

Towards a Dialogical Realism in the American Postmodernist Derealized Novel: Abnegation and Legitimization

Vers un réalisme dialogique dans le roman américain postmoderne déréalisé: abnégation et légitimation

Améziiane Souad *

Badji Mokhtar Annaba University (Algeria)

ameziane.souad@yahoo.fr

Date of receipt: 31/01/2022	Date of acceptance: 26/10/2022	Date of publication: 30/12/2022
-----------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------

Abstract

The present article discusses the tendency in recent American literary criticism to adopt a broader view of mimesis and realism for a critical reassessment of the postmodern novel. Presumably, this study embraces as a matter of principle the existence of reconfigured and hybridized avatars of the classic realist formula in the postmodern American fiction, which testifies for the perpetuation of a pragmatic referential discourse into the postmodern literary period where it was no longer hegemonic. Acknowledging the breadth of mimetic and realist aspects in fiction could help critics to better analyze the multifaceted current realist modes of postmodern fiction. Correspondingly, 'dialogical realism' or 'postmodern realism' offers an aesthetic of compromise that reconciles antagonistic and heterogeneous literary realms and renews the faith in the referential possibilities of language that have come unstuck and entirely distrustful.

Keywords: Postmodernist fiction; postmodernity; classic realism; mimesis; hybridized and dialogized realism; postmodernist critique

Resumé

Le présent article traite de la tendance de la critique américaine à adopter une vision plus large de la mimèse et du réalisme pour une réévaluation du roman postmoderne. Cette étude embrasse comme une question de principe l'existence d'avatars reconfigurés et hybridés de la formule réaliste classique dans la fiction américaine postmoderne qui témoigne de la perpétuation d'un discours référentiel pragmatique dans la période littéraire où il n'était plus hégémonique. Reconnaître les aspects mimétiques et réalistes pourrait aider les critiques à mieux analyser les modes réalistes à multiples facettes de la fiction postmoderne. En conséquence, le réalisme dialogique ou réalisme postmoderne offre une esthétique de compromis qui réconcilie les domaines littéraires antagonistes et hétérogènes et renouvelle la foi dans les possibilités référentielles du langage.

Mots clés : postmodernité ; fiction postmoderne; réalisme classique ; mimesis ; réalisme hybridé et dialogué ; critique postmoderniste

*Corresponding Author:

1. INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the tendency in recent American literary academic criticism to privilege the influence of classic/programmatic realism on the postmodern novel. It acknowledges a fact of the utmost importance that realism, far from being surpassed by the advent of postmodernism in the 1960's and onward, has continued to be the driving force behind most postmodernist literary output. As a matter of fact, the post-war period has seen a full-fledged revitalization and resuscitation of realism in spite of the dismissal and the critical hostility that it has often subject to. This favoritism toward a literary tradition long discredited in the scale of postmodern critical capital, according to the prevailing literary attitudes, is regarded among the most significant developments of late twentieth century American fiction.

Similarly, the present paper concerns itself with the push-and-pull/heated debate between the antithetical movements "realism" and "postmodernism"

within their literary historiography which incarnates the conflict between the Aristotelian view of mimesis as a “healthy” and “natural” imperative that forms the basis of all arts and the Platonic view of mimesis as a dangerous, “poisonous” illusionism. It similarly characterizes the literary-critical scenarios and terrain of contemporary American fiction as an ongoing conflict between the aesthetic ideals and literary practices of realism and those of postmodernism. Within this venture, the juxtaposition of the terms “postmodern” and “realism” allows for texturing the history of their animosity towards each other, recalling the poststructuralist and postmodernist denunciation of realism’s dangerous conventionality-its practice of illusionism, controlling truth-voice, reproduction of dominant ideology-and the realist charges of postmodernism’s narcissism, nihilism, and political and moral disengagement.

