

Remediating Photography in Second-Generation Graphic Narratives: Haptic Imaginaries and Genealogies

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Abstract

IN this article we explore the complexities of using intermediality in a sub-genre of the graphic novel: the graphic memoir. More specifically, our corpus includes three second-generation graphic memoirs that all incorporate reproductions of (family) photographs, personal documents, and archival material: *Palacinche: Storia di un'esule fiumana* (2012), by Caterina Sansone and Alessandro Tota, *Mendel's Daughter: A Memoir* (2006), by Martin Lemelman, and *Two Cents Plain: My Brooklyn Boyhood* (2010), by the same author. Although the phenomenon of intermediality is often approached from a semiotic perspective, our analysis reveals that this approach does not suffice to capture the complexities of intermediality within the second-generation graphic memoirs in our corpus. Drawing on material approaches to visual culture and photography as developed in the domain of anthropology, we address the haptic engagement and creative investment through which the intermedial configurations eventually produce the affective attachments that the narrators seek to establish and share with the world. Thanks to these haptic attachments, the nostalgia evoked in the narratives is converted into a present feeling of affective connection with, and belonging to, a recovered family history. To that aim, the visual dimension of the three graphic narratives is haptically broadened so as to restore paths toward memory, thus welcoming a felt, and truly embodied, experience of other people's history and past.

CRITICS have often attempted to capture the specificity of graphic novels. However, as Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey rightfully point out, the complexity of the graphic novel only allows for a prototypical definition. Will Eisner, who contributed most to popularizing the *graphic novel* label, also proposed a “generic description” of graphic narratives as “any story that employs image to transmit an idea” in which “images and text are arranged to tell a story” (xvii). That sequentiality should actually bring us to question the graphic narrative as such. As John Bateman and Janina Wildfeuer point out, “insights from linguistic models can be beneficially applied [to the analysis of graphic narratives] and we begin to regain

the sense in which sequences of both verbal and visual material can function similarly as communicative artefacts or performances” (181). Building on previous frameworks of multimodality, Bateman and Wildfeuer have fine-tuned the analytical tools aimed at investigating graphic narratives’ internal “organization, [the] level of explicitness, and [the] acknowledgment of the essential role played by an extended dynamic notion of ‘textuality’” (205). In this article, we will explore a particular phenomenon that further answers to the graphic novel’s multimodal complexity: the use of other media within the graphic novel, which has been labeled as *intermediality* (Rajewski, “Intermediality” and *Intermedialität*; Rippl and Etter).

Intermediality in the Arts: The Case of the Graphic Novel

WHILE there is a relative consensus on the definition of intermediality in a broad sense, this is not the case when it comes to specifying particular types of intermediality (Rajewski, “Intermediality”). Thus, intermediality is often understood exclusively as a phenomenon related to “the massive inputs of contemporary mass media and technology” (Bruhn 3). Within the scope of our analysis, we will delineate the phenomenon as a mixed use of specific media or materials, such as “photographs, and paper and vocalised testimony” (Walden 3). Conversely, Irina O. Rajewsky states that intermediality in graphic narratives (published on paper) needs to be understood as “a communicative-semiotic concept, based on the combination of at least two medial forms of articulation” (“Intermediality” 52). In her article, she introduces three subcategories—medial transposition, media combination, and intermedial references—and uses them as analytical tools to explore specific medial configurations, their meaning-constitutional strategies, and their overall signification (“Intermediality” 52). Via medial transposition and media combination, authors seek to focus the reader’s attention not only on the specificity of each medium or material and on the mixing of media, but also on “the space between them” (Müller 20). As we will see, the media or materials used in our corpus of graphic novels “function as a kind of metonymic representation of the historical contexts” that the narratives recreate (Bruhn 33). While manifesting themselves as a *mise en abyme* within the text, the media “point [...] ‘outside’ the text” (Bruhn 33). This means that graphic novels reflect upon themselves, often via the evocation of references or techniques borrowed from other genres or types of narratives, such as literary texts, films, or documentaries; quotes, editing, and montage are some of the devices of Rajewsky’s third category of intermediality: intermedial references.¹

