit metasign can. (Nöh 89)

It challenges the audience even more to think critically, as they are actively involved in decoding the metareferential signs. These underlying meanings point towards the text’s (e.g. the film’s) own status as a constructed artefact and towards the typical patterns and commonly accepted rules of creating a narration.

When applying this model to the medium film, one encounters certain difficulties. To begin with, the criterion of explicit metareference is defined as the criterion of quotability, which can be easily applied to verbal media. Concerning film, however, the question arises whether explicit metareference is only to be found in dialogues, as phrases like “the film” or “the actor” are quotable, or whether images can also be quoted in some respect. Is explicit metareference restricted to the verbal media or can it also be applied to an audio-visual medium? I am of the opinion that explicit metareference in film is to be found on more levels (acoustic as well as visual) than merely concerning dialogues. The explicitness, thus, depends on how obvious or concrete certain metareferential devices are displayed. Therefore, I rather adhere to the definition of implicit metareference, which emphasises that a cooperation of the reader or spectator is necessary in order to convey the metareferential meaning. In other words, the metareferential statement is made subliminally and depends on the medium-awareness of the recipient as to whether it is revealed or not. In order to apply this concept on film, I suggest not to insist on the two strictly separated categories, but instead to view the differentiation on a scale, on which the explicitness of metareferential devices varies. Similarly, Werner Wolf points out that “there is a spectrum of *degrees of metareference* rather than a binary opposition of hetero vs. meta.” (2009 24) As already mentioned, he distinguishes between heteroreference, i.e. a sign’s relation to the outside world, and metareference, i.e. the reflection of the medium itself. While encountering such double-coded signs, the perception of the spectator oscillates between these two possibilities of decoding the sign. The degree of how explicit the sign’s metareference is portrayed and how profound the medium-awareness of the spectator needs to be varies. Therefore, a scale seems to be a useful illustration. If there is a high probability that a sign is understood to carry a metareferential meaning, it would be placed on the left side of the scale. If a sign, however, requires the cooperation of the recipient in order to be decoded as metareferential, it would be located further right. Concerning the medium film one cannot speak about two separate categories, as the exact differentiation between explicit and implicit metareference is problematic. Instead, one can arrange metareferential devices on a scale or – as Werner Wolf calls it – a spectrum of degrees of metareference.



This illustration is an attempt to arrange metareferential devices which are found in the three films under discussion on a scale ranging from explicit to implicit metareference. However, it is strongly arguable which device should be placed on which position of the scale. Can it ever be determined whether e.g. “Film in Comparison” is more metareferentially explicit than “Deconstructing Film-Specific Devices”? This example demonstrates the problematic nature of adapting two strictly separated categories which structure metareference in literature on a completely different medium. Metareferential devices cannot be clearly ordered according to their explicitness. Thus, a bubble model might point out the relation between explicit and implicit metareference more appropriately.



The first picture illustrates the relation between explicit and implicit metareference in the medium literature. As the criterion of quotability is perfectly applicable in a verbal medium, one can distinguish between two separate categories. The medium film, however, could rather be described by means of the second illustration. Specific metareferential devices need no longer be placed on an exact position of a scale, but are instead located in a fuzzy area between the two poles.

Werner Wolf points out that according to its original definition, i.e. the criterion of quotability, explicit metareference would only apply to verbal media and exclude other media like film. However, it depends on the definition of explicitness.

[E]xplicitness may also be defined differently. I propose to conceive it as a high degree of discernability or 'obviousness' on the 'surface' of signs and sign configurations that must be representational, yet need not be restricted to symbolic signs but could include iconic and indexical signs, as in painting and traditional photography. 'Obviousness' is in this context the quality of a clear, (quasi-)denotational representation through the activation of conventional world-knowledge. (Wolf, 2009 45)

In order to locate explicit metareference in film, I proceed from Wolf's second definition and focus on the "obviousness" of individual elements. The degree of explicitness, therefore, concerns the more or less intense effect which metareferential devices obtain in the process of reception. Consequently, I mainly apply the definition of implicit metareference, i.e. questioning in how far the cooperation of the recipient is necessary, when discussing the explicitness of certain devices.

One can also refer to these two poles as overt and covert metareference. According to Linda Hutcheon, overt metareferential texts would "reveal their self-awareness in explicit thematizations or allegorizations of their diegetic or linguistic identity." (7) If a character suddenly gazes at the camera and directly addresses the audience, he/she reveals his/her awareness of being part of a fictionally constructed world. A film can further be described as overtly metareferential, if it reveals its self-awareness by e.g. including written intertitles saying "Chapter 1" etc, which is only to be found in literary texts. The film, thereby, integrates a narrative device from another medium and reveals how film conventionally narrates through showing how it does not narrate. In these two examples film overtly reveals a self-awareness of its diegetic identity. Linda Hutcheon explains that covert metareference takes place as soon as "this process is internalized, actualized." (7) In other words, the metareferential meaning is hidden behind the surface of the story. The recipient needs to read between the lines of a novel or look between the images of a film in order to grasp this covert message. According to his/her medium-awareness the metareference might also be overlooked or ignored. These two categories would also apply to the scale model, which illustrates the degree of how much a metareferential message is overtly displayed or covertly transmitted.

One can further refer to the distinction between explicit and implicit metareference by considering the difference between the mode of telling and the mode of showing. If, for instance, intradiegetic characters discuss the characteristics of film, this metareferential device counts as telling and explicitly thematises the medium. In contrast, a film-specific device can be used in an unconventional manner and ontological borders can be broken. Thereby, their

original function is made visible and, in other words, is *shown* to the audience. The distinction between telling and showing is actually drawn according to the criterion of quotability and applies to Werner Wolf's first definition of explicitness. Accordingly, the mode of telling does only concern the level of dialogues within film, whereas other metareferential devices would be characterized as showing.

The distinction between explicit and implicit metareference, i.e. between telling and showing, can be easily applied to the medium literature, but remains problematic in connection with other media. In the essay "Metafiction and Metamusic" Werner Wolf explores the limits of metareference by putting his focus on instrumental music, which he considers to be a neglected area in the research of metareference. Wolf argues that metareferential music is characterized by its deviations from the traditional style. Thereby, the medium is placed in the forefront and turned into the message. Wolf clearly states that "music cannot explicitly and quotably comment on its own medium in the way fiction can." (2011) He excludes the possibility that instrumental music contains explicit metareferential statements and points out the necessity of the recipient's cooperation to decode implicit metareferential devices, which can be overlooked (or overheard). In other words, Wolf in this case does not differentiate between occurrences of metareference according to their obviousness, but applies the criterion of quotability. He opts for the previously mentioned distinction between telling and showing. In my analysis of the medium film I decided to refer to Wolf's second definition of explicitness, namely conceiving it as "obviousness", and I based my hypothesis on a spectrum of degrees of metareference.

In a footnote, Wolf points out a basic distinction between instrumental music and representational art forms e.g. film. "As music is also a nonrepresentational medium, it even is unable to represent its medium or the creation of a composition in the way a painting may do which self-reflexively shows, for instance, a painter at work." (Wolf 2011) Whereas metareferential devices are very limited in instrumental music, mainly consisting in deviations from the traditional style, film as a representational medium offers a wide range and creative diversity of metareferential devices. The following chapters analyse the different metareferential devices which Woody Allen used in one of the three films. My intention thereby is to show how creatively the attention of the spectator is drawn to the medium film and its mechanisms. I decided to group these metareferential devices in categories and order them according to their metareferential explicitness, i.e. according to the scale model. Accordingly, the first chapter deals with explicit discussions of intradiegetic characters about film, which partly entail the characters' knowledge of their fictionality. The last chapter, then,

discusses intradiegetic metalepsis, which crosses ontological borders within the diegetic world but leaves the border to the spectator untouched.

6.1. Metalepsis between Intradiegetic and Extradiegetic World

The term “metalepsis” was originally coined by the French narratologist Gérard Genette in 1972. According to *Metzler Lexikon. Literatur und Kulturtheorie* metalepsis is defined as “Wechsel zwischen narrativen Ebenen, der auftritt, wenn zwischen diegetischer [...] und extra- oder metadiegetischer Welt hin- und hergeschaltet wird.” (Nünning 490) In other words, metalepsis is the exchange between narrative levels which appears, when the narration switches between the diegetic and extra- or metadiegetic world. This quote already points to the two different variants of metalepsis. If the narration switches between diegetic and extradiegetic world, the ontological border between fictive characters and real-life spectators is crossed. The illusion of an independent fictional world is destroyed, as soon as a character acknowledges the existence of the spectator e.g. by looking at the camera and directly addressing the audience. The metalepsis between intradiegetic and extradiegetic world can hardly be overlooked and is therefore described as a more explicit metareferential device.

If the narration switches between diegetic and metadiegetic world, the metalepsis remains within the diegesis. The transgression of the ontological border does not necessarily disrupt the spectator’s flow of perception nor destroy the constructed illusion of a fictional world. “Die M[etalepse] gestaltet und überwindet ‘eine bewegliche, aber heilige Grenze zwischen zwei Welten: zwischen der, in der man erzählt, und der, von der erzählt wird.’” (Nünning 490) It overcomes a movable, but sacred frontier between the world of the narrator and the world of the narrated, i.e. between diegetic and metadiegetic (or hypodiegetic) world. As the illusion of an independent fictional world is maintained, this variant is considered to be more implicit.

Sonja Klimek describes three preconditions of metalepsis, and thereby refers to the second variant. First of all, the work under discussion must be a representation. Secondly, there has to be a representation of a fictional world within an artefact. Thirdly, the hierarchical levels of representation and of what is represented have to be mixed up in a paradoxical way, and this should not happen by mere accident but be part of the work’s script. (see Klimek 170) Different levels of representation form a hierarchical relation. Unexpectedly, two of the levels get mixed up.

In “A Theory of Narrative” Franz Stanzel further specifies these hierarchical levels of representation in fictional texts. In fictional narrative communication, one can distinguish

between three levels. On the level of nonfictional communication, the author addresses the reader. The embedded level refers to the communication between narrator, i.e. implied author, and addressee(s), i.e. implied reader. Finally, the level of action includes the interaction between the characters of the fictional world. The following illustration demonstrates this “Chinese boxes” model more clearly.

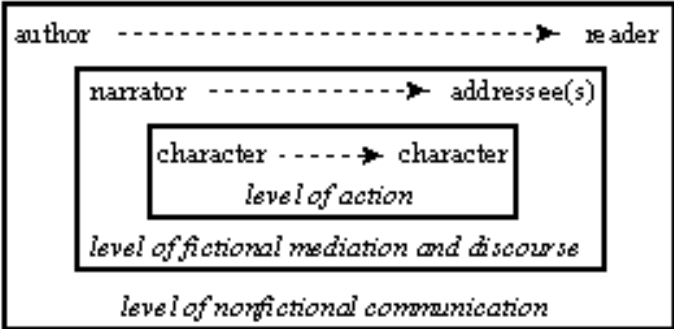
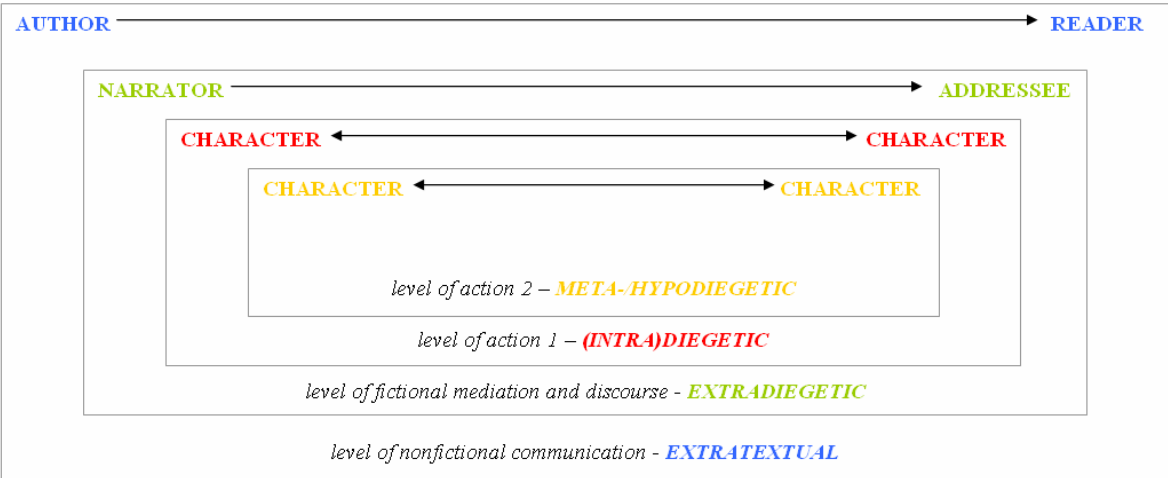


Figure 6.1.1

Whereas the communication between author and reader takes place extratextually, the two embedded levels are defined as intratextual. The two levels of fictional and nonfictional communication are further characterised as one-way communication, as the author or narrator transmits information, whereas the reader or addressee has no possibility to respond. On the level of action, however, a two-way communication takes place, i.e. a reciprocal interaction between the characters. Thus, the arrow within the illustration should actually point in both directions. Furthermore, this model should include an inserted level within the level of action, in case a narration includes a secondary narration within the diegetic world, e.g. a film within a film. In order to include these aspects, I designed a revised version of Stanzel’s model of fictional narrative communication.



As the arrows illustrate, the communication on both levels of action works in both directions, whereas the two outer levels consist of a one-way communication. Furthermore, I included

the terms which I chose to use to define the separate levels. I find them most appropriate, as they all very clearly point out their relation to the diegesis, which is the centre of any fictional narrative communication. Debra Malina uses these terms, as she distinguishes between “the theoretically mutually exclusive zones of (extratextual) reality, the fictional frame (extradiegetic level), the main story (diegesis), and the story-within-the-story (hypodiegesis).” (1) Interestingly, Debra Malina as well as Franz Stanzel emphasize the separation between the extradiegetic level (level of fictional mediation and discourse) and the extratextual level (level of nonfictional communication). In my further analysis I mainly use the term extradiegetic in contrast to intradiegetic. Thereby, I intend to distinguish whether something or someone is located within or outside of the diegesis. When I point out that an intradiegetic character gazes at the camera and addresses the extradiegetic spectator, I do not further specify whether the spectator represents only the implied addressee or is part of a real-life audience. I want to leave this open for individual interpretation and, thereby, use extradiegetic as an umbrella term for both narrative levels.

The model illustrating the fictional narrative communication can be further revised in order to be applied to the medium film. On the level of nonfictional communication, the author is replaced by a cooperation between scriptwriter, director, producer, actor, costume designer and many more. This multitude of artists addresses as well a multitude of spectators, i.e. the audience. On the level of fictional mediation and discourse, the implied “sender of the information”, be it a screenwriter or someone else, communicates with the implied spectator. Finally, the level of action describes the communication between the intradiegetic characters and can include a secondary level of action, e.g. a film-within-the-film.

The clear separation of ontological levels remains an unspoken convention in most narratives. However, by crossing these borders they are made visible and the spectator is reminded of the film’s invisible structure. A transgression of the borders between narrative levels is called *metalepsis*. One can further distinguish between two variants. *Metalepsis* can either operate through crossing ontological boundaries within the diegetic world or through breaking the diegetic frame itself. In other words, *metalepsis* can either violate the border between extradiegetic and intradiegetic world or it crosses a border within the diegesis. I decided to use the terms *intradiegetic* and *extradiegetic metalepsis* for these two variants.

Intradiegetic *metalepsis* is achieved through including an additional subordinate narrative layer, e.g. a film-within-the-film. Consequently, the boundary towards this newly created ontological level can be crossed. This is the case in *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, as the screen character Tom Baxter steps out of the black-and-white romantic comedy and approaches

Cecilia who is part of the cinema audience. In *Play it Again, Sam* the main character from the classic *Casablanca*, which is partly shown within the film, Humphrey Bogart suddenly appears in Allan's fantasy and gives him advice how to deal with women.

Extradiegetic metalepsis, in contrast, breaks the border between the diegetic world and the extradiegetic reality. It can be achieved through e.g. "exposing the presence of the camera or the microphone; allowing characters to address the audience; forwarding, rewinding, burning or cracking the celluloid; revealing the set, technicians or special effects; introducing the actors, or even the directors, as *themselves* within the diegesis." (Limoges 392) In one of Allen's more recent films *Whatever Works*, for example, the main character Boris Yellnikoff suddenly addresses the audience in the first scene and refers to them sitting in the cinema and eating popcorn, whereas the other characters wonder to whom he is talking. Further examples are to be found in *Annie Hall*, as Alvy Singer repeatedly looks at the camera and directly addresses the audience. Thereby, he crosses the ontological border between intradiegetic world and extradiegetic reality. All these films differ significantly in their way of crossing ontological boundaries. This again illustrates how creative metareferential devices can be applied in film as well as other media.

The function of metalepsis is to reveal the fictional construct of a film, namely its underlying structure including the three separate levels. The structure usually remains invisible and is not perceived by the spectator while watching the film. In order to become aware of the three levels of representation and the ontological borders, the film needs to consciously violate the separation and to transgress the borders. Thereby, it lays bare the fictionality of the artwork and undermines the aesthetic illusion. Due to the anti-illusionist effect of metareferential films the spectator is distanced from the intradiegetic world and encouraged to critically reflect on the underlying structures of the artwork. "The paradoxical 'impossibility' of metaleptic transgressions seems to lay bare the fictionality of the work in which they occur and thus implies a meta-statement on its medial nature as an artefact." (Wolf, 2009 50) As the metalepsis between intradiegetic world and extradiegetic reality significantly interrupts the spectator in his/her flow of perception and cannot be overlooked, I classify this metareferential device as relatively explicit. In contrast, the second type of metalepsis, which crosses ontological borders within the diegesis, only slightly disturbs the illusion and can even be overlooked by spectators with less medium-awareness. Therefore, I locate this metareferential device on the right side of the scale, i.e. near to the pole of implicit metareference. As I structured the following chapters in which I analyse a variety of metareferential devices in more detail according to their explicitness, I will examine devices

which break the border of the extradiegetic reality at first and only in the end deal with metalepsis within the intradiegetic world.

6.1.1. Explicit Discussions of Intradiegetic Characters about Film

In order to integrate explicit discussions about the medium film within diegetically motivated conversations among the characters, Allen situates the employment of his city neurotics in the film business. This provides him with the possibility to reflect on the media age. “Wie sehr in Woody Allens Filmschaffen das Medienzeitalter reflektiert wird, unterstreichen die Berufe und Tätigkeiten, die die Kunstfiguren Woody Allens in ihren verschiedenen Filmrollen ausüben.“ (Reinhard Westendorf qtd. in Schwarz 78) In addition to their employment in the film and media industry, Allen’s characters frequently show great interest in films. Consequently, a significant topic of intradiegetic conversations automatically focuses on film. The cinema constitutes an important place, which is frequently visited by the typical city neurotic. “Viele der Stadtneurotiker Figuren sind Filmkenner oder Cineasten und suchen regelmäßig Kinos auf.” (Schwarz 80) They usually watch film classics like *Casablanca* in *Play It Again, Sam* or lengthy documentaries about the persecution of the Jews in *Annie Hall*. Thereby, the characters are portrayed as sophisticated cineastes who possess profound knowledge in the field of film history. This knowledge is displayed in their dialogues with other characters.

The Purple Rose of Cairo also contains explicit discussion about film and cinematic conventions in particular. The screen character Tom is, for instance, astonished that in “real life” a kiss is not followed by a fade-out. Thereby, conventions of classical Hollywood films are directly addressed and deconstructed by intradiegetic characters. Allen cleverly integrates such explicit comments in intradiegetic conversations by letting the film centre on Tom’s rebellion against the script of the film-within-the-film. His unexpected transgression into the diegetic world causes chaos among the cinema audience and legitimates explicit discussions on the medium film without disturbing the illusion of an autonomous diegetic world.

Allen’s films include comments not only on the medium, but also on the film industry. Especially Hollywood is often mentioned critically, as for instance in the following scene of *Annie Hall*. After Alvy is finally persuaded to visit Los Angeles, they drive through the streets of Beverly Hills and Annie admires the cleanness of the city, “Wow, it’s so clean here.” Alvy sarcastically replies, “Because they don’t throw their garbage away. They make it into television shows.” (*Annie Hall* 01:09) In one of the following scenes Alvy complains that Hollywood deceives the audience, as they include fake laughter in television shows. Whereas

other comedians work hard to earn real laughs, Hollywood simply adds them by means of electronic assistance. Alvy points out to his friend, “Do you realise how immoral this all is? [...] You’re earning fake laughs.” (*Annie Hall* 01:10) By means of these short conversations Allen deconstructs the underlying mechanisms of television series, which are usually not consciously acknowledged by the spectator.

I rated the metareferential device “Explicit Discussions of Intradiegetic Characters about Film” as most explicit and placed it on the very left side of the scale. As already discussed previously, Werner Wolf originally defined a metareferential device to be explicit in case it can be quoted. The criterion of quotability is perfectly applicable for literature, but problematic concerning the medium film. Verbally quotable elements are only to be found in dialogues. The metareferential device discussed in this chapter, which I consider to be most explicit, is in fact based on verbally quoted elements. Therefore, Wolf’s definition is applicable for this chapter, but one should not forget that it only marks the edge of a long scale. The following chapters illustrate many other ways of creatively inducing observations on the medium in the spectator, which vary in their degree of explicitness (being defined as obviousness).

6.1.2. Gazing at the Camera and Talking with the Audience

Annie Hall starts with a static shot showing Woody Allen directly gazing at the camera. He addresses the audience and narrates the following joke:

There’s an old joke... em... two elderly women are at a Catskill Mountain resort and one of them says, ‘Well, the food in that place is really terrible’, and the other one says, ‘Yeah, I know. And there are so small portions.’ Well, that’s essentially how I feel about life, full of loneliness and misery and suffering and unhappiness and it’s all over much too quickly [...] You know, lately the strangest things are going on in my mind. I turned forty and I guess I am going through a kind of life crises. Annie and I broke up and I still can’t get my mind around that. You know, I keep shifting the pieces of my relationship through my mind and ... and examining my life and trying to figure out where did the screw up come. A year ago we were in love. (*Annie Hall* 00:01)

As this scene constitutes the very first minutes of the film, the spectator is irritated by how to classify it. Initially, the impression is created as Woody Allen himself gazes at the camera. As soon as he mentions “Annie and I broke up” the spectator suddenly realizes that he is in fact addressing the audience in his role of the filmic character. During this unique moment the extradiegetic director Woody Allen magically transforms in front of the camera into the intradiegetic character Alvy Singer. The spectator wonders whether he has suddenly changed into the intradiegetic character or has already been Alvy since the first second of appearing on the screen. Furthermore, the question rises whether Allen directly addresses the spectator or communicates with an intradiegetic audience in his role of Alvy working as a television

comedian. Is the spectator watching a film within the film (or rather a television show within the film) or does the intradiegetic character Alvy cross the ontological border by addressing the extradiegetic audience? The filmic device of addressing the audience can be interpreted in two ways and produces different effects.