To establish a dialogue between traditional critical methodology that valorizes positivism, utilitarianism and realism and the dialectical and polemical edge of recent critical theory, reading the postmodern novel from the lens of the humanistic criticism seems the most viable analytical approach to validate the above mentioned substantial claims. The latter eclectic critical tool dismisses the purely aesthetic conception and theorization of literature as an aberration and it fundamentally perceives literature as the creative gesture of the author and the result of the specific historical imperatives. Accordingly, aesthetic merits are accorded a tremendous importance and social and moral considerations are not sacrificed. Hence, American postmodernists have crafted a new form of “hybridized” realism, informed by postmodernist critical discourse about language and the limits of mimesis, to catch the post-war temper, to capture the runaway excesses and the crassness of the de facto insipid American reality in a cultural climate not otherwise friendly to “naïve” and “mediocre” realistic literature, and to carry mimesis to levels deeper than it has gone before.

2. The postmodernist Critique: Postmodern Antimimetism and Anti-Realism

The mimetic theory and realist fiction¹ fared badly at the hands of American postmodernists who were influential in promoting a new phase of American fiction to be one of antimimetism and anti-realism. They conceived their business to be the 'derealization' of representational conventions and the mimetic aesthetics, "the rejection of mimetic representation in favor of a self-referential 'playing' with the forms, conventions and icons of "high art" and literature"(Graff, 1979, p. 220). Under the scrutiny of postmodern sensibilities and schema, postmodern fictionists worked hard to dethrone realistic representation's authority by the very process of the experimental and transgressive machinations of the postmodern novel.

Postmodernism has been defined, among others, as "that movement within contemporary literature which calls into question the claims of literature and art to truth and human value" (Graff, 1979, p. 219). Indeed, Literature's traditional pretensions of truth, high seriousness, and the profundity of meaning were increasingly looked at with skepticism and often refuted by postmodernists. Richard Poirier clearly contends, "contemporary Literature has come to register the dissolution of the ideas often evoked to justify its existence: the cultural, moral, psychological premises that for many people still define the essence of literature as a humanistic enterprise"(as cited in Graff, 1979, p. 219). Ultimately, postmodern anti-realism highlights realism's illusionism when addressing human issues, and highly stresses its thematic vacuum.

The most brilliant literary criticism of the post Second World War period became effectually prescriptive, marginalizing, even stifling certain forms of literary realist expression. The critics managed to construe the realist praxis as grossly simplistic and troublesome. In their eyes, literary realism, in its most oblivious conveyance, wrongly issues a straight and unruptured line from object/idea to its representation, neither multivalent nor complex. It propagates the illusion that the 'real' can be accessed through representation. A lofty elaboration on this point is Brian McHale's conclusion that postmodernist fiction is "above all illusion-

breaking art, it systematically disturbs the air of reality" (1992, p.21). Hence, both postmodernist theoreticians and writers powerfully stress the unreality² and complexity of the exterior world that is impossible to truly represent in realist fiction.

In his essay *The Literature of Exhaustion*, which vaulted him to the front of the literary scene, John Barth forwards that the realistic novel or the roman à clef³ is no useful to capture the manifold inanities of the postmodern cultural pathology. He acknowledges the failure of realism through the acceptance of literature as perpetually critiqued and renewed. John Barth equally addresses the "used-upness of certain literary forms" advancing that "personally, being of the temper that chooses to rebel along the traditional lines, I'm inclined to prefer the kind of art that not many people can do: the kind that requires expertise and artistry as well as bright aesthetic ideas and/or inspiration (1984, pp. 64-66). In the same frame of mind, he goes on saying in his *The Literature of Replenishment* that "the artistic conventions are liable to be retired, subverted, transcended, transformed, or even deployed against themselves to generate new and lively work" (1980, p.205). Conventional literary modes have been overused; only through innovation, according to him, can life be breathed into literature again. The exhausted literary forms can be restored to a state of liveliness by drawing attention to their fictional and artificial status. Keith Opdahl, in his outstanding article entitled *The Nine Lives of Literary Realism*, asserts:

By 1967, John Barth could declare that the straight realistic novel had become (as he entitled his essay) "The Literature of Exhaustion". Barth noted that the modern novelists of some 45 years earlier had already shown that the realistic mode was used up. "How could anyone write realistically after Kafka and Joyce? It's dismaying to see so many of our writers following Dostoevsky..." Barth wrote in *The Atlantic*, "when the real

technical question seems to be how to succeed not even Joyce and Kafka.”(1987, p.20)

Tainted by his own vehement conviction about the fallacy of literary realism and the impossibility of ontological realness, Barth directly engages the discourse of literary criticism. He problematizes the worn-out realist practices and destabilizes the extravagant narrative illusions via postmodern defamiliarizing and disruptive literary tropes. He embraces postmodern experimentation characterizing it as noble, forthright, and prosperous for both art and literature. His authorial implication and multivalent layering of representation in his different self-reflexive novels and short stories make the reader fail to grasp the inane minutia and illogical patterning of the his fictional output.