However, Rajewsky’s communicative-semiotic concept does not suffice to capture intermediality’s complexity within recent graphic narratives. Beyond communicating content and meaning, the insertion of a photograph can elicit many emotions and sensations. For instance, a (drawn) photograph can evoke one’s

¹ Werner Wolf has proposed a similar typology (see Bernhart).

childhood but also the parents' struggle to build a new life after a traumatic experience. In this respect, of particular interest are the material approaches to visual culture and, more specifically, to photography as developed within the domain of anthropology. These approaches have marked a shift from a strictly semiotic interest in the way images signify, to a wider cultural and phenomenological focus on what people actually do with images, and why they matter to them (Edwards 224). In *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*, Daniel Miller argues that mattering has "a more diffused, almost sentimental, association that is more likely to lead us to the concerns of those being studied than those doing the studying" (qtd. in Edwards 224). Material approaches especially address the subjective and emotional aspects of practices that make use of images and in which more is at stake than the mere visual perception of those images:

The stories told with and around photographs, the image held in the hand, features delineated through the touch of the finger, an object passed around, a digital image printed and put in a frame and carefully placed, dusted, and cared for, are key registers through which photographic meanings are negotiated. (Edwards 224)

Network models, such as James L. Hevia's "photography complex", take into account the material and affective lives and circulation of photographs, the complex trajectories of multiple material originals, as well as the role of technologies and structures in conveying meaning to photographs (Edwards 223). By considering the reproducibility and the potential repurposing of photographic images, through material practices such as placing or remediation, these network models reveal how photographs—as tactile objects—exist in time and space, and work within social relations. In particular, material approaches within anthropology have paid attention to the role of photography in relation to memory and, more specifically, to the ways in which people make history from photographic images through material performances involving other media and narrative practices.

In the present article, we will examine a specific media configuration that we provisionally call "graphic memoir", in the absence of terminological consensus (Chaney; Gardner; Pedri, "What's the Matter"; Pratt and Miller; Versaci; Watson; Whitlock). More specifically, we will focus on second-generation memoirs, since it is our belief that, within this subgenre, the imaginative process that enables the creator to reconnect with the past and memory is particularly evident. Indeed, critics often assume that materials have immediate "mnemonic power but only when they are invested with imagination" (Walden 103)—that is, only if they are worked on by the author. As Rajewsky ("Intermediality") explains in her authoritative study, we should therefore pay close attention to the ways in which additional layers of meaning are produced through the commingling of different types of intermediality, and ask ourselves the following question: to what extent do post-memorial journeys into the past affect the forms and features of visuality within the graphic narratives under examination here?

Postmemory and Haptic Visuality

IN her monograph on intercultural cinema, Laura U. Marks uses the skin metaphor to highlight the fact that sequences of images may create and convey meaning through their own materiality, and thus through the establishment of a contact between the spectator and the representation. This contact can be further intensified by the use of a visuality that stresses tactility, “as though one were touching a film with one’s eyes” (Marks xi). This kind of tactile visuality, which Marks has coined “haptic visuality” (xi), is to be distinguished from “optical visuality” (162), which implies looking at things from a distance that is sufficient to see them separately and in dimensionality. Drawing on a Deleuzian and Bergsonian theoretical framework, Marks explores the ways in which intercultural cinema engages with the representation of cultural memory and what role haptic visuality plays in it.

With the exception of studies that explore the tactile qualities of reading print comics,² the tactile aspects of comics’ textuality have rarely been studied separately. A valuable contribution in this respect is Katalin Orbán’s work on the role of touch and haptic visuality in “transitional print textuality”, which works in such a way that it mimics digital textuality (“Embodied Reading” 1). Orbán argues that certain “intermediary forms of literature”, such as the graphic novel, and their salient topics, such as memory, epitomize the prominent role of haptic visuality in the transition to a textuality that—in the case of comics—is “often informed by experiential habits and types of attention schooled by electronic media rather than its specific forms and devices” (“Embodied Reading” 1). Subsequently, Orbán broadened her scope by examining the role of tactile connection not only in print but also in digital texts, relating it to the graphic narrative’s kinship with hyperreading. Through an in-depth analysis of Art Spiegelman’s *In the Shadow of No Towers* and David Small’s *Stitches: A Memoir*, Orbán demonstrates how the graphic novel exploits the material qualities of print media, using their multimodal compositions as a means to represent embodied experience (“Language”).