[A]ddressing the audience – of which ‘looking into the camera’ is but one variety – will not produce the same effect if it is aimed at a diegetic camera (and through it, to a diegetic audience) as when it is aimed at the camera itself (and through it, to the audience itself). In other words, looking at the camera is not necessarily self-reflexive (and anti-illusionist) if it is (diegetically) motivated. (Limoges 402-403)

Accordingly, the gaze at the camera can be diegetically motivated, in case Alvy Singer addresses the intradiegetic audience in his role as a television comedian. As this is not evident in the first moment of the shot, he is not identified as the fictive character but instead as the real person Woody Allen, who directly addresses his real audience. With this first scene the film “break[s] the diegetic frame *and* our belief in the autonomy of the production’s diegetic world [...] [by] allowing characters to address the audience [...] introducing the actors, or even the directors, as *themselves* within the diegesis.” (Limoges 393) Due to this paradoxical situation at the beginning of the film, the invisible borders of the diegetic world are broken even before the diegetic world is created in front of the spectator’s eyes. Therefore, the spectator is not hindered from getting immersed in the filmic illusion, as he/she has had no possibility so far to become acquainted with the fictive world. Instead, the spectator’s attention is from the start adjusted to watching a metareferential film. Thereby, the illusion is already being broken before it is even created. It seems as if the film hangs up a sign saying “I am a metareferential film” already in the very first minutes, so that no self-reflexive remark will slip the spectator’s attention in further consequence.

Allen’s film immediately establishes its self-referential stance in a number of ways: the ironic, generally ambiguous interrelationship of author, narrator, and character; by extension, the ambiguous, problematic status of the text in relation to ‘reality’; the convoluted, metaphoric-associative plot structure (at least at the outset); the establishment of a context for repeated authorial intervention; and the ultimate subordination of the messages communicated to the process of narrative communication. (Schatz 126-127)

The quotation sums up the metareferential devices very well, which are used in *Annie Hall*. This chapter analyses the ambiguous interrelationship of author, narrator and character, which is created by means of the direct gaze at the camera. This metareferential device further leads to a confusion of the outside reality and the diegetic universe. “The comic narrator, in his ambivalent status as both author and character, both Allen and Alvy, functions throughout to subvert the film-reality distinction and to disrupt the autonomy of the hermetic fictional world.” (Schatz 127-128)

This first scene purports that the film consists of a fictive autobiography of a so-called Alvy Singer. “As this first scene shows the film could be called a fake, un-chronologically structured autobiographical documentary. As Alvy is narrating or reminiscing about his past he is at the same time re-living these scenes, but he is always able to step out and comment on them.” (Allacher 111) While Alvy narrates his life, his memories jump from one association to the next. Furthermore, he turns out to be an unreliable narrator. “[R]endering what appears to be past events, his own story, but he frequently digresses from mere storytelling to comment on what is presented, sometimes even to admit that what was shown was not entirely true or at least doubtful.” (Allacher 123) As Alvy mentions apologetically, he has a hyperactive fantasy, which endows him with the most peculiar associations and ideas.



Figure 6.1.2.1.



Figure 6.1.2.2.

The first screenshot is taken from the very first shot of the film, as Woody Allen (or Alvy Singer) directly addresses the audience. The second screenshot is taken from a scene which is exemplary Allen’s manner of breaking the illusion of an autonomous fictive world: While telling Alvy about her first visit at the psychiatrist Annie unconsciously mistakes a word. Alvy nails her down on this slip of the tongue, but she denies having said that, whereupon he directly addresses the spectator whom he deems trustworthy, as he/she also witnessed the conversation.

ANNIE: The only question is, will I change my wife.

ALVY: Will change your wife?

ANNIE: Will change my life.

ALVY: Yeah, but you said, will change my wife.

ANNIE: Well, didn’t I stumble? Will change my life, Alvy.

ALVY: But you said, will change my wife.

ANNIE: LIFE, Alvy! I said life.

ALVY: (turning to the camera) She said, will change my wife. You heard it because you are over there. So I am not crazy. (*Annie Hall* 00:50)

The question rises, who is talking to whom. In this scene Alvy’s final comment is dedicated to the audience, who is sitting “over there”, and is incomprehensible for Annie. At this moment the cinematic illusion is broken on two grounds. First of all, an intradiegetic character addresses an extradiegetic audience and, thereby, crosses a strictly defined ontological border.

Secondly, as his comment lacks diegetic motivation, it is in itself not rooted in the diegetic world anymore.

Conversely, the fortuitous asides undertaken by Alvy [...] cannot be diegetically motivated; he does not speak to a diegetic camera but instead directly to the extradiegetic camera and through it to the film's audience. In this case, the self-reflexive device breaches the frontier between the audience and film as well as our aesthetic illusion. (Limoges 403)

This significant moment reveals the underlying convention which claims that the spectator merely observes, but is not further involved in the independent fictive world of the film. It draws the spectator's attention to the manner of how this convention invisibly structures cinematic narrations. When Alvy suddenly turns towards the camera to comment on the ongoing action, he is (usually) not heard by the other characters in the scene. Therefore, his comments resemble an *aside ad spectatores*, which derives from a theatrical convention.

In the Greek theatre the chorus appeared as a mediator between diegetic world and audience by commenting on the happenings. *Parabasis* refers to the moment when the chorus is alone on stage and directly addresses the audience. William Shakespeare included *aside ad spectatores* in his plays, i.e. a character making a remark to the audience which cannot be heard by any other character on stage. In comedies asides are used to create dramatic irony, whereas their function in tragedies mainly lies in the increase of suspense. Thereby, the invisible fourth wall on the stage is consciously broken. (see Allacher 98-101) This narrative technique, i.e. the direct communication of a character with the audience, can also be found in film. The invisible fourth wall is destroyed by means of the filmic gaze through the camera eye. Usually the audience participates in the filmic action as an unnoticed spectator. As soon as a character looks directly through the camera towards the audience and, thereby, acknowledges the existence of these extradiegetic observers, the illusion is broken and the character is either stepping out of his/her role or the audience is drawn into the action. Harald Allacher points out how the theatrical technique can be implemented in cinema at the example of *Annie Hall*. “[T]he relatively young media, cinema, heavily draws from dramatic as well as narrative conventions. [...] Allen's film illustrates how the aside can be directly implemented into film.” (111) The following scene demonstrates how Allen cleverly implements this narrative convention which derives from theatre into the medium film. By analysing the scene I aim at highlighting two aspects in particular: On the one hand, Allen thematises the filmic convention claiming that the camera is invisible for intradiegetic characters. On the other hand, he demonstrates the comic potential of metareferential devices, which is particularly emphasized in postmodernist works of art.



Figure 6.1.2.3

Alvy and Annie are waiting in a queue in front of the cinema. Behind them a man loudly discusses the theories of Marshall McLuhan, which heavily annoys Alvy. Whereas he criticizes the impolite behaviour of the man, Annie simply tries to calm down his anger. Alvy complains that the man behind him is “shouting his opinion in my ear” and “spitting on my neck”. Finally, he steps out of the queue and directly addresses the camera.

ALVY (to the camera): What do you do when you get stuck in a movie line with a guy like this behind?

GUY (stepping out of the line as well): Why can't I give my opinion? It's a free country.

ALVY: Do you have to give it so loud? Aren't you ashamed to pontificate like that? The funny part is you don't know anything about Marshall McLuhan.

GUY: Really? I happen to teach a class at Columbia called "TV, Media and Culture". So I think my insights into Mr. McLuhan have a great deal of validity.

ALVY: Oh, do you? That's funny, because I happen to have Mr. McLuhan right here. Just let me ... Come over here a second. (pulling McLuhan out from behind a poster.)

MCLUHAN: I heard what you were saying. You know nothing of my work. You mean my whole fallacy is wrong? How you ever got to teach a course in anything is totally amazing.

ALVY (to the camera): Boy, if life were only like this. (*Annie Hall* 00:11)

Not only Alvy steps out of the action, but also the guy whom he accuses of postulating wrong statements about Marshall McLuhan's theories. The guy reacts to this accusation and they start a discussion in front of the camera. While the audience suddenly gets directly involved in their conversation and is put in the position of an objective judge, the other characters who are still waiting in the queue do not notice the ongoing events. “The fact that Alvy is able to fetch Marshall McLuhan himself from behind a nearby poster to advocate his case is only the tip of the iceberg. It boldly illustrates how Alvy has indeed a ‘hyperactive imagination’, how the film is not necessarily an accurate rendering of past events.” (Allacher 112) It needs to be

noticed that Marshall McLuhan is in fact not acting a role but appears as himself, whereas Alvy and the other man are still characters of the film. In the German version Alvy's final comment is even more explicitly metareferential, as he says "Aber das passiert ja nur im Film", which means "But this only happens in films." The humorous irony in this statement is created through the discrepant awareness. Whereas the character himself is not aware of his cinematic existence, the audience knows that he is in fact part of a film. They understand the ironic comment and can laugh at Allen's joke of including these words in the speech of a filmic character.

Furthermore, this scene devaluates the trustworthiness of Alvy as a narrator of his own life, as it shows an incident which actually never happened but is only part of his fantasy. The borders between Alvy's real life and his imagined autobiography transgress, whereby questions are raised which are rooted in the discourse of postmodernism. The deconstruction of reality leads to the recognition that reality itself is simply an image of an image, a copy of a copy, a representation of a representation or, in other words, a simulacrum.

In the Early Cinema the gaze at the camera was commonly used in order to attract the attention of the audience. Instead of creating the illusion of an independent fictional world, films of the Early Cinema aimed at creating fascination in the spectator through the presentation of sensational images. Accordingly, Tom Gunning refers to the Early Cinema as the *Cinema of Attractions*. As these films focused on a different goal, namely the presentation of sensational images, the gaze at the camera was not considered as disturbing but as a reasonable and frequently used cinematic device.

The goal of the Early Cinema has its origins in the first films by the brothers Lumière in 1895, who became known as the inventors of cinema. The original sensation of cinema consisted in the possibility of showing moving pictures. Through travel films, for instance, this new medium placed distant settings in reach of the amazed audience. Georges Méliès, who counts as one of the most famous early filmmakers, was more interested in inventing sensational effects and tricks on the basis of the new medium. Thereby, he used a narrative as the context of these stage effects. Méliès explains his attitude towards the new medium with the following words, "I can state that the scenario constructed in this manner has no importance, since I use it merely as a pretext for the 'stage effects', the 'tricks', or for a nicely arranged tableau." (Georges Méliès qtd. in Gunning 57) This statement clearly shows that the narrative was not the primary goal of filmmakers, but was simply used as a means of putting sensational scenes into frame.

Whereas the brothers Lumière concentrated on the realistic illusion, e.g. placing foreign settings within reach of the audience, Méliès was attracted by the film's magical illusion, e.g. using stop-motion techniques in order to suddenly transform an attractive woman sitting on a man's lap into his grouching wife. Both pioneers in cinema did not consider the narrative as their primary goal, but instead focused on the voyeuristic aspect. Thereby, cinema is willing to overtly display its fictionality and the actor's gaze at the camera was definitely common. „From comedians smirking at the camera, to the constant bowing and gesturing of the conjurers in magic films, this is a cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator.“ (Gunning 57) As this quote points out, early films portray comedians playing short sketches or acrobats showing sensational tricks. These performances actually have their origin in theatre. Therefore, actors in early films were still used to bow in front of the audience, as if they would expect applause after their performance. This awareness of being watched marks the gaze towards the camera as ordinary. As the film audience in former times was used in these conventions and films did not aim at constructing the illusion of a fictional world or at creating a narration at all, the direct gaze of fictional characters towards the audience was not perceived as disruptive nor distracting.

Nowadays, however, the gaze at the camera destroys the illusion of the invisible “fourth wall” (the term derives from the theatrical tradition) and thereby the illusion of an independent fictional world. This is usually avoided in Hollywood Cinema and merely used for metareferential purposes. Tom Gunning refers to this significant difference between the Early Cinema and the narrative conventions of Hollywood nowadays as „a fundamental conflict between this exhibitionist tendency of early film and the creation of a fictional diegesis.” (Gunning 57)

As the direct gaze at the camera marks a crossing of the ontological border between intradiegetic and extradiegetic world and a deconstruction of the narrative illusion, it is clearly used as a metareferential and anti-illusionist device. The film self-consciously points to its own fictionality and encourages the spectator to actively ponder over the originally invisible medium. As the illusion of an independent fictional world is obviously destroyed, I located this metareferential device closer to the left end of the scale, i.e. explicit metareference.

6.1.3. Fictive Character vs. Real-Life Actor

Intradiegetic characters do not only transgress the ontological border towards the extradiegetic world by looking at the camera and addressing the audience, but also by resembling their

creator concerning biographical facts, character traits and opinions. The similarities between Woody Allen and his characters are very striking. Allen himself does not deny this observation, but instead points out the significant equivalences. Usually the attempt to draw a parallel between the fictive character and the real-life actor should be treated with caution in a film analysis. Likewise theories concerning literary criticism emphasize the importance to distinguish between author and narrator especially in relation to character traits and opinions. However, in this case Woody Allen himself states that he used his own personality as the foundation for ideas when creating his unique character. “His private persona and his diegetic one are blurred in many of his films, when he seems to be playing the same role as he does in his life.” (Allué 393) Woody Allen and his characters share a similar cultural and social background. His characters usually are American with Jewish roots. In his films they frequently ponder over their ethnic identity and complain about anti-semitic tendencies in the US society. Like Allen, who lived in New York for a long time, his characters usually live in an urban environment. Furthermore, they share an interest in the same topics and have a similar approach to e.g. cinema, religion, death, art, women and psychoanalysis. As Allen himself plays clarinet in a Jazz ensemble as well as classic music, the typical soundtrack of his films mirrors his own taste of music, which is another example of how autobiographical facts are used in the construction of a fictional story.

In an interview he talks about the two main characters of *Annie Hall*, “Ich wollte einen menschlicheren, tieferen Film über eine wirkliche Persönlichkeit machen [...] Ich wollte meine eigene Rolle interpretieren und wollte, daß [sic!] Diane ihre spielt. Unser Leben in New York. Die wahren Konflikte.” (Lebrun 154) He wanted to interpret his own role and asked Diane Keaton to play hers. Thereby, he intended to show their real life in New York, their real conflicts, and to create a deeply human film. The veil between creator and creation becomes very thin. Due to the oscillating border between actor and character, this border is actually made visible. As already mentioned, conventions which have become well-established in the average spectator’s understanding of film are made visible by being broken. Similarly, the clear separation between actor and character is made visible through allowing transgressions, e.g. similarities of character traits.

Alvy Singer started his career as a stand-up comedian and finally succeeded in being shown on television. Similarly, Woody Allen originally earned his money by writing short humorous anecdotes for a newspaper and working as a stand-up comedian. Coming from the stage Allen then moved to the medium film, where he worked as a scriptwriter and actor, until he finally started directing his own films. The professional background of his screen characters in the

film business shows significant similarities to his own position as film director and simultaneously implies a strong interest by his characters in the medium film. Certain observations and discussions within the intradiegetic world are most likely taken from Allen's own thoughts on the medium concerning its unique possibilities and limitations.

In *Play It Again, Sam* this border becomes blurred already through the similarity of the actor's and character's names, i.e. Woody Allen and Allan Felix. Furthermore, actor and character have a lot in common. Again the classical city neurotic plays the main role in the film and is immediately identified by the audience. Moreover, the professional background of Allan Felix is situated in the film business, as he writes reviews for a film magazine. He is characterized by his strong interest in films, especially in classics like *Casablanca*.

Through these obvious similarities between fictive character and real-life actor the ontological border between intra- and extradiegetic world is blurred. In other words, "metafiction is [...] created by having the author's life 'enter' the diegetic world." (Allué 403) Thereby, this usually strict separation is made visible. "Woody Allen uses the device of mixing 'real' and 'fictional' characters, exploring the connections between the artist and his work and between fiction and reality in several films." (Creus 267) By means of this device he creates a continuum between the originally separated categories of fact and fiction and moves the relation between the artist and his work into the foreground. The following chapter analyses how the deconstruction of filmic devices move the medium into the foreground and encourage metareferential reflections within the spectator. This works on the following principle: The conscious breaking of conventions or their unconventional use move them into the focus of attention and make underlying structures visible.

6.2. Deconstructing Filmic Devices

Filmic narration is based on and structured by certain building blocks or mechanisms. As the average spectator is already used to these underlying mechanisms, they have become invisible and moved into the background. In the course of watching a film the spectator correctly decodes filmic signs without realising how they actually function and how they structure the narration. In order to move these underlying mechanisms into the foreground, metareferential films choose to consciously resist the conventional use of filmic devices. Thereby, the accustomed perception is disrupted and the spectator's attention is drawn towards the original function of these devices. In *Annie Hall* two filmic devices are used out of purpose and placed in a different context. First of all, the original function of subtitles, which serve as a written translation of the spoken word into a foreign language, is deconstructed. Secondly, the

ontological border between split-screens is consciously broken, which makes the common usage and rules of split-screens visible. The following two chapters analyse these two examples in more detail.

6.2.1. Subtitles

Subtitles can be defined as a written translation of the spoken dialogues in a film. Their primary function is to transform verbal information within the filmic medium into letters. Consequently, subtitles are text elements which are integrated within the visual image and are simultaneously shown with the acoustic message. Usually subtitles are positioned on the lower margin of the image and count as an added element. They duplicate the diegesis, as they do not transmit new information but merely serve as a translation. According to their function, subtitles are added in further consequence to the already completed audio-visual artwork.

As soon as subtitles are deprived of their original function and used aesthetically, they gain an additional meaning. In their aesthetic function subtitles undermine their significance as translation. They are no longer added to the audio-visual artwork in retrospect, but constitute an independent part of the diegesis. In one scene of *Annie Hall*, subtitles are inserted not to translate what is said but to make visible what is thought.



Figure 6.2.1.1.

After their first encounter during a tennis match, Annie invites her new acquaintance Alvy to her apartment. On her roof garden they talk about photography. During their conversation subtitles are used to visualize their thoughts, which clearly deviate from what is being said. The dialogue takes place as follows:

ANNIE: Well, I'd like to take a serious photography course.

SUBTITLE: He probably thinks I'm a yo-yo.

ALVY: Photography is interesting because, you know, it's a new art form and a set of aesthetic criteria that have not emerged yet.

SUBTITLE: I wonder what she looks like naked.

ANNIE: Aesthetic criteria? You mean, whether it is a good photo or not? [SCREENSHOT 1]

SUBTITLE: I'm not smart enough for him. Hang in there.

ALVY: The medium enters in, as it is a condition of the art form itself. [SCREENSHOT 2]

SUBTITLE: I don't know what I'm saying. She senses I am shallow.

ANNIE: Well, to me... I mean, it's all instinctive. You know, I just try to feel it. I just try to get a sense of it, not to think about it so much.

SUBTITLE: God, I hope he doesn't turn out to be a shmuck like the others.

ALVY: Still, you need a set of aesthetic guidelines to put in social perspective, I think.

SUBTITLE: Christ, I sound like FM radio. Relax! (*Annie Hall* 00:30)

The scene clearly illustrates the comic potential of metareferential fiction. Woody Allen often uses this kind of humour in his films. A scene achieves a comic effect, when narrative devices are deprived of their original function, used against their common convention or placed in a different context. In this scene Allen intended to convey the characters' thoughts to the spectator and discovered subtitles as a suitable filmic device for this purpose. Thereby, he deprived them of their original function and creatively placed them in a different context with a different function. The comic effect is usually based on the spectator's expectations, which are unpredictably disappointed or broken. While the spectator is used to decoding subtitles in their original function, he/she is surprised and amused how the subtitles are creatively used and gain a new function in *Annie Hall*. Furthermore, the clear divergence between the characters' speech and their actual thoughts also contribute to the comic effect of the scene.

Interestingly, the spectator can be regarded as the only stable element during the conversation concerning the state of knowledge. Alvy does not have access to Annie's thoughts, while she is not aware of his true intentions. However, the spectator has access to all information by listening to the dialogue and reading the secret thoughts. While the state of knowledge flickers within the diegesis, it remains stable on the extradiegetic level through the presence of the spectator.

As the subtitles do not translate the spoken word, they represent a further channel for transmitting information. Actually they cannot be referred to as subtitles anymore, but constitute an additional aspect of the medium film which only occupies the spatial position of subtitles within the frame. The aesthetic use of subtitles has a self-referential effect: The mechanisms of the filmic narration are visualised in front of the spectator. Thereby, it draws on the spectator's knowledge that subtitles usually serve as a written translation of the spoken dialogue. This knowledge only subconsciously structures the spectator's perception of a film. As soon as filmic devices rebel against their conventional use, the building blocks of filmic narration are moved into the foreground.

In the manner of how subtitles are used in this scene, they function as doubly encoded signs. On the primary level they visualize the thoughts of the two characters. Simultaneously, they contain a metareferential message, i.e. a reflection on the medium itself. Through their aesthetic use the subtitles have become doubly encoded and function as meta-signs. The

perception of the spectator oscillates between the two variants of decoding the sign. He/she clearly perceives the primary meaning and can laugh over the divergence between the characters' speech and thoughts. However, it depends on the medium-awareness of the individual spectator, whether he/she also perceives the metareferential meaning and is encouraged to ponder over the medium and its mechanisms of structuring a narration. The following film review of *Annie Hall* is exemplary for a spectator's reaction who did not perceive the aesthetic use of the subtitles as metareferential. In his review, Robert Hatch criticizes the inclusion of certain cinematic devices as unnecessary. Thereby, he particularly mentions the use of subtitles and split-screen.

He [Woody Allen] also uses camera technique - split images, subtitles - to reveal what's on the characters' mind when they are saying or doing something else. That's a bit heavy-handed for a knockabout comedy [...], and is anyhow unnecessary for an actor/director who knows well enough how to make clear what he and his fellow players are thinking without hanging up signs. (27)

According to this quote, Robert Hatch views the purpose of subtitles in this scene merely in conveying the characters' thoughts. He is convinced that this filmic device is superfluous, as the audience can already surmise that the two characters have different thoughts in contrast to what they are actually saying. However, through their alienated use, the subtitles gain a secondary meaning and become a meta-sign. Apparently, Robert Hatch did not decode the secondary meaning of the aesthetic use of subtitles. This example illustrates that the cooperation of the recipient is essential to the understanding of metareferential signs.

According to this observation, I would locate the deconstruction of filmic devices in the middle of the scale. On the one hand, the alienated use of film-specific devices significantly disrupts the perception. On the other hand, the cooperation of the spectator is required in order that metareferential devices succeed in their function to cause critical reflections on the medium.

6.2.2. Split-Screen

Split-screens are used as a filmic device in order to simultaneously show two scenes within one image. Usually these scenes are temporally and spatially detached. It is self-evident to the spectator that the borderline between the two images cannot be transgressed neither acoustically nor visually. In *Annie Hall*, however, the characters of the separate images suddenly start talking with each other and thereby break the conventional use of split-screens.



Figure 6.2.2.1.



Figure 6.2.2.2.

Woody Allen uses the scene which is portrayed in the first screenshot in order to represent the contrasting family backgrounds between Alvy and Annie. Beyond that the characters start a debate disregarding the ontological border which separates them. Thereby, Allen consciously breaks the cinematic convention of split-screens and draws the spectator's awareness to their original function.

The second screenshot is taken from the scene in which Annie and Alvy visit their respective psychiatrist and describe the problems of their relationship. Each of them is telling the psychiatrist his/her subjective point of view. The technique of split-screen is used to illustrate the two opposite perspectives of the same situation. They are talking about exactly the same topics and even complete each other's sentences. Consequently, the spectator has the impression that they actually hear each other.

In the previously mentioned film review, Robert Hatch criticizes the use of split-screens as unnecessary. It would have been comprehensible anyway what the two characters think of each other. This criticism again shows that he has only read the primary meaning of the sign but did not decode its metareferential significance. According to Werner Wolf, implicit metareference requires the cooperation of the recipient in order to be understood. In some cases the use of metareferential devices indeed leads to a disruption of the accustomed flow of perception, but it does not result in the desired reflection of the medium-specific conventions. Consequently, the uncommon use of split-screens would be understood as more implicitly metareferential than e.g. the direct gaze at the camera. Still, it gravely disrupts the illusion of the fictional world and cannot be completely overlooked. In the following chapters, further metareferential devices will be analysed which might remain completely unrecognised by the average spectator, as they are merely situated within the intradiegetic world and leave the ontological border towards the extradiegetic reality untouched. This leads to the conclusion that the metareferential alienation of split-screens can be located in-between the two poles of explicit and implicit metareference on the scale.