Resultantly, the postmodern novel began to proliferate and to dominate the literary scene in the second half of the twentieth century. Its practitioners vehemently refuted the concepts of verisimilitude, and hid themselves behind a wall of arbitrary formality. They disarmed the almost social functionality and communicability of literature to reveal the fictional nature of their literary products. The key components of its poetics include metafiction⁴, intertextuality⁵, pastiche⁶, parody, the narrator-fabulator, embedded and polyvocal narratives, transgression of chronology and narrative boundaries, typographic innovations, and multiple discourses. The collective of these postmodern techniques is indicative of the palimpsestic and artificial nature of artworks and symptomatic of the unrealness of the postmodern condition. Federman (1975), in the same line of thought, affirms that “the primary purpose of fiction will be to unmask its own fictionality, to expose the metaphor of its own fraudulence, and not pretend any longer to pass for reality, for truth or for beauty” (1975, p.8). Ultimately, the realist precepts do not seem to serve the avant-garde inclinations of the postmodern novel, for they ensure the continuity of an old order that goes against the development of a more modern and hyperreal world.

Postmodern anti-realism takes place more notably in a world-gone-so-away as to defy the existing means of representation.

Jean Baudrillard's term hyperreality describes the condition where imitations or reproductions of reality acquire more legitimacy, value, and power than the originals themselves. In *Simulacra and Simulation*, he articulates his theory of hyperreality as the theoretical state wherein distinctions between a representation and its original referent no longer exist. He believes that the postmodern condition has erased all signs from their associated referents. Postmodernity, or the new postindustrial age, decisively severed such a connection with its forms of communication, information, and media technology. Hyperreality is constructed out of what Baudrillard calls models or simulacra which have no reference to reality, but exists within a series of replication that has no historical meaning. In the absence of an original referent, everything has succumbed to the all-encompassing process of simulation. Baudrillard powerfully declares that "the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials, it is no longer a question of imitation nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the unreal" (1994, p.2). The image ultimately loses its old functionality as a representation of reality to become a model—a "real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (p.1). Correspondingly, the postmodern era of the late twentieth century signals what many theorists discuss as the crisis of representation. The binary opposition between reality and illusion has been disrupted by the simultaneous acceleration of mass media⁷ and the full-fledged rejection of the taken-for-granted Western epistemological traditions. Ultimately, Baudrillard sees this historical moment culminating in the death of meaning, dystopia and apocalypticism.

Baudrillard also cautions against the modern dystopia of an 'absolute reality', against a world priding itself on having banned all illusion, evil, and even death. The postmodern society has headed toward a virtual reality of operational models where real events cannot even take place anymore. He argues that humankind is becoming less and less capable of discerning meaningful events

from image-events continually bombarded as it is with already pre-processed facts, data, and information. Candido emphatically validates this contention, “the writers increasingly began to observe, it was an era in which reality came increasingly to resemble unreality where it actually frequently outpaced the writer’s ability to image it and fiction needs to be super fiction to cope with an even more fictional age of history” (1995, p.143). In essence, the drastic transition to hyperrality has negatively impacted the postmodern world. The seamlessly co-mingling of physical reality with the virtual reality and by extension the loss of reality is quite applicable in postmodern vulnerability and chaos due to the exaggeration and falsification of reality by media, images and films.

Arguably, it was not postmodernism, however, but modernism that first put into question the objectivity of realism and the truthfulness of the mimetic mode of representation. Literary critics assume that modernist literature reflected the intellectual crisis of the time. It differs from classic nineteenth-century realism by its loss of trust in its capacity to authentically represent the external features of everyday life. The roots of the postmodernist fiction can be traced not only to modernism, but to modernity itself. According to Jean Francois Lyotard, “modernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without the shattering of belief and without discovery of the ‘lack of reality’ together with the invention of other realities”(1999, p.77).Accordingly, the devaluation of the representational capacities of language in modernist literature and the outright overthrow of the realist legacy are grounded on the individuals’ apprehension of reality during the modern period and more particularly in the aftermath of the First World War. The latter has shaken their long-established beliefs in a stable and accessible reality.