Another relevant study on haptic visuality in graphic novels is Rebecca Scherr’s analysis of Joe Sacco’s *Palestine*, where the handshake in the narrative is read as “a visual metonym for the process of haptic readership” (21). Drawing on Marks’s notion of haptic visuality, Scherr argues that the notion of haptics implies both touch in a literal sense and the sphere of emotion and feeling more generally. Considering it as an artistic strategy, Scherr thinks of haptic visuality in terms of “a connective readerly address incorporating sensation and emotion in its communicative reach” (21). At the same time, the author interestingly underlines that a haptic aesthetics foregrounds not only connection but also separation: “For to touch is always, also, to be touched; there is an element of this exchange that reminds us that we are not the other and the other is not us” (22).

² Neuroscientific research has shown, for instance, that visuo-haptic processing is especially appropriate for sequential spatial exploration (e.g. Bara et al.; Fredembach et al.). However, discussions of tactility in relation to the reading process of comics often tend to associate it either to a taboo or a fetish (Hague 93).

If in Sacco's narrative the narrator's sense of separation enables him to maintain an ethical stance while narrating and representing the other's pain, the question arises how haptic visuality operates in narratives that spring from the split position of second-generation narrators who engage with memories that are not their own and that have nonetheless contributed to shaping their identity (Hirsch 5). In this article, we address the ways in which graphic narratives evoke other senses within their own constraints, and how haptic visuality shapes the remediation of family memories and archives in the postmemorial graphic narratives of our corpus.

Second-Generation Graphic Memoirs and Haptic Visuality

OUR corpus of graphic novels includes three narratives that all renegotiate postmemory: Caterina Sansone and Alessandro Tota's *Palacinche: Storia di un'esule fumana*, *Mendel's Daughter: A Memoir*, by Martin Lemelman, and *Two Cents Plain: My Brooklyn Boyhood*, by the same author. All three incorporate reproductions of photographs, personal documents, and archival material dating back to the 1950s and the 1930s, respectively.

In *Mendel's Daughter*, Lemelman reconstructs his mother's pre-war childhood and the Nazi persecution of the Jewish community in Poland during the Second World War (*Mendel's Daughter* [website]). Before his mother passed away, he recorded her story on videotape, which the narrator of *Mendel's Daughter* uses as an authenticating device. A few pages into the book, he turns the narration over to his mother: "Today I managed to find a video of my mother talking about her life. [...] This is her story. It's all true" (5). In *Two Cents Plain*, Lemelman further explores his mother's life by embedding it in a graphic memoir of his own childhood in post-war Brooklyn. It narrates his parents' struggle to rebuild their lives by running a candy store, until their New York neighborhood changed drastically in the 1960s: as Holocaust survivors, Lemelman's parents were once again faced with racism, discrimination, and violence.

In addition to this emphasis on authenticity at the narration level, *Mendel's Daughter* and *Two Cents Plain* are interspersed with family photographs, texts taken from prayer books, artefacts, and images of memory objects, such as letters, school reports, drawings from Lemelman's childhood, and candy boxes. These are added to the author's handwritten quotes and frameless pencil and charcoal drawings (Gravett) whose style, rather than recalling that of comic books, is in line with Lemelman's previous work as a prose illustrator (Mihăilescu 39). Dana Mihăilescu argues that in *Mendel's Daughter*, the use of photographs, which are often held by a hand-drawn hand, as elements of remediation emphasizes "the empathy of survivors and their children for those who died and the Holocaust traumas of survivors" (49).