6.3. Film in Comparison with other Media – Intermediality

The following three chapters are dedicated to a new method which encourages metareferential observations on the medium. It is based on the following principle of comparison: By showing what the medium film is not, it becomes even more evident what film is. While imitating narrative techniques of other media and placing them in comparison with the medium under discussion, one sheds light on the medium-specific mechanisms. In other words, by drawing boundaries towards other media, the characteristics of the actual medium become even more visible.

One can differentiate between three levels of comparison: Firstly, the medium is exposed by being contrasted with alternative channels of transmitting the narrative message. Secondly, the presented artwork is further defined by being compared to various subcategories within the same medium, i.e. filmic genres. Thirdly, the artwork is placed in relation to preceding works which constitute parts of the spectator's cultural knowledge. The first instance is referred to as *intermediality* or rather intermedial reference, whereas the latter two mark two variants of *intramediality*.

Irina O. Rajewsky has devoted her research to intermediality and differentiates between three contrasting interpretations. The term “Medienkombination” classifies a combination or interplay of two or more conventionally distinct media to form a new artwork, e.g. a multimedia show. The phenomenon of “Medienwechsel”, in contrast, involves a process of transformation of a specific pre-text into a new medium, e.g. film adaptations. The term describes the change from one semiotic system into another. According to the third category, namely “Intermediale Bezüge”, one medial product includes a reference of a different medium, either thematising the whole semiotic system or referring to one specific medial product as being representative for the overall system. Consequently, only one medium is materially present, whereas the other medium is merely simulated or reproduced. “[Es] werden Elemente und/oder Strukturen eines anderen, konventionell als distinkt wahrgenommenen Mediums mit den eigenen, medienspezifischen Mitteln thematisiert, simuliert oder, soweit möglich, reproduziert.” (Rajewsky 17) Elements and/or structures of a medium which is conventionally perceived as distinct are simulated or reproduced by means of the own medium-specific mechanisms. Consequently, one cannot speak of the creation of an identical copy but of a reproduction by means of a different medium, which implies a transformation whereby mechanisms of the integrated medium are most likely affected. One cannot assume to be shown an identical copy, as the portrayed medium undergoes transformations during the process of reproduction. Ernest Hess-Lüttich emphasizes the

impact on the integrated medium and coined the term “Transfer-Prozess”. According to this process, “[werden] Texte in andere Texte ‘transferiert’ oder transformiert.” (11) This already implies a change on behalf of the integrated text or medium. The inevitable transformation of the integrated text is based on the given differences between the two medial products.

Da sich [...] bei der intermedialen Variante des Verfahrens stets eine unüberbrückbare mediale Differenz – ein *intermedial gap* – zwischen kontaktnehmendem und kontaktgebendem Medium manifestiert, ergibt sich nicht die Möglichkeit, das andere System in genuiner Weise zu verwenden. (Rajewsky 70-71)

The actual medium cannot reproduce the integrated medium in its exact characteristics and mechanisms due to their intermedial gap. In fact, it merely includes a representation of the distinct medium. As this sheds light on the differences between the two medial products, it further highlights the characteristics and mechanisms of the actual medium and leads to metareferential observations. “Dies bedeutet, daß [sic!] im Falle intermedialer Systemreferenzen immer und *per definitionem* eine Differenz zwischen den Systemen spürbar und vom Rezipienten mitgelesen wird.” (Rajewsky 71) The spectator perceives the friction between the two medial systems and is encouraged to consciously reflect on the medium.

My focus of attention exclusively lies on Rajewsky’s third category of intermediality, as I intend to analyse how Woody Allen uses intermedial references to expose the narrative mechanisms of the original medium by means of comparison. Interestingly, Rajewsky draws a connection between this third category, i.e. intermedial references, and the broad phenomenon of intertextuality. “Intermedialität ist in diesem – und nur in diesem – enger gefaßten [sic!] Sinne in Anlehnung an das Konzept der Intertextualität als kommunikativ-semiotischer Begriff zu definieren.” (Rajewsky 25)

Werner Wolf defines intertextuality as the integration of one (verbal) text into another, i.e. “eine in einem Text nachweisliche Einbeziehung mindestens eines weiteren (verbalen) Textes.” (Werner Wolf qtd. in Rajewsky 53) As Wolf restricts his definition to verbal texts only, one can conclude that he deals with a narrow understanding of the term *text*. For extending this phenomenon on different media, he uses the term intermediality, i.e. “eine intendierte, in einem Artefakt nachweisliche Verwendung oder Einbeziehung wenigstens zweier konventionell als distinkt angesehener Ausdrucks- oder Kommunikationsmedien.” (Wolf, 2002 238) Accordingly, intermediality is the usage or integration of conventionally distinct media. Thereby, one medium is only indirectly present, as it is either simulated or reproduced in the present medial artefact. This proves that Wolf uses a slightly different concept of intermediality as compared to Rajewsky. In his understanding the term only covers Rajewsky’s third category, i.e. intermedial references.

The following subchapters illustrate how Allen integrates various types of media in his films. By exposing the narrative mechanisms of other media he draws on the essential question, what is film? How far does the medium film differ from the portrayed medium? How does the medium film transmit information? What are the mechanisms of filmic narration in contrast to the other medium? Where are similarities and differences?

6.3.1. Theatre

In one of the last scenes of *Annie Hall* Alvy witnesses a stage play which depicts his relationship with Annie. The spectator wonders whether this enactment serves as a therapeutic method for Alvy to come to terms with their break-up or whether he has entered a new professional area as theatre director or playwright. During the scene two actors play the role of Alvy and Annie during their last encounter in Los Angeles. Alvy has travelled across the country in order to win back Annie's love and to convince her to return with him to New York. Annie, however, responds that she is happy with her new life and their meeting ends with a verbal dispute, as none of them wants to take account of the other's wish. The very same words of their conversation are, then, spoken by the two actors on stage. This leads to a duplication of the already heard dialogue.

Hier erreicht das Spiel mit den Spiegeln schwindlige Höhen. Wir wissen, daß [sic!] der Dialog vermutlich *im wirklichen Leben* zwischen Diane Keaton und Woody Allen stattgefunden hat, und daß [sic!] Allen ihn – *so wie er ist* – in den Film gestellt hat, den er mit genau der Frau besetzt hat, die diese Worte ausgesprochen hat. Dann schreibt der Mann des Films ein Stück, in welchem er denselben Dialog verwendet, und wenn er uns dem ganzen Stück beiwohnen ließe, würden wir den Hauptdarsteller sehen, wie er einen Film schreibt, in dem er dieselben Sätze wieder verwendet und der Filmautor seinerseits... (Lebrun 163-164)

As already discussed in the previous chapters the film includes significant similarities between the fictive characters and the real-life actors. Woody Allen states in an interview that his relationship to Diane Keaton served as inspiration and source for this film. His aim was to portray the true human conflicts between man and woman. Michel Lebrun assumes that this conversation might have already taken place between Woody Allen and Diane Keaton and was probably transferred word by word into the film script. Accordingly, Alvy and Annie being played by Allen and Keaton sit on the terrace of the café and speak the very same words as part of the filmic scene. Thereupon, the two actors are shown and carry on the same dialogue. It is no longer a filmic scene, but a theatrical enactment within a film. Lebrun suggests to continue the integration of further hypodiegetic levels. The male actor might, for instance, write a film script and use the same dialogue.

Accordingly, the scene is a reminder of the previously mentioned concept of simulacra. The stage play mirrors the film, which in return is a portrayal of the real world. In other words, the spectator is shown a theatrical performance of a filmic scene of a real dialogue. The question arises as to how far the actual dialogue is more real than the filmic or theatrical one. Instead, it appears to be a copy of innumerable copies behind which no original exists. The first screenshot shows Alvy watching the theatrical performance of his dispute with Annie. In the large mirror on the wall in the background the two actors are visible, who are also shown in the second screenshot.



Figure 6.3.1.1.

The dispute in the café and the theatrical scene differ in so far, as the latter results in a reconciliation. In the last moment the actress playing Annie calls her lover back with the words, “Wait! I am gonna come with you. I love you.” and thereby changes the outcome of the scene. He returns, they kiss each other and the play ends. The next shot shows Alvy who is still watching the scene for a moment and finally looks at the camera to address the audience, “What do you want? It’s my first play. You know, you always try to get things coming out perfect because it is really difficult in life.” (*Annie Hall* 01:25) The original question whether the play serves as a therapeutic method is now answered. Alvy has changed his profession and writes plays for the stage. Furthermore, the statement addresses Alvy’s relation to art and life. Whereas reality often confronts him with disappointments and has led to his pessimistic worldview, art provides him the opportunity to “make things come out perfect”. Alvy creates himself an illusionary world, in which the happy end takes place the way he wishes. “Die Kunst ermöglicht dem Stadtneurotiker ein Distanzieren von sich selbst und hilft ihm die Schönheit und die lebenswerten Dinge des Lebens zu sehen.” (Schwarz 62) Art enables the city neurotic to distance him from himself and view the scene from a more objective perspective. Similarly, the spectator is distanced from the film, in order to observe it from a more objective, i.e. a metareferential, viewpoint.

The scene gives insight into a different medium and, thereby, draws the spectator's attention to the differences between film and theatre. Both media share the same aim, namely telling a story, but have different techniques at their disposal to achieve it. In other words, they differ in their specific type of connection which is used to transmit a narrative from the sender and to the receiver. The theatre audience has the opportunity to directly react to the presented performance e.g. by laughing or clapping. In more modern performances spectators are even included in the play's development and encouraged to physically participate. Actors, in return, spontaneously react to the participation of the audience. As performances guarantee interaction between actors and audience, theatre can be described as a two-sided channel. Information is transmitted from both directions. The medium film, in contrast, operates as a one-sided channel which merely transmits information from the sender, i.e. a cooperation ranging from scriptwriter to costume designer, to the receiver, i.e. the cinema audience. The individual spectators, however, are deprived of the opportunity to immediately respond. They are presented a finished product which cannot be changed any further. Theatrical performances, in contrast, are shown live, i.e. during the process of creation. Therefore, the audience actively influences the construction of the presented artwork. While the pre-written play can be described as stable, the actual performance is a dynamic process. Although theatrical performances are based on repetition, they can never be exactly reproduced due to changed circumstances, ranging from the new audience members to the varying physical condition of the actors. Consequently, each performance is unique and different from the previous. "At the heart of the theatre experience is the performer-audience relationship: the immediate, personal exchange whose chemistry and magic give theatre its special quality." (Unkown) This quote again emphasizes the immediate and transitory nature of a theatre experience in which performer and audience directly cooperate and interact. "Die Simultaneität des Sende- und Empfangsprozesses ist untrennbar mit dem Theater verbunden. Im Kino und beim Fernsehen trennen Raum und Zeit den Absender vom Empfänger." (Sobota) Whereas the process of sending and receiving information takes place simultaneously in the theatre, it is temporally and spatially distanced in film. Accordingly, the process of sending is already completed during the film shooting and editing, before the reception can take place in the cinema. "Der Unterschied zum Theater besteht darin, dass sich die ganze schöpferische Aktivität auf den sich entwickelnden Empfangsprozess verlagert." (Sobota) In the theatre the creative process is not regarded as complete, but is only partly situated before the performance, ranging from script writing to rehearsals, and partly during the actual process of reception.

Nevertheless, I have to contradict that film is a completely finished product and its spectator merely participates as recipient. It is true that he/she cannot actively influence the plot, however the audience still makes an essential contribution within the process of creation. As already mentioned in a previous chapter the spectator is given cues which he/she uses to autonomously construct a story. Film is an art of exclusion, as it only partly presents a narrative to the audience. Consequently, the spectator needs to actively participate in the process of creation by mentally filling the gaps, i.e. the scenes and shots which the film omits showing. This proves that the spectator is not completely detached from the process of creation, although the theatre definitely is the medium which is explicitly based on its direct interaction. The actors in a film cannot, for instance, react to the audience participation in the cinema. My point is simply that the process of creation in a film is not complete without the spectator.

A further distinction between the two media lies in the fact that film transmits its narrative information visually and acoustically, while the simultaneity of theatrical performances offers an experience on the basis of multiple senses. The spectator, for instance, smells the cigar which an actor lights on stage or is touched by the swinging costume of a passing performer. Some academics also emphasize that surrounding factors, ranging from the design of the tickets to the buffet in the foyer, contribute to the multisensual experience of a theatre performance. Whereas this close connection between actor and spectator as well as the addressing of multiple senses creates an intimate atmosphere in a theatre performance, intimacy in film is achieved by means of camera angles and close ups. This aspect already alludes to a further crucial difference between theatre and film, namely the function of the camera.

The two contrasting media operate with different techniques to present a narrative and to create the illusion of a fictional world in front of the audience. Film offers the possibility to guide or intentionally misguide the glance of the spectator. Depending on what the camera captures and presents on screen, the film attaches importance to visible aspects and leaves others hidden. The medium film offers a wide range of possibilities how to present the same scene by means of different shots, camera angles, perspective etc. The theatre only operates with one continuous shot from only one perspective, depending on where the spectator is sitting in the audience. In theatre it is not possible to put details in focus or to show the actors' faces in a close-up. In further consequence, these different techniques have an impact on the style of acting, which differs considerably between the two media. Close shots in films allow actors to show emotions in detail. A slight wink of their eye will be recognized and becomes

meaningful in case the camera puts it in frame and a whisper will be heard in case the microphone is close. Actors on stage, in contrast, have to rely on big gestures and a loud voice. The theatre audience watches the performances as a whole and does not perceive details. While the theatre always shows the full image, the film camera can choose between different angles, perspectives and shot sizes. Interestingly, Allen often neglects this medium-specific device and chooses – as I would call them – “theatrical shots”, i.e. one shot per scene. He shows the spectator the complete setting including unnecessary details and does not capture the aspects which would be essential for the scene with the camera.

The comparison between film and theatre aimed at highlighting the different characteristics and narrative mechanisms of the two distinct media. By including a stage performance within the film Woody Allen visualises these differences. According to Ernest Hess-Lüttich the short theatrical performance in *Annie Hall* undergoes a “Transfer-Prozess” and is affected in its medium-specific qualities. In fact, the spectator is merely shown a filmic reproduction of a theatrical scene. Consequently, the performance loses several of its specific characteristics. This concerns, for instance, the immediate interaction between audience and spectator. The spectator is still sitting in the cinema and watching an actor on a film screen. The scene, therefore, draws on the spectator’s memory of theatrical performances which he/she has already seen and places this memory in comparison with the presented medium.

6.3.2. Cabaret

Cabaret can be analysed as a subcategory of theatre, as it shares similar characteristics. The performances are live and take place in front of a physically present audience. Especially in a cabaret the interaction between performer and audience is significant. Many jokes build on the direct reactions of certain spectators. In contrast to theatre, cabaret usually features one person only who does not perform but narrate instead. Therefore, cabaret is not so much a physical but verbal art form. In this respect it shares characteristics with literature: The story is mediated by a narrator. The following two screenshots are taken from a scene in which Alvy talks at the University of Wisconsin and entertains an intellectual audience with his jokes and funny anecdotes.



Figure 6.3.2.1.

Woody Allen himself started his career writing humorous anecdotes for newspapers and working as a stand-up comedian. He reflects on his professional roots on stage in *Annie Hall*, as the main character Alvy earns his money as a comedian. Though Alvy is mainly shown on television, he also performs on stage in front of an audience. In a previous chapter I analysed how the blurred border between the real actor and the fictive character induces metareferential observations in the spectator. In this scene actor and character share their professional background as well as their specific sense of humour. This is a method of crossing the ontological boundary between intradiegetic world and extradiegetic reality and, thereby, carries a metareferential function.

An interesting instance occurs as the camera puts the theatre audience into frame, which is shown in the second screenshot. The illusion is created so that the screen has transformed into a large mirror and reflects the cinema audience who is watching *Annie Hall* at this very moment. The source of the spotlight which focuses on Alvy might be mistaken as the light of the projector in the cinema hall. Consequently, this individual shot seems to mirror the extradiegetic situation in the cinema. This short instance of irritation captures the very nature of metareferential devices. Similar to a mirror, the medium aims at reflecting itself. Thereby, it causes irritation and deconstructs the mechanisms of the medium film, which can be described as follows: The narrative information is transmitted from the sender by being projected in front of the receiver(s).

Metareference works on three levels in this scene. First of all, the ontological boundary is blurred by revealing striking similarities between real actor and fictional character. Secondly, the representation of a conventionally distinct art form evokes critical observations on the actual medium by means of comparison. Thirdly, the shot showing the theatre audience functions as a mirroring image of the actual cinema audience and deconstructs the mechanisms of film.

6.3.3. Photography

The inclusion of photography does not only serve the purpose of comparing film with a distinct medium, but also reminds the spectator of the historical origins of the medium film. Photography is represented in two scenes of *Annie Hall*. Although these scenes are shown temporally apart from each other, one at the beginning and the other one rather at the end of the film, they are cleverly connected on the narrative level. Woody Allen once mentioned in an interview that he suffers from two phobias: He is afraid of lobsters and spiders. In *Annie Hall* he projects his two phobias on his main characters. In the previous chapter I analysed how the similar professional background of the real actor Woody Allen and his fictive character Alvy Singer deconstructs the ontological border between extradiegetic reality and intradiegetic world. In this scene Allen projects his fears on two of his fictional characters.

Der Stadtneurotiker ist autobiographisch, einschließlich der auf den ersten Blick unzusammenhängendsten Details wie der Phobie vor Hummern oder Spinnen. (Der Umstand, dass [sic!] es Alvin ist, der Angst vor Hummern und Annie, die Furcht vor Spinnen hat, ändert nichts an der Sache. In Woody Allens Kino *sind* alle Personen Woody Allen und drücken seine Leiden in seinen Worten aus.) (Lebrun 159)

Whereas Alvy is afraid of lobsters, Annie panics when she sees a spider. One night as Alvy is in bed with another woman after the separation from Annie, she excitedly calls and urges him to come over. Not knowing what has happened Alvy arrives in distress at her apartment and finds out that the reason for her call was a spider in the bathroom. While he still complains that he feared something tragic to have happened, the shot shows black-and-white photographs on the wall in the background, which were taken in a previous scene.



Figure 6.3.3.1.



Figure 6.3.3.2.

The second screenshot is taken from the very situation where these photographs were made from the opposite perspective. The pictures originate from a scene at the beginning of the relationship between Alvy and Annie. They decide to cook lobsters and Alvy's phobia shows up. Annie takes pictures, while Alvy bravely holds the lobster in his hands. The use of photography draws the link between these two scenes and reminds the spectator of the

previous occasion. Thereby, the similarity between the two characters is emphasised, as they are both terribly afraid of a specific animal.

Furthermore, the integration of photography within film sheds light on the specific characteristics of filmic narration. The spectator views film in comparison to photography and notices their differences. Both media seem to mirror reality as a truthful depiction, but whereas photography portrays still images, film is based on movement. In fact, film consists of numerable photographs which are shown in quick succession, whereby the illusion of movement is created. The integration of photography in these two scenes serves as reference to the historical development of film. The spectator is made aware that the origins of film are rooted in photography. In 1878, Eadweard Muybridge experimented with serial photography. His intention was to analyse the sequence of movements of a running horse and in particular to prove whether there is one moment when all four legs do not touch the ground. Therefore, he arranged cameras along the race course and connected their release with a thin wire which the horse would hit when passing.

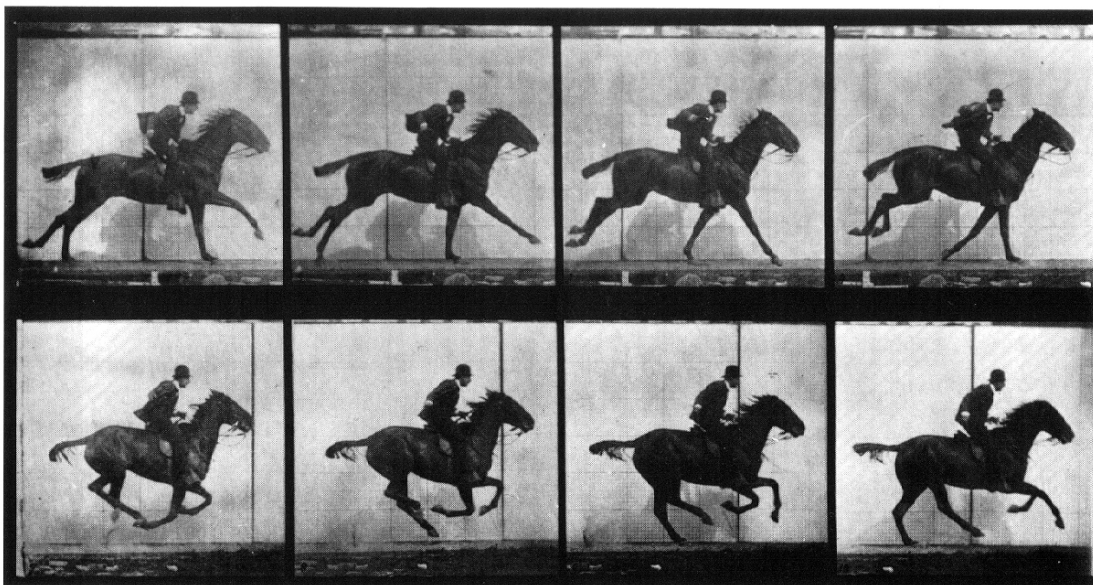


Figure 6.3.3.3.

Showing these pictures in quick succession creates the illusion of movement, which has become the foundation of film. Other scientists like Thomas Edison, who developed the motion picture system known as Kinetoscope, based their inventions on this basic principle. Parallel to the discovery of moving pictures, the projector represents an essential invention in the evolution of film. It derives its origins from the invention of the *Laterna Magica* in the 17th century. Finally, the two brothers Louis and Auguste Lumière, who have later become known as the inventors of film, perfected the ongoing developments. In December 1895 they

projected the first moving picture in front of an audience, which marked the birth of a new medium.

By placing separate photographs in succession film has developed as a narrative art. Narrating stories has always counted as an existential human activity. The principle to use a succession of paintings or drawings as a means of presenting a narrative reaches back into history. As the majority of the population was not able to read in former times, paintings in churches were used to make bible stories accessible for everybody. The following illustration shows the paintings on an altar in Siena, which were made by Duccio di Buoninsegna around 1310 and portray the Passion of Jesus Christ.



Figure 6.3.3.4.

The separate instances of Jesus' trial until his resurrection are presented in individual paintings. In relation to each other they form the narrative. This principle is to be found in various countries throughout history. Ranging from the ancient Egyptians to modern comic strips, stories have been narrated by means of placing separate images in succession. The medium film has developed in this long tradition of presenting narratives. In a narrow understanding separate photographs are shown in succession and create movement, which is the basic component of any happening or story. In a broad understanding separate scenes are shown in succession and thereby construct the filmic narrative. Both instances work on the principle that separate images (or scenes) which are placed in succession create a narrative. A flip book illustrates this basic concept of the medium film very well. The quick succession of drawings creates the illusion of movement. The German term "Daumenkino", i.e. thumb cinema, already indicates its relation to the cinematic technique.