High modernist fiction favored instead the literary record of the movement of consciousness and interiority. In his outstanding essay, *Realism, Modernism and Language-Consciousness*, Stephen Heath deals extensively with the fate of realism at the beginning of the 20th century. While stressing the decline of realism, he argues that, “one of the crucial demonstrations of the loss, recession, is provided by what Stern calls ‘the literature of language-consciousness” (1986,

p.105).As Stern's phrase suggests language becomes the primary concern of modernist writers at the expense of other features. Stern also argues, "here fictions are dominated by language, or rather by an articulate consciousness of the creative process, its psychology, technicalities, and institutionalization" (cited in Heath, 1986, p.105).This inward turn, according to the champions of realism as Lukàs and Auerbach, detracts literature from the realist task of accounting for social and historical development (Lukàs, 1963, p.70-1 & Auerbach, 2003, p. 534-551). In sum, to modernists, reality is relative and subjective, and the use of the stream of consciousness technique serves this unrealist purpose.

The challenge to the notion of realism by modernism was enhanced by the development of the new critical theories which also based their critical enterprises on the close analysis of language and stylistic devices. In the 1920's, for example, the advent of Russian formalism set a new approach to the representation of reality in literature. The formalists stressed the aesthetic criteria of fiction, and denied its mimetic and referential dimensions. Russian Formalism is one of the first schools to apply the methodology of linguistics to the study of literature. It was discredited by the rise of the Socialist realism of George Lukàs who stated that, "by concentrating on formal criteria, by isolating technique from content, and exaggerating its importance, these critics refrain from judgment on the social or artistic significance of subject-matter"(1963, p.50). Hence, the text is approached not as a representation of some external reality, but as a literary and linguistic object governed by intrinsic laws.

The rise of New Criticism equally targeted the problematic realist conventions that allow the linguistic construction of a 'familiar', 'recognizable', or 'ordinary' storyworld. According to the new critics, meaning inheres in the text as a result of the author's intended or unintended linguistic patterns which create a fissure between the word and the world. The principles of the new criticism are basically verbal. That is literature is conceived to be a special kind of language

whose attributes are defined by systematic opposition to the language of science and of logical discourse. The key concepts of this criticism deal with meanings and interactions of words, figures of speech, and symbols. Novels, which are discursive entities, are self-enclosed, imagined fictive universes and bibliocosms with their own cosmology and geography which prevent escape to the world of external reference. In analyzing and evaluating a particular work, new critics usually eschew recourse to the literary history, biography of the author, to the social conditions at the time of its production, or to its psychological and moral effects on the reader

With Structuralism which grounded the critical practice within the new developments in linguistics, as reflected in the works of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson, literary criticism was revolutionized. De Saussure's founding text, *Course in General Linguistics*, a locus classicus, intriguingly displays anti-referential radicalism that hardly makes allowance for extra-linguistic referents towards which signs could gesture. His chapter on The Nature of the Linguistic Sign discards as rather 'naïve' the notion that language might act "as a list of words, each corresponding to the thing that it names" (cited in Den Tandt, 1999, p.47). There is no room in this model for natural signs acting as truthful reflections of things as realist name tags. Indeed before signifier and signified are yoked to form sign, there exists no definite objects to designate or reflect whatever and no concepts to represent them in thought, "nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" (p.112). Therefore, the coupling of signifier and signified is inherently conventional or 'arbitrary' (p.67). The somewhat mysterious linkage of sound and thought could indeed not possibly motivate on any ground anterior to the creation of the sound itself (p.112).