According to Victoria Aarons, the narrator's hand-drawn hand on the cover page is pointing to the black-and-white picture of his mother, suggesting "a movement that positions his mother and her story into the foreground" (60). This

superposition of the hands on the picture represents the narrator's desire and attempt to establish a generational continuity (a "handing down"), thus prefiguring a trope within the narration. On page three, for instance, another hand-drawn hand reaches toward a face. Assuming that this hand is that of the mother visiting her son in his dreams, Aarons considers it a metonymy of voice, "the lasting connection between Polish immigrant survivor and American-born son is voice, a voiced history bequeathed intergenerationally and functioning as a field of subjectivized memory" (62). Similarly, in the close-up of a photograph featuring the eyes of Lemelman's mother, Aarons considers the latter a metonymy of bearing witness, of visual memory and, at the same time, of what is hidden from view and memory (69).

However, apart from the visual implications of the scrapbook montage that highlights the constructed nature of testimony and postmemory, the hands and eyes also foreground the object's contact with human skin. In our view, another dimension that clearly emerges from the above-mentioned memory representations is their hapticity, which addresses the reader and encourages a more direct and multi-sensorial type of engagement. By focusing her analysis on the visual representation of the doubling of voice (mother-son), Aarons fails to take into account this haptic dimension and the creative investment through which the narrator of *Mendel's Daughter* attempts to reconnect with his family memories.

The typically postmemorial paradox of distance and proximity finds an equally haptic closure in the final pages of *Palacinche*, co-authored by cartoonist Alessandro Tota and photographer Caterina Sansone. This graphic narrative reconstructs the family history of Sansone's mother, whose family was forced to leave their homeland at the time of the post-war Istrian-Dalmatian exodus, through the story of a reverse exodus from Florence back to Rijeka. Along with her husband Alessandro, Caterina travels backwards through all the stages of the journey her mother and grandparents made in 1950, when they were forced to leave their hometown Fiume (now called Rijeka) to escape the violence of the then Communist regime. *Palacinche* not only reproduces family photographs and archival material in the graphic narrative; during the journey, Caterina takes new pictures that are also inserted in the book. The narrative itself consists of panels that generally have no frame. Sepia-like tones of brown and beige are used for the panels in which Caterina's mother talks about the past.

Haptic Explorations into the Family Archive

As the above-mentioned summaries demonstrate, Lemelman's graphic novels ought to be read as a diptych: *Two Cents Plain: My Brooklyn Boyhood*, which narrates the story of the Lemelman family in post-war America, picks up where the storyline of *Mendel's Daughter* ended, namely with the Liberation and the reunion of the siblings who had survived the horrors of war. The incipit of *Two Cents Plain* therefore recalls the immediate post-war journey of Lemelman's parents,

while continuity is ensured by using the same drawing techniques and devices, such as the recurrent insertion of photographs, but also the monochromatic colour scheme. Paul Gravett summarizes Lemelman's focus and style as follows:

Lemelman is more prose illustrator than comic artist, eschewing balloons in favour of hand-written, at times lengthy, quotes, mostly separated from his pencil drawings, soft and fragile, and family photos and artefacts. Less multi-layered than *Maus*, its documentary-style focus makes this an undeniably affecting testimony by a mother and son.

In *Mendel's Daughter*, the first two photographs—the one on the cover page, framed by the Star of David, and the one on the title page, without the star—are not simply reproduced as images, but they are adapted to the graphic novel's visual mode. They are represented as hand-drawn pictures, with a white border and/or a shadow creating the three-dimensional effect of a photograph lying on a surface. As the photographs become material objects within the narrative, they do not form an intermedial configuration that simply combines different media but a remediation that adapts the source photograph within the intermedial configuration (Rajewsky, "Intermediality"). This is also the case of the portrayal of Gusta, Mendel's daughter. Each time Gusta appears at an older age, her image is made to resemble one of the photographs contained in the graphic novels. The cover and title pages of *Mendel's Daughter*, as well as Gusta Lemelman's portrayals within the narratives, are clearly remediations, whereas—with one exception (cf. *infra*)—all other photographs are reproductions of old family photographs, presented in retro frames with jagged edges, which in turn are pointed at, or represented as, tangible objects. The pictures are pointed at, or being held by, one or two hands, and accompanied by captions that feature comments and explanations by the narrator's mother. These were obviously added by the narrator in order to identify the relatives, many of whom died in the Holocaust.