This short review on the historical development of the medium film has shown that it originated from photography but went one step further. By showing photographs in

succession, film creates the illusion of movement and denotes itself as a narrative medium. In other words, film has extended photography by adding (or rather creating) movement which enriched the new medium with the possibility to present narratives. Woody Allen refers to the historical development of film by explicitly putting photography in the focus of attention. In one scene he depicts the production process of this alternative medium: Annie uses her camera to take pictures of Alvy holding the lobster. In the other scene the finished artefact is shown: The developed photographs were put up on the wall of Annie's apartment. The integration of photography in these two scenes can be referred to as an intermedial reference. Again, it undergoes a "Transfer-Prozess" according to Ernest Hess-Lüttich, as the spectator actually watches a representation of a photograph. Simultaneously, he/she is reminded that he/she is actually watching a quick succession of innumerable photographs, which constitute the presented film *Annie Hall*. In this manner the integration of photography gains a metareferential function and deconstructs the historical origins and basic mechanisms of the medium film.

6.3.4. Television

I intend to analyse cinema and television as two separate media, as they differ significantly. The basic differences between films which are produced for the cinema as opposed to television result from the circumstances and surroundings of how and where these films are perceived. The primary aim of a cinema audience is to watch a film. Therefore, they are willing to dedicate their full attention onto the screen. Furthermore, the cinema hall is a dark room which does not offer any distractions. In contrast, films on television are usually watched in the living room or kitchen. The spectators are easily distracted, as their surrounding is not completely dark. Often they follow other activities simultaneously, ranging from eating lunch to ironing the laundry. Therefore, they do not give their full attention to the television. Furthermore, they have the possibility to switch channels whenever they lose interest in a specific program. As a consequence, the individual channels fight for the spectators' attention, seek to capture their curiosity and maintain their interest by a quick succession of suspenseful, humorous or emotional images. Cinema, in contrast, is guaranteed the full attention of an audience who is neither distracted by other activities nor able to switch the channel. Of course, spectators might also eat popcorn as well as leave the cinema, if they are not pleased with the film. Nevertheless, a film produced for the cinema does not aim at guaranteeing the constant attention of the spectator and instead takes the liberty of showing slow scenes and long shots. Besides, extensive views of a landscape have a much better effect

on the large screen of the cinema. Films in cinema are usually shown on television after a few years, but then they are explicitly advertised as such, which shapes the spectators' expectation. However, these films do not represent the majority of the television program. This aspect leads to another crucial difference between cinema and television, namely the presented program. Whereas cinema is usually restricted to show feature films and occasionally documentaries with a duration of 90 minutes (or longer), television offers various formats, including series, reality shows, interviews, news and much more. One scene in *Annie Hall* reflects, for instance, on the television format of a talkshow. Alvy Singer is invited to a talkshow, which is illustrated in the first screenshot. The scene only lasts for half a minute. For the only shot of this scene Allen uses a bluish colour in order to clearly distinguish the TV screen from the actual film. Even though the scene is rooted within the narrative and is diegetically motivated by Alvy's voice-over monologue, the imitation of a different medial format distracts the spectator from his/her conventional perception. The different colouring underlines the contrast between a cinema and television screen.



Figure 6.3.4.1.



Figure 6.3.4.2.

The same blue colouring is to be seen on the three television screens in the second screenshot. It is taken from the scene in Los Angeles, when Alvy and Annie visit their friend Max who works as a comedian as well. In this scene Allen explicitly criticizes the techniques of television on the verbal level by means of Alvy's statements and additionally exposes them on the visual level by integrating this conventionally distinct medium. Max tells his assistant at which moment of his performance he should include laughs of an imaginative audience. Becoming witness of this deceit Alvy reprimands his friend.

MAX: Give me a good laugh here.

ALVY: Max, do you realise how immoral this all is? [...] You're earning fake laughs.

MAX: Give me a tremendous laugh here.

ALVY: You are right in front of an audience. But nobody laughs at it because the jokes aren't funny.

MAX: That's what this machine is made for. (*Annie Hall* 01:10)

Alvy complains that television series deceive the audience. Thereby, he deconstructs the illusion which makes the audience believe that comedians in these series earn real laughter.

Whereas Alvy honestly earns laughs by making funny jokes, these series use machines, which invite the audience to join their laughter instead of critically pondering over the joke. Allen integrates these two scenes in order to shed light on the technical construction of e.g. television series or comedy shows and places them in contrast to the medium film.

6.4. Film in Comparison with Different Genres – Intramediality 1

Whereas intermedial references per definition cross medial boundaries, the phenomenon of intramediality exclusively concerns one medium. Irina Rajewsky defines the term intramedial reference and proceeds in her definition from literary texts. I intend to apply her definition, as I consider it to be very appropriate for my purpose, and extend it to the medium film.

Ausgehend von literarischen Texten als kontaktaufnehmenden Produkten geht es im Falle **intramedialer Bezüge** um Relation zwischen einem Text und
a) einem oder mehreren (real oder fiktiv existierenden) Einzeltext(en) oder
b) einem oder mehreren semiotischen Systemen,
und zwar ohne daß [sic!] dabei Mediengrenzen überschritten werden.
Unter Punkt b) fallen sowohl Bezugnahmen auf ein bestimmtes literarisches Genre, auf bestimmte Diskurse, Texttypen usw. als auch Rekurse auf das mediale System selbst, dessen sich der Text bedient. (Rajewsky 71)

Rajewsky distinguishes between two variants of intramediality. First of all, a text (literary or filmic) might create a reference to one or more distinct texts. The integrated text can either be invented exclusively for the present text and therefore fictive or it can have its roots in previously produced texts. Secondly, the text (literary or filmic) might relate to one or more semiotic systems without, however, crossing medial boundaries. This includes references to different genres, text types etc. as well as to the medial system itself. I intend to analyse exactly these two categories in relation to Allen's films. In the present chapter I place film in comparison with different genres, ranging from serious drama to romantic picture, which would apply to category b). In the following chapter I deal with category a) and analyse specific references to individual films, namely *Casablanca* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Both films are categorised as real and not fictive pretexts which were specifically invented for the actual film. Concerning category b) Rajewsky further distinguishes between two variants:

b₁) literarische Subsysteme (spezifische Genres, Texttypen usw.), wobei über das oder die jeweils aktualisierten Subsysteme hinaus andere Subsystem im Sinne eines 'Redens über' oder 'Reflektierens', ebenso aber in Form der Reproduktion bestimmter Elemente und/oder Strukturen des jeweiligen Systems 'erwähnt' werden können;
b₂) das literarische System als solches, das *per definitionem* aktualisiert ist, darüber hinaus aber in Form selbstbezüglicher Verfahren reflektiert und somit 'erwähnt' werden kann. (Rajewsky 71)

According to b_1), subsystems of a specific medium (literary as well as filmic) can be reflected within an artwork which belongs to a conventionally distinct subsystem but to the same medium in two manners, i.e. either these subsystems are explicitly mentioned and talked about or they are presented in the form of a reproduction of characteristic elements or structures. Filmic subsystems can be referred to as film genres. According to b_2), the literary or filmic system can be reflected as such by means of self- or metareferential techniques. In this chapter I specifically focus on category b_1) and analyse the integration of conventionally distinct genres in Allen's films. However, I intend to point out how intramedial references and the emphasis on generic differences always indicate reflections on the overall semiotic system and cause metareferential observations. In other words, the reference to filmic subsystems (b_1) implies reflections on the filmic system itself (b_2). A film integrates a conventionally distinct genre and situates itself in contrast towards it. Thereby, it sheds light on generic differences as well as on medial similarities.

A film exposes genre-specific modes of presenting a narration by means of various techniques. In the previous chapters I already analysed two other techniques of making filmic conventions visible. Firstly, conventions are made visible by being consciously broken. An intradiegetic character, for instance, directly talks to the camera. By doing so, he/she rebels against the convention of creating and maintaining the illusion of an autonomous fictional world. Secondly, conventions are made visible by means of defamiliarization, i.e. being used in an alienate manner. For instance, in case subtitles do not serve the purpose of translating the spoken word into another language but visualize the characters' thoughts, their status as a filmic device and their original function is emphasized. This chapter analyses two additional techniques of exposing filmic, in particular genre-specific, techniques. The film either situates them within an unfamiliar surrounding or exaggerates their characteristics. The transfer of filmic devices in an atypical context distracts the spectator's conventional perception and makes both, the devices as well as the context, visible. By repeating or imitating certain filmic conventions in an exaggerated manner, the film does not only create a humorous effect, but also draws the spectator's attention to the narrative mechanisms of the medium. These methods can be referred to as generic parody and will be depicted in this chapter. Parody is defined as a form of intramediality, as it draws on preceding texts (or artworks) and reworks their significant characteristics. Generic parody, in particular, concerns the reworking of a particular genre. Depending on how explicitly the film either imitates or deviates from conventions, it is associated with a certain genre. Interestingly, genres are usually identified

only in retrospect and often parodies, which exaggerate their conventions, contribute to this identification.

The term *parody* originally derives from the ancient Greeks. In Aristotle's *Poetics* the first reference to *parodia* is to be found. The term is used for (1) naming a narrative poem which treats a satirical or mock-heroic subject and (2) referring to the general practice of quoting, i.e. drawing on the knowledge of preceding texts. In *Palimpsestes* (1982) Gérard Genette formulated a more specific definition: He refers to parody as a written transformation in a playful manner. Pastiche, in contrast, works as an imitation instead of transformation. (see Dentith 10-11) Margaret A. Rose came up with a different concept of parody:

Rose argues that certain kinds of parodic fiction act as metafiction – i.e., that in parodying one text (or kind of text), the parody text holds up a mirror to its own fictional practices, so that it is at once a fiction and a fiction *about* fictions. Furthermore, Rose addresses the paradox that, while apparently being destructive, parody texts actually create new fictions out of their own parodic procedures. (Dentith 14-15)

Rose points out the metareferential significance of parodies, as they hold up a mirror to their own fictional practices. The medium itself is used to reflect on its own status as a constructed artefact. Consequently, parody can be referred to as fiction about fiction. Moreover, Rose mentions that a parody deconstructs narrative techniques and simultaneously carries a constructive potential by creating new fictions. This paradox will be discussed later with reference to Linda Hutcheon's definition, who argues on a corresponding basis.

Robert Phiddian also recognizes a metareferential potential in parody. In *Swift's Parody* (1995) he "suggests that parody throws some of the very fundamentals of writing into doubt." (Dentith 15) This statement can also be applied to the medium film, as filmic parody undermines the basic mechanisms of film. It emphasizes the metareferential potential of parody. Similarly, Linda Hutcheon defines parody as a "repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity." (Hutcheon, 1991 6) Accordingly, the integration of generic parody in Allen's films does not only expose characteristics of the imitated genre, but also sheds light on the typical elements of Allen's films by means of comparison.

In several scenes of *Play It Again, Sam* Allen uses an established mode of filmic narration, figures out its basic characteristics and copies them in an exaggerated manner or places them in a different context. These scenes illustrate that parody is a matter of imitation, repetition and transformation. Classic conventions are imitated, repeated in an exaggerated manner and transformed according to their new context. Thereby, the classic conventions of these genres are exposed and reworked. On the one hand, this creates a comic effect, which is typical of the humour in Allen's films. "[The] spectators do not feel trapped by conventions but released

and free to laugh at them.” (Allué 395) On the other hand, it draws the spectator’s attention towards the medium and encourages metareferential observations. Accordingly, an important function of parody is the act of implicit criticism. This criticism is dedicated to the medium itself, to narrative mechanisms, to generic conventions etc. As parody deconstructs the filmic devices which are essential in the creation of the film’s illusion, it can be categorised as metareferential. However, Simon Dentith points out correctly that “not *all* parodies act in metafictional or deconstructive ways, but *some* do.” (Dentith 16) Similarly, I want to refer to a metareferential *potential*, which might or might not be found in parodic texts.

Linda Hutcheon also emphasizes the metareferential potential inherent in a parody, which reveals the exhaustion of traditional forms and sheds light upon the inadequacies of narrative conventions. Apart from its destructive function, however, parody also contributes in a creative process by revitalizing traditions and approaching old devices from a new angle. “Parody develops out of the realization of the literary inadequacies of a certain convention. Not merely an unmasking of a non-functioning system, it is also a necessary and creative process by which new forms appear to revitalize the tradition and open up new possibilities to the artist.” (Hutcheon, 1984 50) Also Margaret A. Rose points out that parodic texts act as deconstructive fictions and similarly create new forms. Parodies revitalize obsolete traditions by reworking them in a creative way and thereby create space for new artistic developments. Similarly, Sonia Baelo Allué points out that parody creates a new dynamism by undermining automated forms. “Parody is a device in which a set of fictional conventions are undermined because they have become automated. Time, repetition and use make conventions become undynamic: the aim of the parodist is to give a new dynamism to the obsolete forms in order to create new ones.” (Allué 393) In view of that, one can point out that parody, which can be classified as a metareferential device, is deconstructive and constructive simultaneously.

Simon Dentith distinguishes between two types of parody. “One distinction often made is between ‘specific’ and ‘general’ parody, the former aimed at a specific precursor text, the latter at a whole body of texts or kind of discourse.” (Dentith 7) A parody of genre conventions can be classified as general parody, as it aims at a whole body of texts (or films). The film situates itself in relation to a wide range of preceding films, which are rooted in the cultural knowledge of the average spectator. The term *specific parody* can be classified as category a) according to Rajewsky’s distinction of intramedial references, whereas *general parody* applies to category b) and is the focus of this chapter, as it deals with filmic genres. The more a genre shares specific characteristics which distinguish its films from others, the more it is amenable to parody. In other words, the more genre conventions are clearly

formulated and significantly shape audience expectations, the easier these conventions can be taken up and either broken, used in an alienate manner or exaggerated.

Pastiche, which is a related form to parody, imitates the conventions which it perceives as characteristic of a certain genre. Pastiche is understood and appreciated as imitation by the audience. Accordingly, Richard Dyer describes it as a “knowing form of the practice of imitation.” (2) In other words, pastiche functions as a self-conscious artwork which is aware of its own status as an imitation and therefore able to reflect on its own constructedness. In the course of film history pastiche has not only increased the spectator’s awareness of certain genre conventions but has even contributed to defining a genre in some instances, by figuring out its characteristics and repeating them in a self-conscious and exaggerated manner.

Critics may designate a hitherto unsuspected category, but pastiche more powerfully demonstrates the category’s existence by being able to imitate it so recognisably; if the category did not exist it could not be imitated. Thus pastiche contributes not only to fixing the perception of the genre that it pastiches but to identifying its very existence. (Dyer 128)

By imitating generic conventions pastiche has been a factor in identifying the existence of certain genres in film history. As any pastiche situates itself in relation to preceding films, Richard Dyer points out that “pastiche is always and inescapably historical.” (131) Similarly, the short sequences in Allen’s films are rooted in the film history of the Western world, covering Italian films, British thrillers, Hollywood melodrama etc.

A group of films often gains its label as a specific genre in retrospect. Pastiche and parody obtain a crucial role in the definition of genres, as they figure out their specific characteristics and imitate or transform them. As most genres have been defined in retrospect, it might falsify the original understanding and abstract films from their previous context. Consequently, genres are fluid categories and change according to historical and cultural developments. For analysing the seven parodic scenes in *Play It Again, Sam* I intend to use Leo Handel’s classification. Instead of genres he referred to the various film categories as “story types”. This classification seems appropriate as it was taken from audience surveys which were conducted by the film industry.

Comedies:

- Sophisticated comedies
- Slapstick comedies
- Family life comedies
- Musical comedies

War Pictures

- Mystery, horror pictures
- Historicals, biographies
- Fantasies

(Handel 119-120)

Western pictures

- Gangster and G-man pictures
- Serious dramas
- Love stories, romantic pictures
- Socially significant pictures
- Adventure, action pictures
- Musicals (serious)
- Child star pictures
- (Wild) animal pictures

In his films Allen does not draw on academic genre distinctions but he parodies generic conventions according to the understanding of a broad audience. An audience survey seems to capture this common-sense understanding most appropriately. The separate genres are not to be understood as complete or exclusive categories. A film can apply to several of these “story types” as well. Furthermore, this common sense understanding also shifts consistently with the production of every new film and its relation to a specific genre. So these categories cannot be viewed as stable entities but instead as fluid attempts of grouping films according to shared characteristics. Generic distinctions do not only alter over time but also differ according to their local and cultural context. It also needs to be pointed out that the distinction of “story types” by Leo Handel in fact mirrors the classification of literary genres. However, the exact meaning of certain generic definitions may vary according to the chosen medium.

In *The Shifting Definitions of Genre* Lincoln Geraghty and Mark Jancovich argue against the desire to provide authoritative definitions and emphasize the fluid nature of genres. They point out the significant influence of cultural processes on generic definitions. A collection of films is usually identified in retrospect as a genre, which already implies a changed understanding of these films and distorts their original perception. (see Geraghty, and Jancovich 12) Nevertheless, the existence of generic distinctions cannot be denied. Even though it might be problematic in the academic field, it is of importance in popular culture. Generic labels are, for instance, used in television programs. In the following analysis I deal with a common-sense understanding of these genres, as Allen draws on exactly this understanding in his parodic scenes. Therefore, I regard Leo Handel’s classification as appropriate, as an audience survey most authentically reflects the common-sense understanding of the individual genres. I ordered the following scene analyses chronologically to their appearance in *Play It Again, Sam*.

6.4.1. Romantic Picture

In the fantasy scenes of *Play It Again, Sam* Allen plays around with film genres and exaggerates clichés of Hollywood films. The employment of Allan Felix, who works as a film journalist, explains why he draws on well-known film genres in his imagination. This biographical detail serves as the intradiegetic reason for reflecting on various genres and milestones of the international film history. The following two screenshots illustrate how Allan pictures what his wife is doing after their divorce.



Figure 6.4.1.1.

During a conversation with his friends Allan imagines what Nancy's life must look like at that very moment. Desperately he exclaims, "I can just picture what she is up to" and the film enters his vivid imagination. The sound of a motorcycle engine is audible followed by dramatic music in the background. His ex-wife rides on a motorcycle with a freedom-loving hippie. In this scene Allen plays with clichés of Hollywood films of the 60s and 70s, e.g. *Easy Rider*, which was released in the United States in 1969. These films frequently chose this type of man as their male protagonists. Allen exposes this filmic convention by clearly exaggerating it and explicitly naming it through Nancy, who calls her new lover a "strong, handsome, blue-eyed, blond man." Allan even tops the humorous irony of her statement by his sarcastic comment, "We're divorced two weeks and she is dating a Nazi." (*Play It Again, Sam* 00:17)

Also the setting mirrors the characters and their view of life. An abandoned country road leads through a wild-growing and rough landscape. Films like *Easy Rider* propagate freedom of life and love as the ultimate goal. People strive for breaking out of a bourgeois lifestyle and rebel against socio-political norms and conventions. Allan Felix represents an exact opposite to this view on life and is described by his ex-wife as "one of life's great watchers." This contrast is additionally emphasized by Nancy telling her new lover about an incident of her past. She points out that Allan would never ride a motorcycle, as he once fell off a scooter and broke his ankle. Similar to the explicit contrast between the two characters, the conventionally distinct film genres are placed in opposition to each other. By exaggerating the typical features of another genre, Woody Allen sheds light on the mechanisms of his own film. This again works on the previously explained principle: By showing what a film is not, it becomes even more evident what film is.

6.4.2. Adventure Picture

Allan Felix is desperately looking for a solution for his problematic love affair, a happy ending for the film of his life. He has fallen in love with Linda, but does not know how to deal

with this unexpected situation. During the film Allan is repeatedly described as being a watcher, not a doer. While occupying the role of the passive anti-hero, Allan faces tremendous difficulties in finding a solution. He is forced to take over the role of the active protagonist whose task it is to guarantee the forward motion of the narrative. Pondering over the necessary steps to take, Allan attains much worldly wisdom from previous films and imagines how “his film” might end according to different film genres. By providing a wide range of possible endings, Allen deconstructs the narrative mechanisms of classical films. Adapting to an Aristotelian plotting, classical films are generally structured in three parts: The main characters are introduced in the exposition, have to face a conflict, which usually represents their biggest fears, and finally reach a solution. Allan Felix is faced with one of the most typical conflicts in any narrative: He is forced to decide between duty and love. On the one hand he desires to have a relationship with Linda, on the other hand he cannot neglect his loyalty towards his best friend and Linda’s husband, Dick. The last scene of a narrative usually represents the solution of the conflict. Classical Hollywood Cinema offers various strategies, which Allen deconstructs and exposes in his film by applying them in a decontextualised and exaggerated manner. The first time Allan Felix imagines a possible solution to his conflict between duty and love is to be found surprisingly early in the film. He hopes for an “easy way out” of the complicated situation, which spares him taking over an active role. In this scene Dick informs him about his decision to leave for Alaska to settle down with a new girlfriend. The short scene only consists of one shot (Figure 6.4.2.1.), which shows the two friends walking towards a plane.

ALLAN (voice-over): They will never get a divorce either. Why can’t I ever get a break?

DICK: Allan, I’d like you to do me a favour. I’ve fallen in love with another woman. Don’t ask me how. It just happened. We’re gonna go off together, to live in Alaska. She’s an Eskimo. I know you and Linda have always been bonded, so I thought perhaps while I’m gone, you’ll look after her.

ALLAN: Of course.

DICK: Well, I’m off to Alaska. If you need me, I’ll be at Frozen Tundra 69290. (*Play It Again, Sam* 00:52)

The seriousness of the situation is broken on two grounds. Firstly, Allen uses the filmic devices of a classical Hollywood scene, similar to how it might be found in an adventure picture, serious drama or romance. By exaggerating these devices the humour of the scene is created. Despite the absurdity of the situation, both characters behave deadly serious. Furthermore, the situation parodies the dramaturgical trick of *deus ex machina*. The sudden decision of his friend resembles a cheap solution for achieving a happy ending. As it occurs completely unexpected, it is not taken seriously but is ridiculed instead.

Secondly, the irony of the situation increases as Dick again refers to the running gag, which accompanies him throughout the film: In his role as a businessman he constantly informs his

secretary of the telephone number of every place he visits in case his office needs to call him. At a time when mobile phones were not even dreamed of, the constant availability represented a significant challenge for every businessman. By means of repetition and exaggeration Allen highlights the absurdity of Dick's urgency of constantly keeping contact to his office. In this scene he transfers the running gag into an inappropriate context. Dick informs his friend that he can reach him at Frozen Tundra 69290. The absurdity of the situation is created by decontextualizing the running gag and placing it in a new situation.



Figure 6.4.2.1.



Figure 6.4.2.2.

6.4.3. Serious Drama (Great Britain)

After having spent a night with Linda, Allan is ridden by feelings of guilt and fears facing the reaction of his best friend when he finds out about the betrayal. In this scene Allan imagines his desired outcome of the situation, which again appears to be completely illogical and exaggerated. Within the setting of a British drama, Allan reveals the truth about his affair with Linda. Without any emotional attachment they discuss the current situation with distanced British humour. Dick even provides a further solution, as he tells Allan that he suffers from a deadly disease and will die soon anyway. This unexpected circumstance appears to be very convenient for Allan and together they a drink a toast to this happy ending.

ALLAN (voice-over): Because of our social encounters a little romance has developed. It's a very natural thing among sophisticated people.

DICK: You sent for me? (with an exaggerated British accent)

ALLAN: Yeah. Drink? Scotch? (with an British accent as well)

DICK: Fine.

ALLAN: Soda? Linda and I are in love.

DICK: Just as well. Anyway, I'm coming from my doctor. He's giving me two months to live.

ALLAN: Good. Than you don't mind?

DICK: Not a bit.

ALLAN: Cheers.