Structuralists have scrutinized not only realism's alleged misevaluation of literary language but more fundamentally the mistaken view of all linguistic practice on which mimesis relies. In their view, textual structures are misguidedly commissioned to act as the semiotic replica of the external world. Thus the world of accessible experience is either identical to semiotic structures or to signifying processes so fluid that they do not cohere into stable generic categories. On this

view, the realist ambition to map what naïve observers call 'the world out there' is a delusion or hoax. Instead of grasping some putative non-semiotic reality, realist practice only produces semiotic patterns devoid of referential value. Starting from the formalist heritage, Tzvetan and Roland Barthes rejected the interpretative function of criticism and the search for the hidden meaning. Instead, they saw that the "object of criticism deals with the linguistic formulations made by others" or the literary work "as a system of significance" (Barthes, 1984, p. 649). In addition to the concern with language as a system of signs, the aim of the structuralist critic is "the composition of the work-the way in which it is made, that is, how it is said rather than what it says" (Sturrock, 1979, p. 64). Like the formalists, the structuralists also aspire "to undermine the cogency of the concern with mimesis in literature" (Bennet, 1979, p. 20).

Derridean deconstruction has enormously influenced the postmodern critique. It is a form of textual analysis which subverts the implicit claim of a text to possess adequate external grounds to establish its own structure, unity, and determinate meanings. All forms of deconstruction rely upon extremely close readings of the texts under analysis and tend to refrain from introducing extrinsic evaluative criteria. In his famous axiom "There is nothing outside the text" (1976, p.158), Derrida puts into question the relationship language-world and denies the close-ended interpretability of literature. He stresses that literary texts could not be reduced to a stable meaning, and that their foiled referentiality generated a space where interpretation wandered productively within the matrix of instability constituted by both the reader and text. He coins the portemanteau term, 'différance' in which the spelling 'ance' instead of 'ence' indicates the main fusion between two senses of the French 'différence' and that of 'deferment'. His point is that the effect of meaning in any utterance is generated by its differences from innumerable alternative meanings. Since meaning can never come to rest on an absolute presence, its provisional specification is deferred, from one substitutive

linguistic interpretation to another, in a movement without end. Hence, the literary work is open ended, endlessly available to interpretation, and far beyond the reach of authorial intention. However, deconstruction has witnessed a long struggle against charges of pure formalism and political quietism.

All things considered, the radical critique of the realist epistemology articulated by formalists, new critics, structuralists, poststructuralists and postmodernists focuses on the semiotic structuring of perception that defeats the realist ambition to truly represent the world. Jean-François Lyotard gives a historical spin to the critique of the reflectionist fallacy when he writes that late capitalism has thoroughly “derealized the objects of everyday life,” thereby depriving “so-called” realist representations of their presumed object (1999, p.18). By postmodernists’ anti-referential standards, a realist practice is therefore doomed to fail because it wrongly perpetuates illusionism and referential fallacies.

3. The Resumption of the Realist Project: Postmimetism in the Postmodern Novel

Although postmodern fiction is written into a context that grants very little legitimacy to the power of referential schemes, literary scholarship, it is believed by many contemporary critics, was rather blind to the significant realist potential of postmodern fiction, the neglect of which has seriously hampered much of its criticism. Bruss strongly agrees,

The task of criticism, then, is not to situate itself within the same pace as the text, allowing it to speak or completing what it necessarily leaves unsaid. On the contrary, its function is to install itself in the very incompleteness of the work in order to theorize it, to explain ...that of which it is not, and cannot be aware. (1982, p.132)

Examining the recent critical attitude vis-à-vis the postmodern novel has revealed that a gap exists between the perspective that allegedly dominates postmodernist theories and literature, one that is a professed antirealist perspective, and the practice of postmodernist criticism. Fundamental Issues of

unrepresentability and referentiality still stir the verbal energies of both writers and literary critics. Allan Lloyd Smith points out,

Over recent years, American writers have debated whether and to what extent fiction should bare the device, that is, draw attention to the techniques of writing itself; or whether it should be transparent and permit its readers the illusion of access to the real. In *Anything Can Happen* (1983) Tom Le Clair and Larry McCaffery use the terms invisible and visible art to describe fiction that conceals its illusionary methods as against fiction that calls attention to its creator. (1989,p.75.)