Since the insertion of the pictures in Lemelman's works is diegetically motivated, we could categorize it as a form of "nesting", a term coined by W. J. T. Mitchell to refer to the appearance of a medium "inside another as its content" (262). In contrast to Mitchell, Danuta Fjellestad argues that the two media "cannot seamlessly work together, the image is always perceived as standing apart from the verbal medium" (198). This objection, however, might be less relevant in the case of Lemelman's graphic novels. The hands and the captions make sure that the picture is not simply juxtaposed to the graphic novel's verbal and visual elements, but they make the picture an integral part of the narrative configuration. On some pages, photographs simulate a page in a family album, whereas on others they are arranged in such a way that they form a family tree or mimic the shape of an object relevant to the narrative, for example the heart-shaped candy box in *Two Cents Plain* (210, 228), the contours of which frame a set of family photographs (229). While captions are placed over or next to the photographs, in either black or white (depending on the background), some photographs (partially) overlap or cover the drawing of the same character. Finally, the novel's epilogue contains

yet another type of photo composition. On page 193, Lemelman reproduces the picture of the cover page, fusing it with another one, the subject of which remains unidentified: it might signify loss and spectrality. The photo composition turns into an ambiguous representation, as it complicates the “physical relation” (Gunning 24) that pictures are presumed to establish with the reality to which they refer.

The insertion (or drawing) of family photographs clearly visualizes Lemelman’s attempt to sensorily connect with his family’s past, which he has lived first- or second-hand in *Two Cents Plain* and *Mendel’s Daughter*, respectively. Similar sensory experiences are evoked by the repeated reproduction of fabrics and embroidery in the diptych, the texture of which is beautifully rendered by Lemelman’s typical charcoal technique. Fabrics and embroidery were not only part of his grandfather’s business, but also of the family home in Poland (Germakivka, in the former Soviet Union), where the persecution of Jews gradually grew harsher. In *Two Cents Plain*, a similar sensation is further evoked by the remediation of photographs featuring the products sold in the family business: the Brooklyn candy store that, for a while, also served as the family home. The products seem to pop out of the page, and the reader, along with the narrator, wants to touch and smell them. In other words, thanks to a visual representation, the texture of these products provokes sensory associations. These synaesthetic, and in particular haptic, sensations, which remain closer to the body than visuality, are intensified by the insertion of photographs of various items: documents, jewels, toys, and drawing materials, but also pets, mice, and bugs. In particular, the recurrence of the toys and candy almost turns them into fetish objects “used to extend bodily experience into memory” (Marks 201).

On the webpage dedicated to *Two Cents Plain*, Lemelman himself comments on the importance of all the artefacts that are mentioned in the graphic novel, the images of which are available online, in the original colours:

You might say I was an archeologist of my own childhood. While researching *Two Cents Plain: My Brooklyn Boyhood*, I realized that the best way to make my story come alive was to explore the few photographs and countless documents my mother Gusta saved over the years. She kept *everything*.

As I went through her papers, I discovered old report cards, letters, bills and receipts. In addition to her \$200.00 passenger ticket for the Marine Marlin, the boat that took her from war torn Europe to America, I found a rent receipt for \$65.00, the last rent receipt for Teddy’s Candy Store, the store I grew up in. *These papers became a physical and emotional bridge to my childhood* [our emphasis]. I included many of them in *Two Cents Plain: My Brooklyn Boyhood*. (Lemelman, “Artifacts”)

These mimetic elements evoke an indexical relation of similarity (Marks 158), revealing “a form of yielding to one’s environment” (160)—in Lemelman’s case, to his family history. Indeed, although mimesis offers a clue to understanding the narrator’s world, it also enables the narrator to “create a transformed relationship to it” (Marks 141).