DICK: Cheers. (*Play It Again, Sam* 01:06)

As this dialogue illustrates, Allan imagines discussing his affair like sophisticated adults who are emotionally detached from the circumstances. He, thereby, ridicules the seriousness of the

situation. Wes D. Gehring refers to this scene as “a monocle and pipe parody of two English gentlemen discussing things ever so rationally. Allen defuses any further possible hostility by giving Roberts a terminal disease anyway and closes the scene with proper British civility – a toast and ‘Cheers’.” (93) The whole situation is depicted with one shot only (Figure 6.4.2.2.), which is relatively dark and comprises little movement. Consequently, it mainly focuses on the dialogue between the two friends who are dressed like British gentlemen, drinking scotch and smoking cigars.

By means of this scene Allen, additionally, deconstructs a dramaturgical trick which is still used in Hollywood films nowadays. As soon as a character hinders the central couple to happily unite in the end, he or she needs to be removed from the narrative without making another character’s hands dirty. A recent example is found in the action film *2012*, which was released in the United States in 2009. After the male protagonist Jackson Curtis (John Cusack) has again fallen in love with his ex-wife Kate Curtis (Amanda Peet), her new lover Gordon Silberman (Thomas McCarthy) might have hindered the narrative from reaching the typical happy ending. Jackson could have never deliberately removed his competitor from the narrative e.g. by killing him, as he would automatically lose the spectator’s sympathy. Consequently, an alternative solution had to be found and Gordon dies in the course of the natural catastrophe. Thereby, no intradiegetic character can be blamed for his death and the couple can happily reunite in the end. According to Allan’s imagination, this dramaturgical trick is not only limited to a natural catastrophe, which causes the competitor’s death, but could also consist of a deadly disease. Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that this situation does not concern the antagonist of the film but the protagonist’s friend or mentor. It would be unproblematic to remove the antagonist, as this usually represents the ultimate goal of the protagonist (besides his secondary goal within the love plot). The protagonist’s friend, however, has to be handled with caution, even though he/she might represent a competitor in a certain aspect, as this could rob the protagonist from the spectator’s sympathy.

The metareferential significance of this scene is based on two circumstances: On the one hand, Woody Allen exposes the mechanisms of a conventionally distinct genre by exaggerating its characteristics and, thereby, creates a comparison to the presented film. On the other hand, he deconstructs a common dramaturgic trick, namely *deus ex machina*, which can be applied in any narrative, ranging from film to theatre.

6.4.4. Serious Drama (Hollywood)

The two preceding scenes represented relatively convenient solutions for Allan's conflict and featured emotionally detached characters. In further consequence, he ponders over Dick's feelings after the discovery and, therefore, chooses the most emotionally charged genre of Hollywood, i.e. the melodrama or, according to Leo Handel's classification, the serious drama. Allan imagines that Dick loses himself in desperation and commits suicide.

ALLAN: (voice-over) Dick and I have been through a lot together. He is my best friend. This is terrible. This is gonna hurt him. I know it.

DICK: How could they? My wife and my best friend. I loved her. And I loved him. Why didn't I see it coming? Me who had the foresight to buy Polaroid at 8.5. (*Play It Again, Sam* 01:07)

Again, Allen spoils the gravity of the situation by means of the final ironic statement. The humorous effect is created by unexpectedly placing a trivial comment in a highly dramatic context. This scene again illustrates that exaggeration and decontextualisation are two essential techniques of parody.

Films which are classified as melodramatic are nowadays often referred to as weepies or women's pictures. According to the common understanding nowadays a melodrama presents an emotional love story primarily dedicated to a female audience. Interestingly, the meaning of the term melodrama has shifted, as it originally labelled films offering adventure, action and thrill. Steve Neal analysed the changed meaning of this film genre,

[During the period of Classical Hollywood Cinema] the mark of these films is not pathos, romance, and domesticity, but action, adventure, and thrills; not 'feminine' genres and woman's films but war films, adventure films, horror films, and thrillers, genres traditionally thought of as, if anything, 'male'. (Steve Neal qtd. in Geraghty, and Jancovich 2)

This shifted meaning serves as a demonstrative example of the fluid nature of generic definitions. In this case it even developed in the exact opposite. Whereas melodramatic films were originally dedicated to a male audience and focussed on action, adventure and thrills, they centre on a love story nowadays, portray emotions in epic broadness and primarily address a female audience. Woody Allen draws on the current understanding of melodrama. The scene in *Play It Again, Sam* seeks to recreate the emotionally intense and moving atmosphere on the visual and acoustic level. The two screenshots illustrate how Allen mirrors the typical *mise-en-scène* of a melodrama concerning the setting, lighting, shot size and editing. Melodramatic films specifically convince by their rich visual style and lavish images. The setting and décor should mirror the character's emotions and conflicts, which seeks to activate the spectator's empathy. The dramatic atmosphere of the scene further increases by means of the music, whereby the spectator gets immersed in the fictional world and suffers with the protagonist.



Figure 6.4.4.1.

The close up of the second screenshot shows Dick's red bathrobe being washed away by the waves in order to increase the emotionally intense atmosphere of the scene. Furthermore, colours gain symbolic significance in melodramatic films. The film *Far From Heaven*, for instance, which was released in 2002 in the United States, strongly relies on colour contrasts on the visual level. Thereby, the film creates impressive images which remain in the memory of the audience. Even though one can proceed from culturally determined meanings, the symbolic interpretation of colours actually depends on the personal associations of the individual spectator. In this scene one might, for instance, relate the red bathrobe with Dick's unrequited love and passion for his wife. Simultaneously, it might represent blood which again reminds of his suicide. The blue sea and his blue shorts construct an aesthetic harmony. The colour blue might stand for the tears which he shed out of despair and grief. The symbolic interpretation of the two colours represents my associations and yet varies for other spectators. Interpretations might resemble each other due to a similar cultural knowledge, but one cannot proceed on this assumption. Generally speaking, colours do not carry any predetermined symbolic significance, but might play a crucial role in a film and are consciously used in many melodramas.

The intramedial scene sheds light on the genre-specific mechanisms of a melodrama by imitating a dramatic scenario and mirroring the characteristic *mise-en-scène* in an exaggerated manner. Thereby, the scene reproduces the emotionally intense atmosphere and immerses the spectator in the action. Metareference works on the principle of creating an autonomous fictive world and then destroying the illusion by exposing the mechanisms used for its construction. Similarly, the spectator at first gets immersed into the dramatic scenario of Dick's suicide, but is then distanced by the obvious exaggeration of melodramatic features and finally torn out of his/her empathy by means of Dick's final statement. The humour is created by placing a trivial comment into a deadly serious situation. "[E]ven any lingering chance of melancholy is undercut by Robert's parting soliloquy on the beach." (Gehring 93)

This instance illustrates how parody works by (1) exaggerating characteristic features of the pre-text or genre and (2) placing a statement in an unfamiliar and paradoxical context.

6.4.5. Serious Drama (Italy)

In the following scene Allan is passing by a film poster which advertises an Italian film. He does not seem to notice it, as he is lost in thoughts. In the voice-over narration he reminds himself of how such conflicts, i.e. a man is having an affair with his best friend's wife, are solved in Italian films. The betrayed husband is taking revenge to regain his honour and to calm his anger. The camera zooms into the poster, until the picture gets blurred, and the parodic scene starts with Dick coming downstairs into an Italian bakery shouting "Bastardo!" at Allan.



Figure 6.4.5.1.

Dick chases Allan in the bakery until he finally stabs him with his knife and Allan faints with a grimace towards the camera. This scene ridicules Italian films, which focus on revenge and blood feud, and simultaneously applies techniques of slapstick comedies. The large poster in the first screenshot shows the Italian film *Le Coppie*, which was released in 1970. Accordingly, Allen parodies a genre and specifically draws on one film which is representative for this period. The film contains three episodes: *Il Frigorifero* (the refrigerator) narrates the story of a poor married couple. After having spent their money on a refrigerator, they finally have to opt for prostitution in order to survive. In *La Camera* (the room) another married couple celebrates their tenth anniversary in a luxury hotel, but is finally arrested and brought to prison. In the last episode called *Il Leone* (the lion) two people who have committed adultery cannot exit the room because a lion is outside and blocks the exit.

Le Coppie was produced in cooperation with three Italian film directors who were already renowned at that point in their career. Mario Monicelli made his first attempts in the film industry in the 1930s. In his position as screenwriter and director he significantly contributed

to the development of the Italian comedy, i.e. Commedia all'Italiana. Thereby, Monicelli was most renowned for mixing humour, irony and tragic destinies. Alberto Sordi was a successful actor of comic as well as dramatic roles since the 1930s. Furthermore, he is renowned for speaking the Italian dubbed voice of Oliver Hardy. In particular, since the 1980s, he turned to directing films. Vittorio De Sica started his career as an actor in the 1920s and turned to directing in the 1940s. Due to his decision to employ non-professional actors and his refusal to film in studios, De Sica is viewed as a revolutionary figure in the Italian film industry. He placed his main focus on the genre of serious drama featuring the Italian working class and used techniques similar to a documentary in order to create the impression of authenticity. After some of his films lacked commercial success after the Second World War and damaged his career, Vittorio De Sica faced difficulties in financing further films. These circumstances forced him to return to the acting profession. In the 1960s, however, he resumed his position as a film director.

The parodic scene of *Play It Again, Sam* imitates the typical narrative as well as the mise-en-scène of an Italian drama. Dick's language and the dramatic music additionally highlight the national affiliation of this genre. By exaggerating these genre-specific characteristics, the scene creates humour as well as exposes the filmic mechanisms which belong to a specific national cinema and places them in comparison to the presented film. Allan's grimace towards the camera in the final shot again breaks the ontological border between intradiegetic and extradiegetic world. His bizarre smile in the end implies that seemingly even his own death represents an acceptable way out of the unbearable situation which weighs heavily on his shoulders. However, Allan has to find his own ending and appropriate solution to the self-inflicted conflict with his best friend.

6.4.6. Gangster Picture

Finally, Allan decides to sacrifice his own desire for his friend's benefit, as he realises how much Dick loves and needs his wife. In a further fantasy scene Allan imagines Linda's reaction on the airport when he will tell her to end the affair. In this scene Allan acts as an emotionally detached secret agent, whereas Linda seems to be desperately in love with him and refuses to accept their break-up. Then, she suddenly urges him to give her a letter, which has never been mentioned previously. Allan is confused and does not know what she is referring to. This scene illustrates how his thoughts digress while imagining filmic endings. As their farewell on the airport resembles a final scene of a thriller or according to Leo Handel's classification a gangster picture, the storyline of the scene follows the typical genre

conventions and loses its relation to Allan's real situation. Therefore, it is reasonable to mention a letter, which serves as the symbolic placeholder of any haunted item in the centre of a thriller, even though it stands in no relation to the actual film narrative. Furthermore, Linda's absurd demand for the letter might be a reference to the letters of transit which play a crucial role in *Casablanca*. Ilsa Lund's (Ingrid Bergman) husband Victor László (Paul Heinreich) has decided to pay a huge amount of money for two letters which permit them to leave the country, but the secret salesman is arrested before the arranged handover. Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) accidentally gets possession of these letters and in the end voluntarily relinquishes a future with the love of his life and enables the couple to depart by means of the two letters.

Furthermore, Linda suddenly pulls out a gun and threatens her opponent. Allen, thereby, includes a range of classical conventions and clichés in this scene and exposes them by means of exaggeration and decontextualisation. One of these clichés consists in the film character of the mysterious lady who ambitiously strives for a specific goal and does not recoil from using the gun which she carries in her handbag.

LINDA: You said you loved me.

ALLAN: Take it gracefully.

LINDA: But the time we spent together, the closeness, the promises. You mean too much to me. I can't let you go.

ALLAN: Don't forget, I'm sorry.

LINDA: Sorry is not enough. You think I'm a sort of play-toy?

ALLAN: What can I say?

LINDA: Give me the letter.

ALLAN: What letter? There is no letter?

LINDA: I want the letter. Give me the letter!

ALLAN: You're going crazy. Don't pull the trigger. I'm a bleeder. (*Play It Again, Sam* 01:13)

Similar to previous scenes, the irony of the situation reaches another level by the last statement. The humour again is created by placing a trivial and inappropriate comment within an apparently serious context.

The two screenshots illustrate how Allen also follows the conventions of a thriller on the visual level and mirrors the typical *mise-en-scène*. The two characters almost remain silhouettes in the first image. Furthermore, the scene confines itself to dark colours and is almost black and white, which undermines the gravity of the situation. The second image is even more significant. The camera shows the two characters from below and, additionally, in a tilted position, which is a common technique in increasing the suspense of the situation.



Figure 6.4.6.1.

After this scene Bogart suddenly appears as Allan's taxi driver and gives him advice how to end his relationship with Linda. The following scene again loses its relation to Allan's real circumstances and, thereby, its status of being a helpful example of how to resolve his problem. In the course of their dispute, Linda again pulls out a gun, but Bogart quickly disarms her. He accuses her of having already murdered two other men. This accusation stands in no relation to what has been previously mentioned or to what might be relevant for Allan. In the meantime, a police car pulls up behind them and two officers arrest Linda for her apparent murder. Although Bogart has intended to give his pupil a helpful example of how to resolve his dilemma, the scene has again lost its way within the conventions of a completely different genre. The burden to find his own solution is not taken from Allan.

It seems as if Woody Allen himself raises the question of how to end the film. He consults the conventions of various genres and enacts the endings which they would propose. Thereby, he exaggerates the generic characteristics in order to produce a humorous effect and to reflect on the medium. He exposes the suggested solutions as inadequate for his film, which is rooted in neither of these genres. Consequently, he needs to find his own ending, which is discussed in the following chapter.

6.4.7. Serious Drama à la *Casablanca*

There's fog at the airport. The plane is visible in the background. The whole scene is reminiscent of the atmosphere at the end of *Casablanca*, which was shown at the beginning of the film. Allan approaches Linda and courageously tells her that it is necessary to quit. Linda immediately agrees with him. She has realized that she does not want to break off her marriage because she still loves Dick. Even though a relationship with Allan would be tempting for her as well, she cannot imagine her life without Dick. Linda has realized that Dick needs her and she needs him as well.

ALLAN: Linda, I understand, really.

LINDA: Sure? You're not just saying that to make things easy?

ALLAN: No, I'm saying it because it's true. Inside of us we both know you belong to Dick. You're part of his work, the thing that keeps him going. If that plane leaves the ground and you're not on it with him, you'll regret it. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon and for the rest of your life.

LINDA: That's beautiful.

ALLAN: It's from *Casablanca*. I waited my whole life to say it.

DICK: I thought I saw you here. What's going on?

ALLAN: There's something you should know before you two leave.

DICK: Us? You are coming with me? Look, nobody owes me any explanations.

ALLAN: I'm going to anyway because it may mean something to you later on. You said you thought Linda was having an affair. But you didn't know that she was in my house last night when you called. She came over to baby-sit with me because I was lonely. Isn't that right, Linda?

LINDA: Yes.

ALLAN: Over the past weeks I've fallen in love with her. I hoped she felt the same way. I tried everything, but all she could talk about was you.

DICK: I understand, Allan.

ALLAN: I hope you do.

DICK: We'd better be going. I'll call you, Allan. (*Play It Again, Sam* 01:18)

Dick and Linda are leaving for the plane. The music is dramatic. Allan is left alone in the fog. Behind him Bogart appears. The two screenshots illustrate how the mise-en-scène mirrors the last scene of *Casablanca*. Particularly noticeable is the incoming fog as well as the acoustic starting of the plane's propellers.



Figure 6.4.7.1.

Allan courageously sacrifices his own love for his friend's benefit and even takes all guilt upon himself to relieve Linda from any further troubles. In doing so he has finally made his way from being one of life's great watchers to having become a classical Hollywood hero. Bogart is proud of his pupil, as he afterwards admits, "That was great. You've really developed yourself a little style." (*Play It Again, Sam* 01:20) The true ending of the film recreates *Casablanca*, but as Bogart mentions in the last few lines, Woody Allen has developed his own style. This differentiates his films finally, which cannot be classified as belonging to a conventional genre and have established their own set of characteristics and unique type of humour.

Then, when the plane is safely away, Bogart assumes the original Claude Rains role by joining Allen in his walk into the enveloping mist. Unlike earlier fantasies, however, in which Allen blindly tried to ape the complete Bogart persona, the closing scene uses the Bogart legend as a point of reference to aid Allen in the final liberation and acceptance of his own identity. (Gehring 94)

As this quote points out, Woody Allen has not only found his own ending, but has also granted his protagonist the chance to find his own identity and to distinguish himself from his idol. Even though Allan Felix does not succeed in his apparent goal to find a woman, the last scene still represents a happy ending, as he bravely reaches the underlying goal, i.e. his emancipation from a passive and insecure anti-hero to an active and self-sacrificing cinema legend. Similar to Rick in *Casablanca*, Allan has sacrificed his own luck for the benefit of his best friend. This heroic deed guarantees him the sympathy of the audience, which represents the goal of any protagonist, and Allan can confidently leave the screen.

6.5. Film in Comparison with Previous Films – Intramediality 2

According to Rajewsky's distinction of intramedial references, this chapter is dedicated to category a), i.e. the presented artwork refers to a preceding (real or fictive) text within the same medium. The intramedial reference of specific films always indicates reflections of the medium itself. In other words, the reference to individual films (Einzelreferenz) implies a reference to the overall semiotic system (Systemreferenz). (see Rajewsky 74-75) Accordingly, intramedial references cause metareferential observations. If they are integrated within the diegetic world, they lose their metareferential potential. If they, however, obviously relate to preceding texts and disrupt the spectator's flow of perception, they have the potential to initiate reflections on the medium.

The distinction between hypertext and hypotext serves as a useful concept for the analysis of intramedial references. Hypertext or post-text labels the presented artefact which includes a reference on a preceding text, i.e. the hypotext or pre-text. The term *text* can be applied to any product of a semiotic system, ranging from literature to film. It simply refers to the process of transmitting narrative information from a sender to a receiver by means of a medial code and, thereby, applies to any medium.

The integration of a hypotext works on a similar principle as the previously discussed generic intramediality: By including a conventionally distinct film, an opposition to the hypertext is created. Consequently, intramedial references shed light on the mechanisms of the presented artwork by means of comparison. The following two chapters analyse this concept on the basis of *Play It Again, Sam* and *Annie Hall*.

6.5.1. Casablanca

The term "cinematic identification" alludes to the phenomenon that the spectator identifies with the main protagonist. Consequently, he/she gets immersed into the fictional world,

empathises with his/her personal hero and forgets, for instance, the time spent in the dark cinema hall. This phenomenon is exemplified with the male protagonist Allan Felix.



Figure 6.5.1.1.

Humphrey Bogart, in his role as Rick Blaine, has sacrificed his own luck for the benefit of another man. The final scene takes place at an airport, where he convinced the love of his life to leave the country with her husband. Woody Allen alternately shows the glamorous Hollywood legend on screen and the insecure antihero in the cinema audience, whereby these two opposite characters are placed in comparison. “As the film cuts back and forth between Bogart on screen and its antihero audience member, it is clear that Allen has momentarily become Bogart.” (Gehring 90-91) Already these first shots point out the major theme of the film, i.e. Allan’s desire to turn into his attractive screen idol, which only comes true the moment he joins the cinema audience and forgets his true self. The film-within-the-film ends with a full shot showing the protagonists walking away with their back towards the camera. In the next shot the lights go on in the cinema and the audience slowly rises from their seats to leave the hall. Woody Allen in his role as Allan Felix is placed in the centre of the frame. These two shots form the transition from the black-and-white world of *Casablanca* to Allan’s reality in colour. The contrast between these two worlds and especially between the two protagonists is additionally emphasized on the acoustic level. As Allan leaves the cinema, his thoughts are audible in form of a voice-over. “Who am I kidding? I am not like that. I never was. I never will be. That’s strictly the movies.” (*Play It Again, Sam* 00:04) In his monologue he refers to Humphrey Bogart, who represents his biggest idol. Allan, thereby, addresses all spectators who tend to identify with strong male personalities in films and are discouraged when leaving the cinema and being confronted with their true self. Humphrey Bogart in his role of Rick Blaine embodies the classical male hero of Hollywood films in the 40s. His heart belongs to a woman, but he finally sacrifices his own desires for her benefit. He never shows any feelings, however his rough appearance merely hides a soft core. The French police officer repeatedly points out that Rick is in fact sentimental and morally good. In one scene he helps a Bulgarian couple to leave the country. As the woman begged him for help in the

preceding scene, he remained untouched and harsh, but in fact he then lets her husband, who is playing roulette in Rick's nightclub, win enough money to pay for their refuge. After his honourable deed he even refuses to accept any thanks. Only in one scene Rick grants the audience an insight into his emotions as well as into his own vulnerability and weakness. When he meets Elsa, who has remained the love of his life, for the first time in Casablanca, she is accompanied by another man, her husband. In the following night Rick stays up late, starts drinking again and remembers their relationship in Paris. The audience gains an insight in his character by being shown his deep wound of the past. From this scene onwards the male audience even more easily identifies with the protagonist, as they most likely have already experienced emotional pain some time in their life and still carry its wounds.

In *Play It Again*, Sam Allen portrays Bogart as more arrogant and cynical as he is represented in *Casablanca*. Instead of truly loving one woman, he rather appears as a macho who simply uses women for love affairs but is not interested in them any further. Allan takes this image as his ideal and wonders why he cannot behave similarly. He is repeatedly talking to Bogart who is sitting in his living room and gives him advice how to behave in the presence of women.

ALLAN: What's the matter with me? Why can't I be cool? What's the secret?

BOGART: There is no secret, kid. Dames are simple. I never met one that didn't understand a slap in the mouth or slug from a 45.

ALLAN: Yeah, cos you are Bogart. (*Play It Again*, Sam 00:08)

This short dialogue illustrates how the film uses Bogart as the opposite pole to Allen's insecure antihero. As the first screenshot illustrates, Bogart appears as the dark, mysterious, male idol who seems to know every secret about women and relationships. He constantly wears his dark hat and grey jacket and is shown smoking most of the times. "Through the interaction with one of the legends of cinema history, director Allen has tapped a seemingly universal romantic fantasy among the viewing public." (Gehring 91) Consequently, especially male spectators can identify with the main character Allan Felix.



Figure 6.5.1.2.



Figure 6.5.1.3.

The second screenshot is taken from the scene in which Allan has finally invited Linda for dinner and Bogart gives him advice about what to say and do. This instance illustrates how

the film legend only exists in Allan's fantasy, as other characters like Linda are not able to hear or see him.

By inserting an intramedial reference within his film, Allen draws on the spectator's cultural knowledge. *Casablanca* represents a milestone in film history and is often regarded as the forerunner of the classical Hollywood melodrama in combination with an adventure film. The film was released in the United States in 1942. As it was still produced during the Second World War, it contains Hollywood propaganda against the Nazi regime. By referring to a well-known artwork of the past Allen roots *Play It Again, Sam* within the historical development of film in general. He implicitly states that his films similarly are a contribution to a whole cluster of films over history. Furthermore, the two scenes which are shown in the preceding screenshots demonstrate how the intramedial reference, i.e. *Casablanca*, is not only included as a visual quotation in *Play It Again, Sam*. In case the intramedial reference is integrated within the diegesis, it might not disturb the illusion of an autonomous fictional world. This would apply, if the hypotext remained the black-and-white film which is only shown after e.g. the characters of the hypertext enter the cinema. In this film, however, the embedded hypotext transgresses into the hypertext, as their characters even interact. The ontological border between the hierarchically distinct narrative levels is disturbed, as a character of the black-and-white melodrama is resituated in the new surrounding.