Thus; while postmodernist discourse often includes formulations that signal radical antirealism, critical approaches to literary postmodernism are in fact much less extreme in their practices. Critics show that although the referential dimension of language is problematized, reference is never really devalued or narcotized. Consequently, a careful perusal of the postmodern fiction has yielded an understanding of the relation of language to the referent, and offers a useful basis for the analysis of postmodern referential strategies. Malcolm Bradbury stipulates that "words are universal currency. They are serial, referential, have structural logics (grammars), and are difficult to privatize" (1979, p.187). Stern equally contends "there is no such thing as literary work of art...which does not seek to have an effect, and which does not rely for its effect on what is outside itself" (1973, p. 24) Even Hutcheon who seems to appreciate Literary postmodernism establishes the fact that there are two types of postmodernist fiction, "one that is non-mimetic, ultra-autonomous, anti-referential, and another that is historically engagé, problematically referential and it is only the latter that defines postmodernism" (1988, p. 52). Under those circumstances, postmodern

writers are highly sensitive to the human experience in all its political, social, economic dimensions.

The respective fictional output of novelists culminates in works that incongruously and kaleidoscopically illuminate the spirit of the postmodern era and the apocalyptic postwar sensibility. Post-WWII is “a fiction of troubled realism that fitted a time of continuing nuclear threat, lost historical optimism and a pervasive sense of human evil” (1992, p.25). The war novel made resurgence on the American literary scene and WWII remained the main subject of study for many writers well into the sixties. Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969) and Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22* are anti-war novels which use absurdist terms and irony. As Ian Ousby argues, “Heller and Vonnegut write out of personal bitterness and personal suffering, using irony and satire to deride the stupidity of military bureaucracy and the larger lunacy of the war itself” (n.d. p.320). Postmodernist writers are equally engaged in a relatively earnest examination of intellectual, cultural and historical issues showing their basic rootedness in cultural pathology. Daniel Green remarks,

The fiction provides readily identifiable, highly stylized analyses of what could be called postmodern culture- analyses that are inflected by such notions as self-referentiality, the fragility of human identity, or the blurring of the line between reality and culturally pervasive, manufactured representations of it but incorporate them as subject or theme rather than the inspiration for formal invention.(2003, para.7)

Their respective works evidence a desire for direct political and social engagement. Perhaps the most vital theme in contemporary fiction is that of family dynamics exploring the decline or rupture of vital relationships (divorce, alcoholism, mental illness, loss of child, child abuse. As Malcolm Bradbury and Richard Ruland poignantly demonstrate, “during the 1950s, it was already apparent that American Fiction expressed an edgy dissent and a world divided between personal experience and public events so vast and disturbing that, as Saul

Bellow put it, "private life cannot maintain a pretense of its importance"(1992, p. 381). In the field of gender and ethnic discourse, realism has become a rallying literary term for writers who wish to underline the practical limits of the politics of postmodernism and gives voices to issues that it fails to address. The proliferation of ethnic literature, mainly Jewish and African-American in the American literary scene gives an insight into the experiences of minority groups in a predominantly White Anglo-Saxon Society. American women write predominantly in the realist mode. In their eyes, postmodernist fiction is primarily the creation of white heterosexual males. For these authors, the postmodern discourse that favors fluid identities modelled on an aesthetic of difference, writerliness and significance proves unworkable and sometimes self-defeating (Alcoff, Moya, & Mohanty, 1998, p.35).

Thereupon, many of the most talented post-war American novelists, John Updike, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth, have harnessed experimental technique to the old-fashioned mimetic sleigh. Ronald Sukenick puts it, the desire to "bang" the readers with reality, and to close the gap between words and things, a fiction must be "not an ideological formulation of belief but a statement of a favorable rapport with reality (1975, p.15). Behind Sukenick's remarks is a desire to reclose the broken circle and make a fuller unity, in which the creative is not set off from the critical. The challenge then became the re-attachment of words to things in the certain knowledge of arbitrariness of signification.

Postmodernist works provide an effective instance of the way in which irrealists may be engaging indirectly with the assumed realities of the culture, using experimental techniques. They work in invisible and visible forms, mixing transparent and opaque modes in their writing to offer a merciless depiction of the often complex reality they were facing. Stanly Corkin notes, "even in age of experimental fiction, the realist mode, defined in much the same way that William

Dean Howells defined it a century ago, is alive”(1996, p.196).In effect, postmodern fiction evidently demonstrates that its intricate textual scaffolding may act as a referential apparatus capable of supporting the realist agenda.