In *Mendel's Daughter*, the one photograph that stands out is an archival photograph used as evidence in the 1961 Eichmann trial. The photograph, found after the Liberation, was taken in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and shows a Jewish prisoner's hair locks being cut by German officers while Eichmann observes, smiling. Rendered in a low resolution, the enhanced photograph serves both as back- and foreground, eventually composing a single fabric with the rest of the panel. By representing both past and present in the foreground, this key panel reveals history's haunting guise. At the same time, the insertion of the archival photograph reveals Lemelman's lack of faith in iconically and historically charged visuality as an instrument to restore connections with his personal and family history.

Reverting Missing Memories

THE graphic recounting of Sansone and Tota's reverse exodus is interspersed with photographic material, including old family pictures, archival material, and new pictures taken by photographer Caterina Sansone, who also appears as a character in the graphic parts of the narrative created by her husband Alessandro Tota. The first two photographs appear on the cover page: one features Caterina's mother in her teens and is reproduced as a photographic background image for the second photograph, which is, instead, represented as a hand-drawn—and thus explicitly remediated—picture, superimposed on the background image. The latter, by contrast, lacks a frame and is thus offered to the reader as if it were an original, unmediated image rather than a mnemonic object. In the remaining part of the paratext, other configurations of overlapping family pictures are shown against the background of a homely looking tablecloth and a tin cookie box with the words "Foto Elena" on it. In these photographic images, Elena's hands and fingers are pointing at the pictures that are represented as tangible objects. However, this is only the case for Elena and not for her daughter Caterina, who is trying to establish a felt connection with her mother's memories throughout her journey.

Within the narrative itself, Sansone and Tota integrate photographic material in three ways. The first two photographs in the narrative are hand-drawn pictures that are presented as material objects, that is, with a white frame and an oval-shaped grey background, recalling the photographic frames of yesteryear. Being hand-drawn, both images are adapted to the visual mode of the graphic narrative. Like those in Lemelman's narratives, they are not just combinations of different media (Rajewsky, "Intermediality"), but remediations of real or imaginary photographs within the visual-graphic mode of the narrative. The first hand-drawn photograph appears when Elena, as a character of the graphic narrative, starts recounting her family history while being filmed by Riccardo, Caterina's brother (30). The panel showing Elena with the box containing the photographic family archive is the first panel to be endowed with a frame. This frame takes the shape of the TV set positioned behind Elena, as does the frame containing the caption that accompanies the hand-drawn photograph, placed right next to it.

Although the presence of both pictures is diegetically motivated and can be classified as “nesting”, the two hand-drawn pictures and the recurring frames at the start of Elena’s story question the referential quality that is usually attributed to photography by highlighting the construed nature of this (and any other) media configuration—namely, as a vehicle of memory transmission.

The two hand-drawn pictures contrast with the photographs of Caterina’s parental home in Italy (Antella, Tuscany), which are reproduced as images on pages 38–45 of the graphic novel (Centro Repubblica Sociale Italiana). Once again, these photographs are diegetically motivated: at the start of her reverse exodus, Caterina goes out with her old-school camera in order to take pictures of her parental house. These photographs stand out because they occupy the whole page and do not feature any human beings. What we do see are objects, that is, traces of the past, or what Ann Rigney has termed “accidental archives” (474), which trigger a desire to search and narrate; all these photographs are taken on the eve of the journey, when the family’s story is yet to be told.

In the remaining chapters, the photographs from the cookie box are juxtaposed to those taken on the same spot during Caterina and Alessandro’s journey to Rijeka. Although the latter have been taken from different angles and distances, it is striking that, like the pre-departure photos, none of them feature human beings. The white space around the photographs in these two-page configurations has the same function that gutters usually have in graphic narratives—that is, to represent the time that passes between the panels. In this specific case, the time passing between the past and present photographs becomes an unbridgeable gap. Once arrived at the final destination, Caterina expresses her disappointment as she ultimately fails to retrieve her family’s past in Rijeka, her mother’s birthplace. However, the impossibility of gaining direct access to her family’s past is already prefigured by the complex layering of the narrative, as the story told in the graphic parts interacts with the other visual mode: that of photography. All two-page configurations imply Caterina’s desire to connect with her family’s past and with memories that are not her own. At the same time, though, they highlight the difficulty of retrieving that past from the spaces once inhabited by the family and revisited during the reverse exodus. Whereas the narrative’s graphic part is meant to recount Caterina’s journey and search for a felt connection with her family’s past, the two-page photographic configurations, instead, bring to the fore the lack of the aforementioned “physical relation” that pictures are presumed to establish with what they represent (Gunning 24). Notwithstanding the captions that make the picture pages look like a transgenerational family album, a real connection is, indeed, still to be established as Caterina and Alessandro reach Rijeka.