To be exact, Allan's imaginary mentor is not merely a resituated screen character but rather a fictional re-interpretation of the real-life actor, Humphrey Bogart. This interpretation combines the appearance of many famous film characters which Bogart enacted, predominantly mirroring Rick Blaine from *Casablanca*. One cannot speak of a truthful depiction of the real-life Bogart. Instead, it reflects Allan's imagination of how Bogart would behave and speak. Woody Allen alludes to Bogart's image as a Hollywood legend and draws on the cultural discourse which his filmic characters have created. Accordingly, Allen does not only reflect on Bogart's role as Rick Blaine, but also reminds the spectator of other films which feature Humphrey Bogart. Allan's apartment, for instance, shows several film posters and equals a Bogart museum. "The naturalness of Bogart's appearance is helped by the fact that Allen's apartment is like a Bogart museum, with posters from *Casablanca* and *Across the Pacific* (1942; another Bogart film) dominating everything, while smaller bits of Bogart memorabilia, like stills and books, lie scattered about." (Gehring 91) Consequently, his film includes references to the overall discourse and the cultural image centring on the real-life actor.

As already discussed in a previous chapter, the last scene even mirrors the ending of *Casablanca*. Even though it is slightly adapted to Allen's own style, as Bogart points out in his last lines, the parallels concerning dialogue and mise-en-scène are obvious. By echoing the scene which was shown at the beginning, i.e. on the black-and-white screen of the cinema, the film ends full circle.

6.5.2. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

In *Annie Hall*, Allen draws on the spectator's cultural knowledge by including an intertextual reference to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The animated film produced by Walt Disney was released in the United States in 1937. It is based on a German fairy tale which was collected and written down by the Brothers Grimm. The scene in *Annie Hall* can also be regarded as a parodic reflection on Disney productions in general. Allen does not only parody this particular cartoon film but simultaneously exposes the typical narrative and aesthetic techniques of Disney films. As this sequence also parodies generic conventions, its analysis could be placed in the previous chapter as well.



Figure 6.5.2.1.

The cartoon sequence imitates aesthetics of a Disney film, which is illustrated in the two screenshots. The Wicked Queen is accompanied by a black raven. She resides in a cold castle with stone walls and small windows. Next to her a large mirror is portrayed, which enables her to see the future and marks a crucial equipment of every wicked queen. Her costume is also very typical, as she wears a dark coat with a high collar and a golden crown. Her low neckline, however, would be subject to censorship in a Disney production. The cartoon character of Alvy, in contrast, does not seem to fit into the Disney world. Already his body height and physiognomy significantly distinguish him from the queen. Furthermore, his costume derives from a different period. The visual transfer of the male protagonist into the fairy tale world of Walt Disney marks the foundation of the humour in this scene.

The intertextual reference of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is explicitly mentioned by Alvy in a voice-over narration before the cartoon sequence starts, as he remembers that he already felt sympathy for the Wicked Queen instead of Snow White in his childhood.

ALVY (voice-over): When my mother took me to *Snow White*, everyone fell in love with Snow White. I immediately felt for the Wicked Queen.

WICKED QUEEN: We never have any fun anymore.

ALVY: How can you say that?

WICKED QUEEN: Why not? You are always leaning on me to improve myself.

ALVY: You are just upset. You must be getting your period.

WICKED QUEEN: I don't get a period. I am a cartoon character. Can't I be upset once in a while?

MAX: Will you forget about Annie! I know lots of women who you can date.

ALVY: I don't want to go out with any other woman.

MAX: I got a girl for you. You are going to love her. (*Annie Hall* 00:51)

The humour of this scene works in various ways. Firstly, Allen draws on the spectator's knowledge of the famous Disney cartoon featuring Snow White and the Wicked Queen. By combining two diverse film genres and letting their characters interact with each other, the humour of this paradoxical scene is created. Secondly, Allen places a dialogue, namely an ordinary dispute of a couple, within the completely different context of a children's fairy tale. The transfer of a dialogue into an unfamiliar and unexpected setting creates humour. Thirdly, the Wicked Queen even makes explicit metareferential comments on the situation and shows her awareness of being a cartoon character.

Interestingly, his friend Max appears as well in the cartoon sequence and serves as a figure to bring back Alvy into the diegetic reality and end his excursion to the world of animation. With his comment "Will you forget about Annie" Max actually places Annie on the same level with the Wicked Queen, whereupon her character gains an additional dimension. All of a sudden she is given the attributes of the Wicked Queen, who represents the cruel, ambitious, egocentric antagonist of many fairy tales. According to Alvy's perspective, he remains faithful and dedicates all his love and devotion to her, whereas she cares little about his feelings and is simply charmed by his presence. As this unequal relationship would destroy Alvy in the long run, his friend Max enters the scene with the advice to look for other women and seems to rescue him from the masochistic admiration of the Wicked Queen.

The scene starts as a retrospect on Alvy's childhood, as he points out in the voice-over that he always felt for the Wicked Queen instead of Snow White as a child. Then, it mirrors his perception of his relationship with Annie and seeks to problematise their central conflict. Finally, the scene serves as a transition within the principle narrative. It bridges the break-up with Annie and his decision to go out with an acquaintance of Max. Beyond that, the scene contains metareferential significance: It reflects an important branch of the Hollywood film industry, namely the Disney Empire and its animation film adaptations of well-known fairy

tales. It exposes the mechanisms of this film genre by means of exaggeration and decontextualisation. This creates a paradoxical contrast of two conventionally distinct genres, which in return sheds light on the mechanisms of the presented film. Furthermore, the characters even explicitly comment on their own status as fictional constructs. This example illustrates the metareferential potential of intramedial references in film very well.

6.6. *Metalepsis within the Intradiegetic Frame*

The clear separation of ontological levels usually remains an unspoken convention in any narrative medium. As soon as characters transgress between these levels, their clear separation is made visible. The aim of metalepsis consists in revealing the fictional construct of a filmic narration. It makes the underlying structure visible, which is usually not perceived while watching a film. Thereby, metaleptic transgressions obtain an anti-illusionist effect. They undermine the aesthetic illusion and prevent the spectator from being drawn into anticipating the story. The spectator is reminded of these ontological borders, as soon as they are made visible by being transgressed, and is thereby encouraged to critically reflect on the underlying mechanisms of filmic narrations.

As already mentioned, I intend to distinguish between extradiegetic and intradiegetic metalepsis. Whereas extradiegetic metalepsis violates the diegetic frame, intradiegetic metalepsis is achieved through including an additional subordinate narrative layer, e.g. a film-within-the-film, and crossing the boundary towards this newly created ontological level. Concerning intradiegetic metalepsis, one can make a further distinction according to the direction of the metaleptic transgression.

When things or characters from the level of representation introduce themselves on the level of what is represented, one might talk about 'ascending metalepsis'. By analogy, one might talk about 'descending metalepsis' to denominate phenomena of fictitious things or characters coming to life on the level that includes the representation of their fictitious world. (Klimek 170)

The three films under discussion contain both variants of metaleptic transgressions. In *Annie Hall* the main protagonist Alvy accesses the hypodiegetic level by appearing as an adult in the flashbacks of his childhood. As he inhabits a hierarchically higher level and enters the embedded narrative world, this transgression can be referred to as descending metalepsis. In *Play It Again, Sam* Bogart, who inhabits the black-and-white screen world of *Casablanca*, appears in the diegetic world by impersonating Allan's mentor. Bogart ascends from the film-within-the-film to the hierarchically higher diegetic world. *The Purple Rose of Cairo* contains metaleptic transgressions in both directions. Proceeding on the assumption that Cecilia exists on a hierarchically higher level of representation, as she lives in the same world which the

creators of the film-within-the-film inhabit, and that Tom rebels against the dictation of the film script by leaving the screen and approaching Cecilia, one can argue in favour of an ascending metalepsis. In a later scene, however, Tom invites his new love to the black-and-white screen world, which can be referred to as a descending metalepsis. As metaleptic transgressions happen from both directions in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* and the two worlds appear more and more equivalent instead of being hierarchically separated, one can refer to this phenomenon as horizontal metalepsis.

Besides 'mételepses ascendantes' and 'mételepses descendantes', there have been attempts to create a third category: the term 'horizontal metalepsis' was coined for transgressions involving two parallel worlds, 'from one given order to another given order situated on the same narrative level' (Klimek 170)

The two characters Tom and Cecilia are no longer separated through the "sacred" frontier between two different ontological levels, but only through their existence in two different places within the same diegetic world. Together they exist in the diegetic world as well as they appear in the hypodiegesis. The hierarchically higher level has decreased in its status and the two worlds have gained an equivalent status. Consequently, it does no longer appear improbable that Cecilia might choose the fictional character Tom as her fiancé. As soon as she opts for reality, however, and Tom ultimately returns to the screen world, the ontological border is re-erected and the hierarchy between the two worlds is immediately re-established. The following chapters analyse four variants of metalepsis which Allen uses in the films under discussion. In all four variants, metalepsis is achieved through first including an embedded narrative level and then crossing the border towards this newly created level.

6.6.1. Film within a Film

In *The Purple Rose of Cairo* the embedded narrative level consists in the film-within-the-film, a romantic comedy which carries the same title as the actual film. Henry and his wife, representing the upper class of Manhattan, are bored with their luxurious life consisting of cocktail parties and evenings at the opera. They seek distraction by travelling to the exotic country of Egypt, where they meet the archaeologist Tom Baxter. He calls himself an adventurer and explorer. In Cairo he searches for the purple rose. According to an old legend, a pharaoh once had a rose painted purple for his queen. Now this rose is said to grow wild on her tomb. The group of travellers convinces Tom to accompany them to Manhattan and to explore the adventurous city life of the American metropolis. Cecilia, who can be regarded as a representative of the lower-class cinema audience, finds distraction in watching romantic

comedies, which fake an ideal world. Secretly she dreams of inhabiting the glamorous world of the wealthy and beautiful.

The integration of an additional narrative level within the diegesis is referred to as *mise en abyme*. “This device designates a special relationship within an embedding structure, namely – with reference to the media – the ‘mirroring’ of parts or the totality of a framing or embedding higher level of a semiotic complex (text, work, performance) in a discernible unit located on an embedded, lower level.” (Wolf, 2009 56) As the embedded narration concerns the same medium, this device can be used to induce reflections on the medium. In other words, *mise en abyme* thematises medium-specific characteristics simply through mirroring them on an embedded level. It is based on a similarity to the actual work of art, e.g. both narrations being transmitted through the medium film. The embedded narration offers possibilities to experiment with the advantages and limits of the used medium and to visualize its status as art, i.e. as a fictional construct. The spectator, consequently, projects these observations on the actual narration, which is transmitted through the same medium. However, the metareferential potential of *mise en abyme* can also remain unnoticed. Its effect as a metareferential device depends on the medium-awareness of the spectator as well as on the degree of how much the *mise en abyme* is integrated in the diegetic world.

Where the recursivity is plausible, in particular, where it can be said to be a feature of the represented world (as in the paintings adorning the walls of a realistically painted interior) the prominence of the artificial similarity thereby involved will be low. As a consequence, the *mise en abyme* in question will not be conceived as a metareferential phenomenon but as a predominantly heteroreferential one. (Wolf, 2009 58)

As *mise en abyme* does not necessarily violate any conventions of filmic narratives, its metareferential significance might remain unnoticed by the spectator. In case a film is integrated in the diegetic world and is part of its fictional reality, it does not distance the spectator from the ongoing action. Furthermore, the “metareferential potential in *mise en abyme* [...] appears to be much weaker than in [m]etalepsis.” (Wolf, 2009 60) In *The Purple Rose of Cairo* both metareferential devices occur. On the one hand, a film is included within the diegesis and leads to a duplicity of the presented medium, which is referred to as *mise en abyme*. On the other hand, the border between the diegetic world and the embedded narrative level is crossed, which is described as *metalepsis*. Accordingly, *metalepsis* goes one step further and possesses an increased metareferential potential.

The ontological border is usually crossed by characters of the narrative. “Characters often serve as agents or ‘carriers’ of *metalepsis*, disturbers of the ontological hierarchy of levels through their awareness of the recursive structures in which they find themselves.” (McHale 121) In *The Purple Rose of Cairo* the screen character Tom Baxter takes the position of the

carrier of metalepsis. He disturbs the ontological hierarchy by rebelling against the dictation of the film script and against the restrictions under which he suffers within his black-and-white world. He resists being bound to the embedded narrative and acts as a disturber of the ontological hierarchy. In the significant scene, as Tom for the first time leaves the hypodiegetic world, the border is in fact crossed gradually i.e. ranging from visually, acoustically up to the actual encounter between the fictional character and his creators. The exact scene of Tom's transgression is constructed as follows: In the hypodiegetic scene Tom enters the noble apartment of his hosts and admires their style of living. Suddenly he looks at the camera and directly addresses Cecilia in the cinema audience.

TOM: Well, I am impressed. I really am. You have yourself quite a place here. You know, I still can't get over the fact that 24 hours ago I was in an Egyptian tomb. I didn't know any of you wonderful people... (looks at Cecilia) and here... am I now... I am on the verge of a madcap Manhattan weekend... My God, you must really love this picture.

CECILIA: Me?

TOM: You've been here all day. And I've seen you twice before.

CECILIA: You mean me?

TOM: Yes, you. This is the fifth time you're seeing this.

WOMAN (on screen): Henry, come here quickly.

TOM: I gotta speak to you. (He leaves the screen)

HENRY: Listen, old sport, you are on the wrong side.

WOMAN: Tom, get back here, we're in the middle of a story.

TOM: I want to have a look around. (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:17)

This short dialogue shows how the ontological border is at first crossed visually, as Tom looks down from the screen and recognises Cecilia. Shortly afterwards he even addresses her acoustically. The metaleptic transgression functions in both directions, as Cecilia answers and is heard by Tom. Finally, Tom steps down from the screen and enters the higher narrative level. Thereby, he transforms from the black-and-white screen character into a coloured human being of the diegetic world.



Figure 6.6.1.1.



Figure 6.6.1.2.

The two screenshots are taken at the moment of his transformation. In the background of the second screenshot Henry and his astonished wife witness Tom's escape from within the screen world.

Tom's unexpected transgression raises dismay among the audience. Tom and Cecilia quickly leave the cinema and hide in an abandoned amusement park. The characters on screen are upset and do not know how to deal with this exceptional situation. The audience members complain to the cinema owner that they have paid for seeing the whole uninterrupted film. The producers in Hollywood are called in for assistance. The actor Gil Shepherd fears a downfall in his career and travels together with his agent to the small town. Many journalists visit the cinema. It has never occurred before that a character would leave the screen. One man suggests, "You should turn the projector off. This could be the work of Reds or anarchists." Another man argues, "If he turns the projector off, you'll strand Tom Baxter out in the world someplace. You want an extra guy running around?" (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:25) Also Gil Shepherd fears that Tom could cause scandals in his name. The unforeseen situation results in chaos and an emergency meeting is convened in the cinema. Among the real people and screen characters measures and solutions are discussed. Thereby, the ontological border is not only transgressed but also explicitly talked about in the dialogues.

SCREEN CHARACTER: Ok, ok, let's not all panic. We are all adults.

SCREEN CHARACTER: I'm bored. I'm a dramatic character. I need forward motion. [...]

SCREEN CHARACTER: Where did Tom go?

SCREEN CHARACTER: Into the real world.

SCREEN CHARACTER: That minor character leaves and we're all stuck.

SCREEN CHARACTER: I wonder what it's like out there.

SCREEN CHARACTER: They don't look like they are having fun.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hey, what the hell kind of movie is this?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: The paper said it was a romance.

SCREEN CHARACTER: Don't tell us your sad stories. You think we like this?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Look at this, they sit around and talk, and no action? Nothing happens?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I want my money back. This is outrageous.

SCREEN CHARACTER: Stop yapping. We've got problems of our own.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You can't talk to my wife like that. Who do you think you are?

SCREEN CHARACTER: I'm a genuine countess with a lot of dough, and if that's your wife, she's a tub of guts. (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:23)

Many of these statements explicitly address characteristics of a filmic narration, which usually remain unmentioned. One screen character, for instance, describes himself as a dramatic character who needs forward motion. Thereby, he explicitly shows awareness of being a fictional character and deconstructs the basic constituents of every narrative: Dramatic characters centring on a conflict lead to forward motion. Furthermore, narrative technical terms are used and understood in the discussions. Tom is, for instance, referred to as "that minor character". Usually films aim at maintaining the illusion that they present individual human beings with a biographical pre-history and psychological depth. This comment reveals that the spectator is merely watching characters, which consist of what is written into them but have no potential to develop psychologically. Additionally, the distinction between the real world and the fictional screen is explicitly mentioned. One of the characters wonders

what life would look like on the other side of the screen. In a further comment an audience member complains that he is not shown the expected romance. Films are classified in genres, which entail certain expectations of the cinema audience. A romance, for instance, focuses on a romantic relationship between two people. The film usually starts with their encounter, thematises certain conflicts and finally ends with a happy reunion of the two lovers, e.g. through marriage. The complaint of the audience member raises questions concerning the function of cinema. Similarly, another woman demands her money back and complains, “I saw the movie last week. That’s not what happened. [...] I want what happened in the movie last week to happen this week. Otherwise what’s life all about anyway?” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:25) In her comment she addresses the function of cinema on the mainstream market. Films provide the spectator with distractions from daily life. That is the product one pays for and expects when going to the cinema. Furthermore, films are categorized in genres, which entail expectations and should be met by the projected commodity. This analysis of the quoted dialogue illustrates how the majority of statements carry a metareferential potential and explicitly thematise the mechanisms of a filmic narration. In this particular dialogue the metareferential statements cover: (1) characters and conflicts are major building blocks of a narrative and lead to the necessary forward motion; (2) characters are divided up into major and minor characters; (3) the clear separation of hypodiegetic and diegetic world is exemplary for the distinction between reality and fiction; (4) the categorization of films into genres raises expectations among the audience and (5) distraction constitutes the major function of mainstream cinema. This dialogue can be regarded as one example of how Allen includes metareferential observations within the diegetic world. The film includes many more interesting and humorous dialogues of this sort.



Figure 6.6.1.3.



Figure 6.6.1.4.

Two further humorous incidents which I want to mention are illustrated by the two screenshots. The first screenshot shows how the other characters are not able to escape the black-and-white screen world. The aforementioned “genuine countess with a lot of dough” presses her face against an invisible wall which separates the fictional from the real world.

Similar to how this wall is made visible through her failed attempt of transgressing it, the ontological border is made visible through Tom's successful transgression. In other words, this screenshot illustrates on a symbolic level how metareferential devices work. By consciously rebelling against filmic conventions, they are made visible and drawn back into the spectator's awareness.

The second screenshot illustrates the reaction of one screen character on the proposed solution by the Hollywood producers. After having discussed how to deal with Tom's sudden escape, one man makes a suggestion which seems to be most reasonable and appropriate for everyone, "We have to get him back into the picture. Then we turn off the projector and burn the prints." Another man eagerly adds, "And the negative." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:59) However, as soon as the screen characters hear their plan, the character on the right side of the second screenshot panics, "No! Don't turn the projector off. No, no. It gets black and we disappear. [...] No, you don't understand what it's like to disappear. To be nothing. To be annihilated. Don't turn the projector off!" (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:19) Considering the character's urgent resistance, the act of turning the projector off equals in some respect to a planned murder. The black-and-white characters claim to have an existence of their own, which would be extinguished as soon as the film is not shown anymore. Even though they are acknowledged as being fictional, they have already earned our sympathy. For a spectator on the extratextual level, the black-and-white screen characters appear as real as e.g. the Hollywood producers on the diegetic level. One actually does not distinguish between degrees of "realness" according to the narrative levels on which characters are to be found. Therefore, it appears to be cruel that diegetic characters suggest annihilating the characters of the hypodiegesis.

The transgression of narrative levels happens from both directions. Real people as well as fictional characters imagine life on the other side of the screen as better. One of the studio bosses summarizes this phenomenon in the comment, "The real ones want their lives fictional, and the fictional ones want their lives real." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:36) Before her encounter with Tom, Cecilia has always dreamed of a carefree and easygoing life similar to a Hollywood film. Once she admits, "My whole life I wondered what it would be like to be on this side of the screen." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 01:05) In one scene Tom invites Cecilia to the black-and-white screen world and makes her dream come true. Together they enter the cinema and step onto the screen.



Figure 6.6.1.5.



Figure 6.6.1.6

The first screenshot shows Cecilia who has just entered the black-and-white world of the screen. While her sudden invasion still meets diverse reactions among the characters, she is overwhelmed herself by the new experience and remarks amazed, “I feel so light. Like I’m floating on air.” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 01:01) Just as Tom Baxter does not fit into the real world, which is already visualised by means of his extravagant costume and the tropical hat, Cecilia represents an alien element in the black-and-white world of cinematic magic. The order of the fictional world is severely disturbed by Cecilia’s presence. The film script does not include an additional character and its pre-written scenes cannot be enacted as usual. While other characters are still worried about following the plot-line, Tom suggests leaving altogether for Copacabana. They are having dinner there and listen to the beautiful singer Kitty. Cecilia notices that the Champagne is replaced by Ginger Ale and discovers that the filmic world is in fact built upon illusions. She encounters Kitty whose role is pre-written to fall in love with Tom at first sight and marry him. As soon as Kitty discovers that she does not only face a severe concurrent but even a real person from the other side of the screen, she is shocked and faints. Tom cares little about this incident and heads with Cecilia out of the restaurant. At the question of the astonished waiter who remarks “We’re just chucking out the plot”, Tom simply answers, “Exactly, every man for himself.” This answer relieves the waiter who happily replies, “Then I don’t have to seat people anymore. I can do what I’ve always wanted to do” and starts step-dancing. (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 01:04) As the order of the fictional world is already disturbed through Cecilia’s presence, the characters are no longer bound to the script and experience the freedom of making their own decisions. Consequently, the waiter has the chance to break out of his original role and rejoices that he can do what he has always wanted to do. However, “it is always unclear as to what extend the characters do, in fact, influence the story and to what extent they are still following their fate. It is impossible to determine as to what extent their perceived freedom is part of the author’s initial plan.” (Allacher 49) As Tom Baxter leaves the black-and-white screen world, he rebels against the prescription of his writer. Simultaneously, the question arises as to what extent he

becomes the master of his words and deeds, as he is still bound to the script of a higher ontological level written by Woody Allen.

The second screenshot is taken from a sequence in which Tom shows Cecilia the nightlife of the spectacular city. Interestingly, two pictures are placed on top of each other with reduced opacity, whereby they are visible simultaneously. This indicates how reality is perceived differently in a film. The screen does not merely represent a different world to which they travel, but is also characterized by a different perception. Consequently, filmic devices such as reduced opacity are commonly used and understood by the spectator, even though they mark a significant difference to the visual perception in the real world.