In an interview granted by Russel Banks in 1995, the North-American author acknowledges the fact that North-American fiction is witnessing a “useful return to realist premises”, and defines this return as, “a resumption of the realist project, but informed by a period of serious self-scrutiny and practice in the experimental 60s and 70s” (1986, p. 89). The result of all this is a realism heavily influenced by postmodern premises which, as Banks acknowledges himself, looks like “something which is more formally self-conscious” (p.89). Rebein equally asserts that the past twenty years have seen a full-fledged revitalization of realism, a phenomenon he takes to be among the most significant developments of late-twentieth century American literature. Rather than merely regressing to old-fashioned forms of strictly referential realism, contemporary American writers have, in Rebein’s opinion, crafted a new form of realism informed by postmodern self-consciousness about language and the limits of mimesis (2001, p.45). Stanley Corkin similarly refers to the continuity of realism in American Fiction, but he also hints at the influence of the “Father of American realism on contemporary writers. According to him, because they manifest an interest in domestic morality and sexual politics, “writers such as Raymond Carver, Anne Beattie, Philip Roth, Jay McInerney, and a range of others compose novels that fall within the dictates of the Howellsian method”(p. 195). Howells’ influence is reflected in the sounding echoes that his critical precepts seem to have found in the writings of contemporary writers and critics. Stephen Heath aequally shows, in *Realism, Modernism and Language-Consciousness*, the perennial nature as well as the historical specificity of Realism, “realism may be traced as perennial, a permanent mode of writing that is dominant or not throughout ages” (p.103). In the same vein, William Chace in his article entitled *Historical Realism: An Echo*, concludes that ‘Realism perpetually offers itself to suffer redefinitions’ (p. 893). In an essay entitled *The Nine Lives of Literary Realism*, Keith Opdhal writes, “the realistic novel

has remained our single major literary mode for over 125 years, habitually springing back to outlast those movements that have ostensibly buried it" (cited in Rebein, 2001, p. 19) Robert Stone, guest-editor of *The Best American Short Stories* (1992), highlighting realism's continuing relevance and its adaptability, make the following statement about the stories included in this volume,

In their variety, these stories reflect what is probably the most significant development in late-twentieth century American fiction, the renewal and revitalization of the realist mode, which has been taken up by a new generation of writers. This represents a less a "triumph" of realism than the obviation of old arguments about the relationship between life and language. As of 1992 American writers seem ready to accept traditional forms without self-consciousness in dealing with the complexity of the world around them. (cited in Rebein, 2001, p. 18)

In addition Stephen Heath rejects Stern's idea that language-consciousness leads to the impossibility of realism. He maintains that it, on the contrary, may contribute in the development of a new realism within the *données* of changing historical contexts,

The concern with language is not to sever it from the world but to stress the inter-relation of the two, the relations of meaning that everywhere hold the reality of representation. What is then at issue is not a loss of realism but a contemporary redefinition of it to include the awareness-the language consciousness-of the terms of its production. Realism becomes a question of forms rather simply of contents. (1986, p.118)

Admittedly, debates in recent American criticism about the problematic legitimacy of realist art are given extended scrutiny and have resulted in a critical unanimity. Literary critics have been responsive to realism's metamorphoses. Realism, in these

works, no longer takes the form of a seemingly self-evident mirroring of the world. The evolution of realism after the nineteenth century, according to them, reads like a sequence of its hybrid offshoots. Accordingly, the postmodernist fiction displays a hybrid make-up, mingling elements of classical mimesis and postmodernism

Adopting a holistic view of realism as a complex of metatheoretical, epistemological and methodological suppositions capacitates literary studies to further explore the types of mimesis and representation of both physical and virtual reality. Similarly, proceeding through a more avowedly dialogical understanding of realism suggests that the multiplicity of ways of understanding it does not always imply mutual exclusion but it encourages development and extension of its theoretical concerns. This testifies for its adaptability and flexibility through its long literary historiography because its referential apparatus unfolds as a sequence of reinvestigations and renegotiations.