In contrast to Lemelman’s work, Fjellestad’s statement that different media “cannot seamlessly work together” (198) finds confirmation in *Palacinche*, where the combination of media becomes a strategy aimed at counterbalancing the somewhat childish portrayal of the character’s drawings in the graphic parts recounting the journey. However, an unexpected turn in the story occurs when Caterina spots the name of a dish called *palacinche* (“crepes” or “pancakes”, in Croatian) on the

publicity sign of a bar. The moment she tastes the pancakes, she feels—albeit for a brief moment—a concrete and immediate bond with her family’s past: the pancake turns out to have exactly the same taste as those her mother used to make for her when she was a child. The final pages of *Palacinche* therefore display the family recipe in the form of a short, self-contained graphic narrative, marked by a different border design. The recipe itself also includes a close-up of the crepes that have provided the gustatory sensation that ultimately rescues Caterina, allowing her not only to reconstruct her family’s past, but also to feel a part of it.

Restoring Memory through Haptic and Gustatory Imaginaries

PALACINCHE clearly bears the mark of Caterina’s desire to convert memories that were bequeathed intergenerationally into her own, private sense memories. While seeking to connect with visual repositories of family memory, at the end of her journey Caterina realizes that Rijeka is not the *lieu de mémoire* she had hoped to find. However, the feeling of disillusionment that comes with this awareness ultimately turns into happiness as she recognizes the taste of the childhood pancakes. After her visual attempts seem to have failed, a bodily experience thus enables her to connect with her (family’s) past. In this way, *Palacinche*’s final pages create room for what Rigney has dubbed “alternative modes of remembrance” and “positive forms of attachment”, which can be continued and transmitted across time and space (369–70). The function of the hand-drawn pictures and the two-page configurations of Caterina’s own photographs is to pave the way toward this alternative mode of connecting with a family history and memory that is not her own.

The photo compositions in *Mendel’s Daughter* and *Two Cents Plain* equally emphasize the past’s haunting nature and the narrator’s inability to connect with it; in doing so, they end up complicating the connection that the other photographs were supposed to establish with the past. In combination with the remediation of all other items that Lemelman gradually inserts in both of his narratives, the photographs become a “prosthesis for memory” (Marks 201). However, in Lemelman’s second-generation narratives, the use of images featuring these items is not efficient in itself: the visual and verbal “nesting” of the images has to evoke multi-sensory experiences, such as the very tactility of photographs and objects. Although photography is a medium that actually “produces affective resonances and attachments” (Campt 16), in Lemelman’s narratives it is only through the narrator’s haptic engagement and creative investment that the intermedial configurations eventually produce the affective attachments that he was eager to establish and share with the world.

Finally, the question of how to restore the connection with the past is hinted at by the very titles of *Palacinche* and *Two Cents Plain*: the smell of pancakes and the taste of seltzer water, which used to cost two cents. Thanks to these olfactory and gustatory attachments, the nostalgia evoked in the narratives no longer represents “an immobilizing longing for a lost past” (Marks 201) but transfigures into a present

feeling of affective connection and belonging to a recovered family history, for which the authors provide grounding through the insertion of unquestionable documents and remediated memory objects. In doing so, the visual dimension of the three graphic narratives conveying the authors' commitment to the truth is haptically broadened to restore paths to memory, and welcome a felt, and truly embodied, experience of other people's history and past.

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