Gil interrupts their adventure in the black-and-white world, as he calls Cecilia's name. The first screenshot shows how he is standing alone in the cinema, whereas Cecilia and Tom look down at him from the black-and-white screen. Gil tries to convince Cecilia of his love for her. Cecilia has difficulties coping with the sudden admiration of two men. She expresses her irritation in the statement, "Last week I was unloved. Now two people love me and it's the same two people." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 01:07) Even though Cecilia refers to her lovers as the same two people, they significantly differ from each other and she has to make a decision. The characters on the screen try to give advice. Some argue that she should "[g]o with the real guy. We're limited", whereas others point out that "[Tom]'s got no flaws. [...] You're throwing away perfection." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 01:07) Finally, Cecilia chooses Gil and tries to reasonably argue her decision, "Try to understand. You'll be fine. In your worlds, things have a way of always working out right. See, I'm a real person. No matter how tempted I am, I have to choose the real world. I loved every minute with you. And I'll never forget our night in the town." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 01:07)



Figure 6.6.1.7



Figure 6.6.1.8

The principle function of metareferential devices is the destruction of illusion and the stimulation of critical reflections about the medium. In a pro-illusionist film the spectator is immersed in the picture flow and experiences the diegetic world as real. Due to the sudden destruction of illusion he/she is distanced from the ongoing events and actively reflects on the

medium. This represents the desired goal of metareferential films. Richard Allen calls the illusion which the spectator encounters in the cinema *projective illusion*, as a film gains life through being projected. “In der *projective illusion* sieht der Zuschauer einer komplett organisierten Welt gegenüber, die keinen Repräsentationscharakter mehr hat. Diese Form der Illusion zeigt eine virtuelle Realität, in der man sich der Illusion nicht mehr bewußt [sic!] ist.” (Trapp 23) The spectator is confronted with a perfectly organised, autonomous world. Its representational character and fictitious nature is moved into the background. Consequently, he/she is not aware that this virtual reality is in fact an illusion. The spectator forgets that he/she is actually watching a film, but instead experiences it as real life. “Aus dieser Perspektive wird der Rahmen der Leinwand als eigener Blickwinkel in die präsentierte Welt wahrgenommen, und nicht als Projektionsfläche für einen Filmapparat. Nach Richard Allen identifiziert sich der Zuschauer mit der Kamera.” (Trapp 26-27) The frame of the filmscreen is perceived as one’s own perspective on the presented world instead of the projection of a film. According to Richard Allen, the spectator identifies with the camera eye. In *The Purple Rose of Cairo* the spectator is made aware of this delusion by means of a duplication of the projective illusion. The film-within-the-film serves as an illustration of the deceiving reality in which a spectator like Cecilia might get lost.

The more the intradiegetic metalepsis is integrated and motivated by the diegesis, the less obvious it is recognized in its metareferential function. In contrast, the more it appears as a superfluous element of the diegesis, the more likely it disturbs the aesthetic illusion of an autonomous fictional world and encourages metareferential observations in the spectator.

[T]he more a device will be ‘gratuitous’, the more forcefully the diegetic boundary and our belief in the aesthetic illusion will be broken. Conversely, once a device becomes perceived (by the recipient) as diegetically, symbolically or even dramatically motivated, it will be ‘naturalized’ and will somewhat lose its anti-illusionist effect. (Limoges 402)

It is arguable as to how far the metaleptic transgression in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* obtains an anti-illusionist effect or whether it is diegetically motivated. As Tom’s decision to abandon the hypodiegetic world forms an – if not *the* – essential event for any further story development within this film, the metaleptic transgression is necessary for the ongoing action and diegetically motivated. Consequently, it depends on the medium-awareness of the spectator whether he/she perceives the broken conventions and is encouraged to critically reflect on the narrative mechanisms in film. As the metaleptic transgression remains within the diegetic frame and is, additionally, diegetically motivated, the anti-illusionist effect is relatively low.

One of the major themes of *The Purple Rose of Cairo* considers the contrast between reality and fiction. Observations on this opposition are achieved through placing an intradiegetic metalepsis in the centre of the film. Tom's transgression functions as the starting point for explicit discussions among the characters about the actual theme of the film. In one scene, for instance, Cecilia and Tom sit in a church and talk about God and the higher meaning of life. While Cecilia tries to explain that God is the reason for everything, Tom finds God impersonated in the scriptwriters of *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, Irvin Sachs and RH Levine. In one of the following scenes he meets a prostitute who invites him to a brothel. As she asks him what his mind wanders about, Tom answers,

I was thinking about deep things. About God and his relation with Irvin Sachs and RH Levine. I was thinking about life in general. The origin of everything we see around us. The finality of death and how almost magical it seems in the real world, as opposed to the world of celluloid and flickering shadows. (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:56)

Thereby, Tom addresses the contrast between reality and fiction and questions the incompatibility of these two worlds. "The relationship between author and character can be seen as pars pro toto for the relationship between fiction and reality, it can be astonishingly close but sometimes the connection is hard to identify at all." (Allacher 80) These two contrasting worlds are portrayed within the film and are particularly impersonated by the characters Tom as opposed to Cecilia and Gil. Whereas Tom and Cecilia seek to transgress the border and fail at this attempt, Gil strives at re-erecting the clear separation between reality and fiction.

The discussion comes up whether one can simply redefine the black-and-white screen as the real world. One screen character proposes, "Let's just redefine ourselves as the real world and them as the world of illusion and shadow. You see? We're reality, they're dream." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:58) However, this innovative and courageous suggestion seems to be out of question for the other characters. A woman shortly replies, "You'd better calm down. You've been on the screen flickering too long." (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:58) Even though this short comment is paid little attention to, *The Purple Rose of Cairo* focuses on the tragic juxtaposition between reality and fantasy and emphasises the incompatibility of these two opposing worlds.

At one point in *Purple Rose*, one of the silver-screen characters wonders why his world can't simply be redefined as the real world, and reality deemed a world of shadow and illusion. But the film as a whole does not endorse this position. Rather, Allen is constantly at pains to underscore the cruel disparity between escapist comedy and its gullible audience – this despite the fact that the film-within itself is both a tribute and parody of the genre it represents. (Preussner 95)

The film illustrates the fatal incident of a young woman who is drowning in her fantasy and loses her path in reality, but is finally confronted with the fact that she cannot entirely live

without reality and is forced to return. The desire to opt for a life in fantasy contradicting the vital need of reality is encapsulated in one of Woody Allen's humorous statements, "I hate reality [but] it's the only place where we can get a good steak dinner." (qtd. in Björkman 50)

The major theme of the film covers the contrast between fantasy and reality and simultaneously comprises a parody of its own genre. It ridicules so called champagne comedies which portray an unrealistic picture of upper-class society and seduce the middle- and lower-class cinema audience to get lost in dreams. The term champagne comedies was coined by Woody Allen himself. In an interview he talks about the film-within-the-film of *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, "Es war einer dieser Filme, die ich als Kind gesehen habe und die ich 'Champagnerkomödien' nannte. Diese Komödien aus den 30ern und 40ern mit all diesen romantischen Leuten, die Smokings trugen, große Nightclubs besuchten, in Penthouses lebten und die ganze Zeit Champagner tranken. Damit bin ich aufgewachsen." (qtd. in Björkman 169) Allen remembers that it was one of the films which he saw in his childhood and which he called champagne comedies. These comedies of the 30s and 40s featured romantic people, who were wearing tuxedos, visited great nightclubs, lived in penthouses and were sipping champagne the whole day long. At the question whether Allen would agree with the Swedish writer Harry Martinson who once called cinema the temple of life's cowards, he answers that the illusory retreat into the glamorous world of the silver screen is definitely one of the functions of cinema. "Eines der Vergnügen am Kinobesuch ist die Chance, sich den rauhen Realitäten des Lebens zu entziehen." (qtd. in Björkman 170) One of the pleasures in visiting the cinema lies in the chance to escape the harsh reality for a certain time.

However, escapist comedies also involve dangers, as cinema turns out to be a temporally limited distraction from reality and not a permanent retreat. "Essentially, the silver-screen environment contains no lasting value for its audience beyond that of temporary escape. Absorbed in great quantity, its effects may even prove harmful." (Preussner 95) The pleasant experience of becoming immersed in a fictional world usually does not last longer than 90 minutes. Sooner or later the credits appear on screen, the lights of the cinema hall are switched on and the amazed spectator is again confronted with everyday life. The retreat to the cinema even entails negative consequences in the long run. It appears to be harmful to increasingly evade and become alien to reality, as one is finally forced to discover that one is still bound to reality, which is truly the only place offering a good steak.

Woody Allen, thereby, also criticizes film productions of Hollywood which feign an ideal world. "Remarkably, Allen manages to convey the radical shallowness of escapist comedy while simultaneously preserving audience identification with Cecilia, the ultimate fan of such

comedy.” (Preussner 96) On the one hand, Allen critically examines the shallow comedies of Hollywood which support people’s retreat to the cinema. On the other hand, he places Cecilia in the centre of his film and portrays her as a very sympathetic character, whereby the spectator can identify with her opinion advocating shallow comedies. Due to his/her identification with Cecilia the spectator him/herself experiences the cruel denial of a Hollywood-like ending. While witnessing Cecilia’s tragic return to the harsh reality, the spectator suffers with her.

All the characters return to their original situation. Gil is shown on his flight back to Hollywood. It remains open to interpretation whether Gil feels guilty about having tricked Tom back onto the screen and destroyed Cecilia’s hopes of a better future or whether he will persistently continue his career. The film ends with Cecilia who returns to the cinema and again drowns her sorrows in the fantasy world of the silver screen. “In this final sequence, Allen seems to imply that although escapist cinema may offer us no substantial alternative to the rigors of everyday life, it can and should at times function as a therapeutic surrogate reality, especially for the Cecilians of this world.” (Preussner 96)

The displayed opposition between fantasy and reality is central in many of Allen’s films, but is dealt with differently every time. “Fantasy for the Allen comedy persona has a continuing duality that he struggles with in each film (will he use fantasy as mere escape or as a step towards maturity?)” (Gehring 97) Whereas he shares a pessimistic view of escapist comedies in *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, the main character’s imaginary companion in *Play It Again, Sam* appears to be positively connotated, as he helps Allan to grow in his personality and find his own way of life.

6.6.2. Actor Encountering his Creation

Metalepsis is defined as the paradoxical transgression of logical or ontological borders. An intradiegetic metalepsis climaxes in the moment, when a character meets his creator and realizes that he is a fictional construct. “The level of the fictional world and the ontological level occupied by the author as maker of the fictional world collapse together; the result is something like a short-circuit of the ontological structure.” (McHale 213) This paradoxical encounter in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* takes place as the fictional character Tom Baxter intrudes upon the realm of his creator or, in other words, as the actor Gil Shepherd is confronted with his creation.

When they stand in front of each other and appear on the same ontological level, the question rises, who of them is ontologically superior, who is inferior? Who stands above the fictional

world, who is placed within it? Who is inscribed, who is the inscriber? “The paradoxes multiply, until in a final section the entire confrontation is revealed to have been scripted in advance, a game or performance in which *both* collaborate. They are co-authors, then.” (McHale 215) Gil claims to be Tom’s creator, as it is him who has fleshed him out according to the instructions of scriptwriter and director. In a conversation with Cecilia he seeks to persuade her, “He’s my character. I created him. [...] I made him live. I fleshed him out.” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:40) Tom, in contrast, insists on his independent will and autonomous existence. He points out that he is an independent human being and emphasizes their significant differences. The film “explores the quasi-mystical fact that an actor's performance in a film - with his person and personality and voice - has a life completely independent of the actor's own person and personality and voice that gave it being.” (Kauffmann 38) Gil is confronted with an independent being who resembles him like a perfect copy and who is said to be his creation, but who has at least partly liberated himself and now demands complete autonomy. On the one hand, the spectator is shown two characters who originate apparently from the same person. On the other hand, he/she more and more discovers that the only aspect they have in common is their outward appearance. Interestingly, these two characters in fact represent an opposition on various levels.

In one of the first scenes Gil talks to a journalist about his role in *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, “I played Tom Baxter with a kind of poetic, idealistic quality.” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:29) This statement pointedly highlights the most significant character trait of Tom, namely his naive nature, which represents the biggest obstacle that prevents him from surviving in reality. This becomes especially clear in the following scene: As Tom meets Cecilia in the church, he encounters her husband Monk and they start fighting. Monk plays an evil trick on him in order to gain superiority in the fight. Tom is not used to intrigues, deception or hypocrisy. Instead, he is characterized as being naive and honest. He imagines everything to happen according to a film script and to finish with a happy ending, which would reward the good and punish the evil characters. It is bitter for him to discover that reality works differently. Tom later mentions in a conversation with Cecilia, “I’ll had him up to the point when he started fighting dirty.” And she hits the nail on the head by responding, “That’s why you’ll never survive off the screen.” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:46) Gil, in contrast, consciously uses dirty tricks in order to push his will through and to survive in the harsh reality. His deceiving nature is especially revealed, as the audience finds out that he played with Cecilia’s feelings in order to eliminate the “fatal incident” which might ruin his career. In one scene his agent reminds him of the tragic consequences in case this copy of him enjoys

life off the screen, “Hirsch [the film director] already said, if you can’t control your own creation, nobody is gonna risk a picture on you.” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:29) Being Tom’s creator Gil is held responsible for any of his action. However, Tom is not interested in profiting from this “advantage”, but merely fights for his freedom and for his love to Cecilia. This scene shows that Tom has much nobler intentions and would refrain from causing damage to anybody.

Paradoxically, the fictional Tom appears to be more authentic than the real-life Gil. Whereas Tom acts to the best of his knowledge and belief, Gil plays a role also apart from his profession and deceives the naive Cecilia. The authenticity and honesty of Tom is opposed to Gil’s hypocrisy and deception. “Es ist wohl auch kein Wunder, daß Gil in seinem nächsten Filmprojekt Charles Lindbergh spielen möchte, der als Spion für die Nazis gearbeitet hat. Ein Spion ist schließlich auch eine Person, die stets vorgibt, jemand zu sein, der sie nicht ist. Allen möchte uns wohl damit klar vor Augen führen, daß Gil und Tom nicht dieselbe Person sind.” (Trappl 17) In his next production Gil aims at playing the role of Charles Lindbergh, who worked as a spy for the Nazis. Similar to his true persona, a spy also pretends to be a different person. Allen, thereby, seeks to make the spectator aware that Tom and Gil are not the same character but differ significantly.

Furthermore, Allen emphasizes that Tom only consists of the qualities which are written into his character and is limited in his potential to develop psychologically.

Seiner [Tom Baxter] Rolle sind gewisse Eigenschaften zugeschrieben, wie die Wißbegier [sic!], die Verlässlichkeit, die Spontanität, innerhalb dieser Parameter kann er sich ‘weiterentwickeln’, er wird jedoch niemals fähig sein, mit Tricks zu arbeiten, was in der realen Welt notwendig ist. Sein Verhaftetsein in der Rolle, die ihm zugeschrieben wurde, drückt Allen auch dadurch aus, daß [sic!] er den ganzen Film über sein Forscherkostüm trägt. (Trappl 14-15)

As Cecilia and Tom enter the abandoned amusement park, he happily remarks, “I know exactly what an amusement park is and what goes on. I do! It’s written into my character. [...] So it’s in me.” (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* 00:20) Even though he has liberated himself from the film script by having left the screen, he is still restricted in his knowledge and character traits. Tom is only able to react according to his pre-written identity. It is left open for speculation whether his character traits and knowledge of the world have the potential to develop and adapt to the real world or whether he is forced to remain the character who was completed according to the script and Gil’s performance. In the previous quotation Marie Trappl proceeds on the assumption that Tom has limited possibilities to develop and is restricted to the qualities (curiosity, reliability and spontaneity) which are written into his character. In contrast to the static character of Tom, the real-life Gil has potential to develop and grow in his character. However, the expected change from the ambitious actor to a caring

lover of Cecilia does not take place. Gil is, thereby, also reduced to a static film character, simply impersonating the antagonist of the film.

The cinema audience is usually given the impression of observing three-dimensional characters. Similar to an iceberg which only displays its top, the spectator is shown only certain pieces of information and qualities of a character, while the rest remains hidden under the surface. In contrast to this concept, Allen portrays a character who only consists of the qualities which are shown on the screen and does not possess any deep psychological insight or biographical background. Consequently, Tom is denied any possibility to develop psychologically. He simply exists within the film and for the film. Tom does not possess the necessary three-dimensionality as a character to survive in real life. Therefore, his transgression from the two-dimensional screen world to the three-dimensional reality is also problematic concerning the prerequisites for his character.

In the actual encounter between the two-dimensional Tom and the three-dimensional Gil “the ‘sacred’ frontier between the world of the creator (where the act of the representation takes place) and the world that is represented (i.e., is created in the case of fictional artefacts)” (Klimek 171) is violated. This metafictional scene, thereby, reveals that there is someone else who is in fact responsible for the creation and the putting-into-action of the character, which is often forgotten while watching. The real-life actor Jeff Daniels in fact acts the role of Gil Shepherd who in further consequence acts the role of Tom Baxter. The scene deconstructs the fictional reality within the film by letting the audience have a look behind the scenes and by reminding them of the process of shooting a film and – specifically in this case – the process of creating a fictional character.

After the first encounter between creator and creation, a subliminal fight for superiority develops between them. On the surface they seem to fight for the favour of Cecilia, but in reality Gil is simply concerned with his career and Tom actually seeks freedom and independence. Cecilia acts as judge in this fight and finally decides for Gil. Tom returns deeply hurt to the fictional world, which is structured according to rules and has a prewritten happy ending. Consequently, Gil has reached his true goal, confidently returns to Hollywood and drops Cecilia like a hot potato. The film ends in full circle and everyday life is re-established in the small town. Cecilia is forced to return to her cruel husband and seeks refuge in the cinema. The romantic dream worlds of Hollywood once again represent a pleasant distraction from her miserable reality.

6.6.3. Flashbacks

In *Annie Hall* Woody Allen makes use of the narrative technique of flashbacks, whereby he inserts a further narrative level within the diegesis. Between the hypodiegetic narration, which is located in the past, and the characters' present situation a new ontological border is drawn. This border usually cannot be crossed because the two scenes are (1) placed on two separate narrative levels and (2) detached temporally as well as spatially. The main protagonist of the film, however, transgresses this border. Alvy leaves his own narrative level and appears in his own flashbacks. He comments on them or even interacts with characters of the subordinate level.

The first screenshot is taken from a scene which is shown at the beginning of the film. Alvy narrates in voice-over that he already showed great interest in women as a schoolboy. The flashback shows himself as a child in the classroom while he attempts to kiss a girl on the cheek. Immediately the girl jumps up, is visibly disgusted by this sudden attack and angrily reproaches him. The teacher tells Alvy to stand up and come in front of the class. Suddenly the adult Alvy sits in the classroom and defends himself against the teacher's accusations, "I was just expressing a healthy sexual curiosity." The teacher sharply replies, "Six-year old boys don't have girls on their minds." (*Annie Hall* 00:04) Then, the girl whom he kissed starts arguing about Freud like an adult psychologist, through which the scene even increases in its absurdity.



Figure 6.6.3.1.



Figure 6.6.3.2.

The second screenshot is taken from a scene, in which Alvy asks Annie whether he is her first big romance. She negates his question and tells him about her past relationships. As she is talking about one of her lovers, an actor called Jerry, suddenly both appear within the flashback, listen to the flirt she was having and comment on their statements.

ALVY: Look at you, you are such a clown.

ANNIE: I look pretty.

ALVY: Well, you are pretty. But that guy with you... (shakes his head)

JERRY: Acting is like an exploration of the soul. It is very religious, like a kind of liberating consciousness. It is like a visual poem.

ALVY: Is he kidding with that crap?

ANNIE (flashback): Oh right... (laughs shortly) ... Right, I think I know exactly what you mean.
 ALVY: You do?
 ANNIE: Oh come on, I mean I was so young...
 ALVY: That was last year!
 JERRY: It is like when I think of dieing. Do you know how I want to die?
 ANNIE (flashback): No. How?
 JERRY: I'd like to get torn apart by wild animals. (*Annie Hall* 00:18)

Alvy and Annie appear in this past scene as unobserved spectators. They comment on the ongoing action but are not heard. Metalepsis is defined as a transgression of ontological as well as logical borders. Accordingly, characters do not necessarily access different narrative levels, but might also transgress temporal and spatial borders in order to achieve the effect of metalepsis. In this scene Alvy and Annie's appearance in a past event marks a metaleptic transgression, not only because the characters get access to the hypodiegetic level, but also because temporal and spatial borders are crossed.

In one scene Alvy suggests to visit the place of his childhood, a small house in an amusement park of Brooklyn. Annie agrees to this suggestion and also his friend Rob accompanies them. At their arrival Alvy is astonished that everything has remained similar to how it looked like in his past. The house which was built below a rollercoaster looks identical to his memory. As the three friends enter the house, they seem to have entered his childhood and even encounter the same people.



Figure 6.6.3.3.



Figure 6.6.3.4.

The first screenshot shows the three amazed observers in the background. Alvy as a young child lies on the floor in the centre of the image and occupies himself, while his parents loudly quarrel in the foreground and do not notice the three intruders of the future. Alvy (the adult) suddenly interrupts their quarrel, "You are both crazy!" The picture changes to a closer shot only showing the three visitors. Rob asks, "Hey Alvy, who's that?" and Alvy responds, "The welcome home party 1945 of my cousin Herby." (*Annie Hall* 00:59) The reverse shot shows the living room again, now filled with many people. Rob even communicates with Alvy's aunt, the red-haired woman in the foreground of the second screenshot. However, while

responding to his comments, the aunt addresses the woman who has turned her back towards the camera.

Through these seemingly accidental transgressions of logical and ontological borders the chronological narration is dissolved. Characters cross space and time, as if it would be ordinary to travel into one's past. This particular variant of intradiegetic metalepsis illustrates how mechanisms which structure a filmic narration in the background are made visible by being violated. Flashbacks are usually inserted in a narration as a clearly separated hypodiegetic level. As soon as the borders are crossed and conventions are broken, they are moved into the foreground and return into the spectator's awareness.

6.6.4. The Imagination of Intradiegetic Characters

This fourth chapter, similarly, analyses how a hypodiegetic level is embedded in the actual narration with the goal to transgress the newly erected borders. In *Play It Again, Sam* the main character Allan Felix has a lively fantasy. He imagines talking to Humphrey Bogart and to his ex-wife Nancy. These two characters appear visibly on screen, but seem to be clearly separated from the diegetic world. This aspect is illustrated in the following two screenshots.



Figure 6.6.4.1.

As Allan is once again frustrated that he is constantly failing in his attempt to date women, Nancy suddenly appears in a fantasy and comments on his miserable condition, “Allan, what do you expect? I always said you were not the romantic type.” (*Play It Again Sam* 00:46) She tells him that he behaves in an awkward and clumsy manner in front of women and, therefore, fails at impressing them. As Nancy already appeared on the same diegetic level in the beginning of the film, the spectator might be confused whether she is now really lying on his bed or whether Allan is merely talking in his fantasy. This original confusion is immediately resolved, as Nancy is suddenly gone in the preceding shot and Allan returns to his monologue. Thereby, the ontological border between the diegetic world and Allan's fantasy is blurred for a short moment.

In another scene Allan talks to his male mentor Bogart, while he buys food, champagne and candles for his dinner with Linda. Bogart interrogates Allan whether he has fallen in love with Linda and gives him advice how to prepare for his encounter with her. Suddenly Allan's second frequent fantasy character Nancy appears and starts arguing with Bogart. "It is a pivotal fantasy because it brings together for the first time the two poles of Allen's fantasy world – the castrating ex-wife and the macho legend, who will eventually do battle for control of Allen's real world. The scene is given an added comic touch by taking place in a supermarket." (Gehring 92)



Figure 6.6.4.2.

BOGART: So, you finally fell in love with her?
 ALLAN: I just got carried away for a minute.
 BOGART: Come on, kid. You don't have to feel guilty.
 ALLAN: Guilty over what? Two lonely people with a tremendous amount in common have dinner together. We're platonic friends.
 BOGART: There's nothing platonic about the way she thinks of you.
 ALLAN: Yeah? How can you tell?
 BOGART: What do you want her to do? Attack you? Don't get those candles, they're for a Jewish holiday. Get romantic candles!
 ALLAN: She's my friend's wife!
 NANCY: Of course, she is. She'll tell Dick and he'll beat you up.
 BOGART: She loves you, not him.
 NANCY: He's not the romantic type.
 BOGART: Well, he could be, if he tried.
 NANCY: Don't listen to him.
 BOGART: Don't listen to her.
 ALLAN: Guys, we are in a supermarket. (*Play It Again Sam* 00:51)

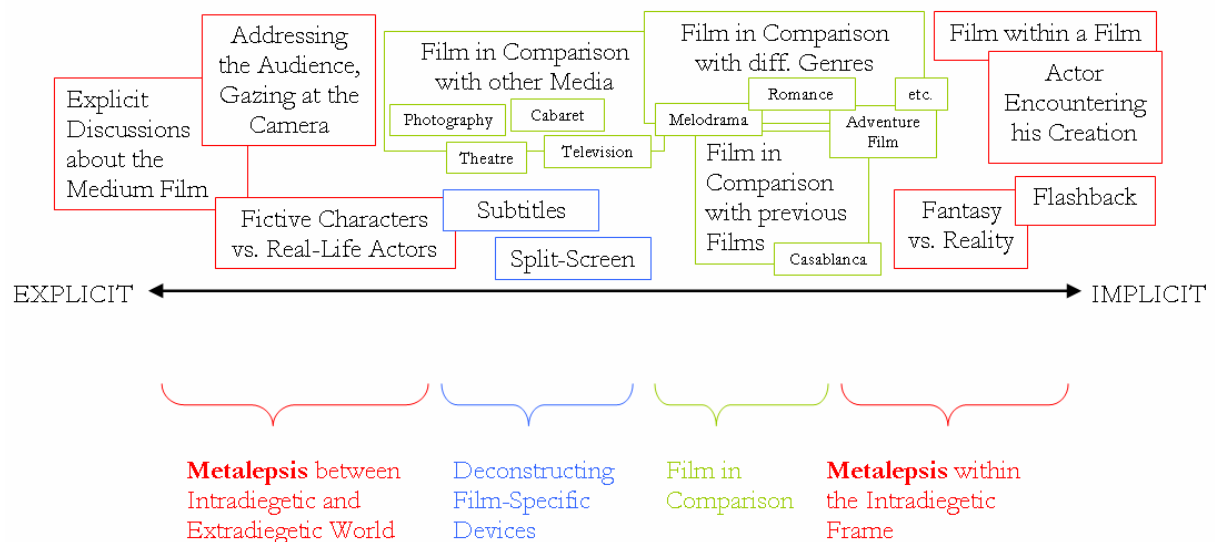
Allan finally interrupts the fantasy sequence through his ironic comment and reminds his fictive friends that they are in a supermarket, which is a place of everyday life and not a setting of absurd fantasies. This scene shows how two characters inhabiting a hypodiegetic level interact with a character on the diegetic level in an obviously diegetic surrounding.

During his date with Linda, Bogart gives Allan advice what to do and say. Suddenly Nancy appears and accuses Bogart, "I warned you to leave my ex-husband alone!" (*Play It Again Sam* 01:00) Before anyone is able to react, she pulls out a gun and shoots her opponent. Allan is shocked and loses his composure. Interestingly, a clear border is drawn concerning the interaction of diegetic and hypodiegetic characters. Whereas Allan communicates with Bogart

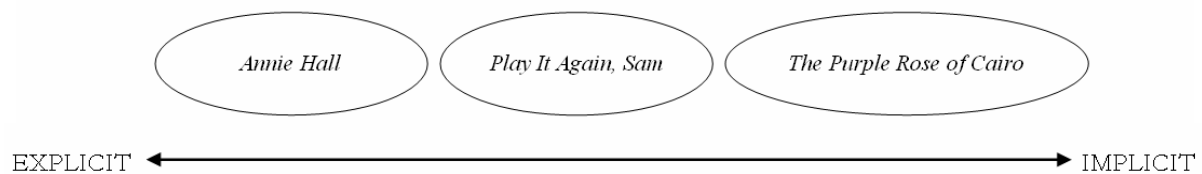
and Nancy, they are neither heard nor seen by Linda. Furthermore, she does not hear Allan when he is talking to one of his fantasy characters. This implicates that the hypodiegetic level, even though it is visually situated within the screen, is exclusively inherent in Allan's fantasy and inaccessible for others. As this hypodiegetic level as well as its blurred border to the diegetic world is clearly motivated by the unfolding action and serves to illustrate Allan's thoughts, it remains an implicit metareferential device. The cooperation on behalf of the recipient is necessary in order to let these metaleptic transgressions cause critical observations on the medium film.

7. Conclusion

Metareferential devices aim at distancing the audience from anticipating the diegesis and seek to encourage critical observations on the medium. Ideally these devices lead to an emancipation of the spectator, as they turn him/her from being a passive consumer into an active participant who critically engages in the initiated reflections on the medium. In my thesis I intended to demonstrate the numerous creative ways of achieving this metareferential goal. The three films by Woody Allen illustrate this diversity very well, as they vary significantly concerning the manner in which the spectator is encouraged to reflect on the medium. My scale model in Chapter 6 is an attempt to arrange these metareferential devices according to their explicitness.



Even though the exact position of individual devices is arguable and a bubble model would better grasp the fluid categorisation, the scale model still serves as a suitable orientation. Not only metareferential devices but also the three films in their totality differ according to their explicitness and can be situated on different places along the scale.



Annie Hall most frankly exposes its status as a metareferential film. The intradiegetic characters explicitly talk about the medium film and reveal their awareness of being fictional constructs. While gazing at the camera and directly addressing the extradiegetic audience,

characters cross the sacred border of the diegetic world. As the fictive character Alvy Singer and the real-life actor Woody Allen share significant similarities, the ontological border between the two worlds which they inhabit is violated. This ambiguous relationship between author, narrator and character leads to a confusion of the outside reality and the fictive universe. Patricia Waugh points out that the process of making the oppositional relationship between reality and fiction visible is an important function of metareference. According to her definition, a metareferential artwork “self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.” (2) *The Purple Rose of Cairo* also thematises this relationship, but uses a different strategy. The film transfers the opposition between reality and fiction completely within the diegetic world and does not violate the border to the extradiegetic reality. Nevertheless, it achieves the same effect, as it reminds the spectator of the film’s status as a fictive construct. A further definition of metareferential artworks was formulated by Brian McHale. According to his notion, postmodernist fiction “is above all illusion-breaking art; systematically disturbs the air of reality by foregrounding the ontological structure of texts and of fictional worlds.” (221) Films usually seek to create the illusion of an autonomous fictive world and hide the medium-specific mechanisms which are used for its creation. Metareferential films, in contrast, consciously destroy the illusion and draw attention to the medium. They move the process of creation into the foreground, instead of presenting a finished artwork. Jean-Marc Limoges describes medium-specific metareference in films as “any device that intentionally reveals (by showing or hinting at) the enunciative apparatus of film itself.” (392) A film exposes medium-specific mechanisms and conventions by means of various strategies: Conventions are, for instance, made visible by (1) being consciously broken and/or (2) used in an alienate manner. *Annie Hall* provides two examples to illustrate this principle. In one scene subtitles, which usually transform an acoustic message into written language, are deprived of their original function and used aesthetically. Instead of serving as mere translation they are inserted to visualize the characters’ thoughts and, thereby, gain a metareferential meaning. The second illustration of this principle consists in the unconventional use of split-screens. This filmic device usually serves to show two scenes which are temporally and spatially detached within one image. Whereas the visible border between these images usually separates the two settings, it is crossed acoustically in *Annie Hall*. The conscious transgression of this border disrupts the accustomed flow of perception and ideally leads to critical observations on the underlying medium-specific conventions. These two examples illustrate how filmic devices gain a metareferential meaning, as soon as they are given an

additional, aesthetic, function. Similarly, Werner Wolf points out that metareference “establishes a secondary reference to texts and media (and related issues) as such by, as it were, viewing them ‘from the outside’ of a meta-level from whose perspective they are consequently seen as different from unmediated reality and the content of represented worlds.” (2009 22-23) Metareferential signs simultaneously relate to the extradiegetic world and comment on the artwork’s artificiality. Thereby, they function as doubly encoded signs. A certain degree of medium-awareness on behalf of the recipient is necessary for decoding both meanings.

Another possible strategy of exposing medium-specific mechanisms relies on the principle of comparison: By showing what the medium film is not, it becomes even more evident what film is. Thereby, one needs to distinguish between three levels of comparison. According to Irina O. Rajewsky, intermedial references focus on the integration of a conventionally distinct medial system, whereas intramedial references reflect on distinctions within the own medium and either refer to another semiotic system, e.g. genre, or a specific pre-text.

By imitating narrative techniques of other media, the film sheds light on the intermedial gap towards them and specifically reveals the mechanisms of the materially present medium. The spectator perceives the friction between the contrasting medial systems and is encouraged to ponder over “the enunciative apparatus of film itself.” (Limoges 392) *Annie Hall* contains several instances of intermedial references with a metareferential function. Woody Allen reflects on the narrative mechanisms of theatrical performances, reminds the spectator of the historical origins of film by integrating references to photography and reveals the differences between television and cinema. All these examples illustrate how the representation of a conventionally distinct art form evokes critical observations on the presented medium by means of comparison.

Secondly, intramedial references highlight generic differences within the same medial system. These references do not only characterise the presented film but also lead to reflections on the overall medium. In various scenes *Play It Again, Sam* places itself in comparison with different genres. Thereby, two methods are applied which constitute the basis of generic parodies: Filmic devices are (1) transferred into an atypical context and (2) imitated in an exaggerated manner. Thereby, they prevent the spectator from getting immersed into the story and encourage metareferential observations from a distanced viewpoint. Similarly, Linda Hutcheon claims, “With a technique not unlike that of Brecht’s alienation effect, the parody and self-reflection of narcissistic narrative work to prevent the reader’s identification with any character and to force a new, more active, thinking relationship upon him.” (49) The

spectator's expectations are disrupted, in case generic conventions are exaggerated or situated in a new context. In search of an appropriate solution for his affair with his best friend's wife the cineaste Allan Felix reflects on classical endings taken from film history. Consequently, *Play It Again, Sam* includes generic parodies on romantic pictures, adventure pictures, gangster pictures and serious dramas with different geographical origins. Similarly, *Annie Hall* reflects on animation films of Walt Disney by including a reference to the film adaptation of the German fairy-tale *Snow White*.

The parody of this Disney production also belongs to the third category, which covers intramedial references to specific films. *Play It Again, Sam* draws on the cultural knowledge of the spectator by including references to the well-known Hollywood melodrama *Casablanca*. The embedded hypotext is not only referred to in the dialogues or quoted visually, but even transgresses into the hypertext, which entails interaction between the characters of the contrasting ontological levels. The conscious transgression of ontological borders is referred to as metalepsis. By crossing these strictly separated borders, the film reveals its underlying structure, sheds light on its inherent mechanisms and undermines the aesthetic illusion. Werner Wolf points out that this process implies a metareferential comment on the medial system. "The paradoxical 'impossibility' of metaleptic transgressions seems to lay bare the fictionality of the work in which they occur and thus implies a meta-statement on its medial nature as an artefact." (2009 50)

As metalepsis describes a transgression of ontological borders, one needs to distinguish between different levels of representation which are placed in a hierarchical relationship to each other. As soon as these levels get mixed up in a paradoxical way, one can speak of metalepsis. Whereas extradiegetic metalepsis violates the diegetic frame, intradiegetic metalepsis transgresses an ontological border within the diegesis. According to the first category, the illusion of an autonomous fictive world is destroyed, as soon as an intradiegetic character acknowledges the existence of the spectator, e.g. by looking at the camera as in *Annie Hall*, and shows awareness of him/herself as a fictional construct. The second category, in contrast, is achieved through including an additional subordinate narrative layer and crossing this newly erected border within the diegesis. *The Purple Rose of Cairo* hesitates in destroying the fictive illusion and does not violate the border of the diegetic world. Instead, metaleptic transgressions are situated within the diegesis, which categorizes them as intradiegetic. The diegetic audience watching the black-and-white champagne comedy mirrors the actual situation in the extradiegetic cinema. Tom Baxter's transgression from the screen into Cecilia's world only slightly disturbs the illusion, as it does not violate the diegetic

frame. Therefore, a certain degree of medium-awareness on behalf of the recipient is necessary in order to decode the metareferential message of this transgression.

The aim of my thesis was to demonstrate the creative potential of metareference. The three films by Woody Allen illustrate the great variety of metareferential devices, which use different strategies in order to distance the spectator from the narrative and to make medium-specific mechanisms visible. These devices might (1) be classified as very obvious in their manner of pointing to the medium, (2) disrupt the accustomed flow of perception without resulting in the desired reflections on medium-specific mechanisms, or (3) remain completely unrecognised by the average spectator, as they do not touch the illusion of an autonomous fictive world. It mainly depends on the medium-awareness of the recipient whether the metareferential potential of a film is recognised or not. This observation proves that metareference always requires an active recipient who contributes in the act of deconstructing the presented artefact. The scale model represents an attempt to grasp the degrees of obviousness of metareferential devices in films.

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Appendix I – List of Films

2012. Dir. Roland Emmerich. Columbia Pictures, 2009.

Annie Hall. Dir. Woody Allen. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, 1977.

Casablanca. Dir. Michael Curtiz. Hal B. Wallis Production, 1942.

Der Neurosenpflücker. Woody Allen und seine Filme. Dir. Richard Schickel, Lorac Productions, 2005.

Easy Rider. Dir. Dennis Hopper. Raybert Productions, 1969.

Far From Heaven. Dir. Todd Haynes. Consolidated Film Industries, 2002.

Le Coppie. Dir. Mario Monicelli, Alberto Sordi, Vittorio De Sica. Cinema International Corporation, 1970.

Melinda and Melinda. Dir. Woody Allen. Twentieth Century Fox, 2004.

Play It Again Sam. Dir. Woody Allen. Paramount Pictures, 1972.

The Child. Dir. Alex Gopher. Youtube. 25 November 2011
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgHOGqmRVR8>>.

The Purple Rose of Cairo. Dir. Woody Allen. Orion Pictures Cooperation, 1984.

Whatever Works. Dir. Woody Allen. Sony Pictures Classics, 2009.

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<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgHOGqmRVR8>>.

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<http://www.phys.ufl.edu/~avery/course/3400/vision/reversible_face_woman.gif>.

Figure 5.1.1. *Annie Hall*, 00:06.

Figure 5.1.2. *Annie Hall*, 00:06.

Figure 5.2.1. *Play It Again Sam*, 00:06.

Figure 5.2.2. *Play It Again Sam*, 00:45.

Figure 6.1.1. Jahn, Manfred. 2005. *Narratology. A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. University of Köln, 2005. 12 December 2011 <<http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.htm#N2.4>>.

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Figure 6.3.3.4. Buoninsegna, Duccio di. Altarbild, Siena, Tempera auf Holz, Passionsgeschichte. 1310. 14 February 2012
<http://employees.oneonta.edu/farberas/arth/Images/ARTH213images/Duccio/Maesta_back.jpg>.

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Figure 6.3.4.2. *Annie Hall*, 01:10.

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Figure 6.6.3.3. *Annie Hall*, 00:59.

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Figure 6.6.4.1. *Play It Again Sam*, 00:46.

Figure 6.6.4.2. *Play It Again Sam*, 00:51.

Abstract (German)

Im Fokus dieser Arbeit steht die Vielfalt und Kreativität metareferentieller Praktiken, die in den Filmen Woody Allens zu finden sind. Der Begriff Metareferenz stammt ursprünglich von Werner Wolf, der dieses Phänomen aus dem Bereich des Literarischen auf alle übrigen medialen Systeme ausgeweitet hat. Es handelt sich um eine selbst-reflexive Betrachtung eines Kunstwerks und dessen eigener medialen Konstruiertheit. Dabei hebt sich das besagte Werk auf eine Meta-Ebene, um einen objektiven Blick zu erlangen und rückt mediale Mechanismen, die unsichtbar im Hintergrund operieren, in den Fokus. Folglich dient das Medium nicht mehr ausschließlich als Mittel zur Informationsvergabe, sondern manifestiert sich selbst als diese übermittelte Information.

Metareferentielle Praktiken funktionieren als zweifach kodierte Zeichen. Einerseits beinhalten sie eine heteroreferentielle Bedeutung und stellen sich in Bezug zu der extratextuellen Welt, andererseits fungieren sie als Träger einer metareferentiellen Bedeutung und signalisieren ein Bewusstsein ihrer eigenen Konstruiertheit. In seiner Zeichentheorie erläutert Roland Barthes, dass von dem Rezipienten die ursprüngliche sowie sekundäre Bedeutung wahrgenommen wird. Basierend auf diesem Prinzip der doppelten Kodierung präsentiert ein metareferentieller Film einerseits eine heteroreferentielle Handlung und lenkt andererseits die Aufmerksamkeit auf das verwendete Medium. Die Wahrnehmung des Rezipienten oszilliert zwischen den Leseweisen des Films. Ludwig Wittgensteins Konzept des Kippbilds, das ein spontanes Kippen unterschiedlicher Interpretationen beschreibt, ist auf die soeben erläuterte Funktionsweise eines metareferentiellen Zeichens anwendbar.

Die Doppelbedeutung metareferentieller Zeichen sowie das Kippen der jeweiligen Interpretationen lassen sich an folgendem Beispiel gut veranschaulichen. In einer Szene des Films *Annie Hall* setzt Woody Allen das filmische Mittel der Untertitel entgegen ihrer konventionellen Verwendung ein und lädt sie mit einer zusätzlichen Bedeutung auf. Für gewöhnlich dienen Untertitel der schriftlichen Transkription des Gesprochenen in eine andere Sprache. Es handelt sich dabei um Textelemente, die nachträglich in das Filmbild integriert wurden. Da Untertitel keine neue Information vermitteln, stellen sie ein addiertes Element dar, welches die Diegese verdoppelt. Dieses Charakteristikum der Untertitel wird bereits durch deren Position innerhalb des Filmbilds sichtbar, da sie sich am unteren Rand des Bildes lagern. Sie schränken den Originalfilm nicht ein, sondern fügen ihm lediglich etwas hinzu. Sobald Untertitel eine ästhetische Funktion erlangen und sich von der ursprünglichen Aufgabe der reinen Übersetzung lösen, wird deren konventionelle Bedeutung unterminiert. Sie werden mit einem Neuwert aufgeladen, der über das Translatorische hinausreicht. Laut

Roland Barthes erhalten sie eine zusätzliche Bedeutung und fungieren folglich als zweifach kodierte Zeichen. In der besagten Szene aus *Annie Hall* beraubt Woody Allen Untertitel ihrer ursprünglichen Funktion der reinen Übersetzung und verwendet sie stattdessen, um die Gedanken der Charaktere sichtbar zu machen. Die ästhetische Verwendung von Untertiteln erzielt einen selbstreferentiellen Effekt, da dem Zuschauer dadurch die Mechanismen des Erzählens vor Augen geführt werden. Woody Allen greift eine Vermittlungsweise des Filmischen auf und setzt sie zweckentfremdet als zusätzlichen Informationskanal ein. Die unkonventionelle Verwendung von Untertiteln ist beispielhaft dafür, wie Metareferenz den gewohnten Lesefluss des Films stört, den Rezipienten von der Diegese distanziert und ihn/sie im Idealfall zu Reflektionen über das betrachtete Medium anregt.

Es kann zwischen drei Arten von Metareferenz unterschieden werden. Diese Differenzierung beruht auf Gérard Genettes Begriffserklärung von *Histoire* und *Discours*. Die äquivalenten Begriffe aus dem Englischen sind *Story* und *Discourse*. Beziehen sich metareferentielle Mittel auf die so genannte Story, dem WAS einer jeden Erzählung, wird das Kunstwerk als Konstruktion reflektiert und das oppositionelle Verhältnis zwischen Realität und Fiktion beleuchtet. Discourse beschreibt hingegen das WIE einer Erzählung, wobei zwischen zwei Varianten unterschieden werden kann. Discourse 1 umfasst rein narrative Entscheidungen, die unbeachtet des gewählten Mediums getroffen werden. Metareferentielle Mittel auf dieser Ebene reflektieren beispielsweise die Perspektive, aus welcher erzählt wird, oder ob die Abfolge der Ereignisse chronologisch oder in Rückblenden erfolgt. Discourse 2 bezieht sich ausschließlich auf die medienspezifischen Mechanismen, die zur Übermittlung einer Story beitragen. Folglich versuchen metareferentielle Mittel auf dieser Ebene das Medium, welches als scheinbar neutraler Übermittlungskanal von narrativer Information fungiert, sichtbar zu machen. Da meine Arbeit ausschließlich die dritte Variante von Metareferenz beleuchtet, habe ich mich in dem Titel für die Wortwahl *media-specific metareference* entschieden. Im Speziellen untersuche ich, wie metareferentielle Mittel die verborgenen Mechanismen des Mediums Film, die im Hintergrund einer jeden filmischen Erzählung operieren und während des Rezeptionsprozesses in Vergessenheit geraten, in den Fokus rücken.

Das Ziel medienspezifischer Metareferenz liegt darin, den Zuschauer von dem Erzählfluss zu distanzieren und ihn/sie zu kritischen Beobachtungen über das präsentierte Medium anzuregen. Folglich führt Metareferenz zu einer Emanzipation des Rezipienten, da er/sie von dem Status des passiven Konsumenten zu dem eines aktiven Betrachters geführt wird. Um dieses angestrebte Ziel zu erreichen, bietet Metareferenz eine Vielzahl kreativer Methoden, die in dieser Arbeit genauer beleuchtet wurden. Als Illustration dienten drei Filme von Woody

Allen, die jeweils sehr unterschiedliche Strategien gefunden haben, um den Rezipienten zu kritischen Reflektionen über das Medium Film zu bewegen. Während *Annie Hall* seinen Status als metareferentiellen Film sehr offensichtlich zur Schau stellt und festgeschriebene Konventionen bricht, wodurch dem Zuschauer der Wunsch, sich für ca. neunzig Minuten in der Illusion einer autonomen fiktiven Welt verlieren zu können, verweigert wird, bricht *The Purple Rose of Cairo* nicht den diegetischen Rahmen, sondern projiziert das mediale Verhältnis zwischen Zuschauer und Film in die Erzählung. *Play It Again, Sam* siedelt sich bezüglich seiner Metareferenz zwischen diesen beiden Filmen an und verwendet insbesondere Genre-Parodien, um den Film in Vergleich mit anderen zu stellen und metareferentielle Beobachtungen bei dem Rezipienten zu erzielen. Auf der Suche nach einer möglichen Klassifizierung dieser unterschiedlichen Methoden, stieß ich auf Werner Wolfs Unterscheidung zwischen expliziter und impliziter Metareferenz in der Literatur. Laut seiner Definition beinhalten Beispiele expliziter Metareferenz zwingend zitierbare Elemente wie beispielsweise „Leser“ oder „Kapitel“. Gemäß impliziter Metareferenz hingegen werden selbst-referentielle Reflektionen des Mediums nur zwischen den Zeilen getätigt und benötigen deshalb die Kooperation des Lesers, um als solche erkannt zu werden. Es ist ein gewisser Grad an Medienbewusstsein des Rezipienten nötig, damit Beispiele impliziter Metareferenz nicht übersehen werden. Dieses Modell ist nicht eins zu eins auf das Medium Film übertragbar, da das Kriterium der Zitierbarkeit bezüglich der expliziten Metareferenz problematisch ist. Anstelle einer eindeutigen Einteilung in explizit oder implizit, kann beim Film von einem Kontinuum der Offensichtlichkeit metareferentieller Methoden gesprochen werden. Die Skala als auch das Bubble Modell in Kapitel 6 sollen diese fließenden Übergänge zwischen expliziter und impliziter Metareferenz im Film veranschaulichen. Demnach stellt meine Arbeit den Versuch dar, die vielfältigen metareferentiellen Methoden, die in den drei Filmen von Woody Allen zu finden sind, anhand Werner Wolfs Unterscheidung zu klassifizieren.

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