As a matter of fact, contemporary American critics envision a postmodern realism as a conciliatory cure that manages the volatility of extreme differences, and blurs novelistic distinctions to forge a new hybrid fiction which is a new synthesis of the real and the unreal. Postmodern Realism refers to the formal tension between realist narrational invisibility and postmodern opacity. Albert Borgmann, in *Crossing The Postmodern Divide*, uses the term principally as an alternative to two cultural currents 'Hyper-modernism'. In his eyes, postmodern realism is "an orientation that accepts the lessons of the postmodern critique and resolves the ambiguities of the postmodern condition in an attitude of patient vigor for a common order centered on communal celebration" (1992, p.16). Thornton and Songok Han Thornton's formulation of "postmodern realism" also conceives a postmodernism modified by realism to result in a "critical alternative of a more capacious and socially accountable postmodernism" that can be applied to literary historiography and historical theory. (1993, p.123).

Building on Andreas Huyssen's postulation of postmodernism as a potential force of cultural and political criticism, Thornton and Thornton argue that realism, with its referential and communicational model of language and

representation, may restore a language of social action in postmodernism, “even granting that all facts are mediated, there is no excuse for a “wall to wall” abandonment of historical referentiality. Rather, it mandates a radically revised mediation of fact and fiction” (p. 138). He substantially claims that, postmodern realism might be understood as mimesis with ontological dominant. In postmodern realism, the world has become textualized” (p. 12), and it “upholds a mimetic aesthetic goal while paradoxically recognizing the demise of the real.”(p.10). Thus, the spirit of collaboration and the scenario of a cordial and collegial symbiosis between the fictional theories and epistemological stances of realism and postmodernism culminate in a more pragmatic and committed postmodernism. It equally offers an inclusive paradigm that accommodates all varieties o realism.

Presumably, the heterogeneity of the postmodern fictional corpus manifests itself in the first place by the coexistence of old and new aesthetic choices. Classic mimesis has indeed not disappeared in the postmodern era. Its survival in the face of skepticism, even hostility of the proponents of postmodernism, is one of the factors that make the argument in favor for postmodern realism possible. Resilient classic realism is discernible in the works of such literary authors as Raymond Carver, John Updike and Joyce Carol Oates which they illustrate this narrative and epistemological hybridity by using postmodernist devices to recontextualize drastic actual events. The possibility of such a felicitous hybridization of realism with postmodernism is admittedly not uncontested.

This hybridized postmodern realism is also referred to as dialogical realism which designates the aesthetic project pursued by works red as carrier of the realist strategy in which the techniques of representation previously guaranteeing art’s ability to represent the social world interact dialogically with defamiliarizing discursive devices borrowed from experimental postmodernism that ostensibly

problematize or reject the imitation of phenomenal appearances. Scholars and critics have contended that even the most radical literary postmodernism may contribute to the mapping of the world and pursue the referential goals of hybridized realism. Bertens similarly shares this view,

From a generous perspective, however, a postmodern text sets up a dialogue between referentiality and non-referentiality, between realism and anti-realism, between historical verisimilitude and anti-history. It is both representational and anti-representational, and interpretation will depend on which side of that dialogue we prefer to hear (or find more interesting), and on our intellectual response to postmodernism's peculiar way of sitting on the reference (Bertens, 2010, p.54)

Admittedly, realism has been reshaped by the appearance of a new dialogical pattern that regulates the various functions of language and the different genres of discourse. It has been reconfigured by being placed in a field of dialogic interactions linking referentiality respectively to metadiscursive practices. Thus a postmodern text in which referential and aesthetic functions are dialogized must be one that is not homogenously realistic, but one in which realist verisimilitude morphs into a hybrid discourse. The call uttered by twentieth-century critics in favor of an expanded postmodernist realism stems arguably from hopes of bursting the bonds of what modernist critic Roger Garaudy "borderless realism" (cited in. Herman, 1996, p. 48).

4. Worlds within Words: Contemporary Forms of Postmodern/Dialogical Realism:

An amalgam of hybridized postmodern realisms testifies for a realist mapping of postmodernity. It further expresses a resilient cultural need and a dismissal of a simplistic relapse into the reductive reflectionist fallacy of traditional realism. It equally offers a theoretical backing to the residual usefulness of a referential discourse within the broader fabric of the postmodern fiction.

Metarealism: concerns texts that, without surrendering their claims to referentiality comment on their own representational procedures and on the linguistic construction of their referent in everyday life. It differs from metafiction proper by the fact that referentiality remains its major goal, not deconstruction or the destabilization of referential illusion. Fredric Jameson acted as an early advocate of such a postmodern realist practice when he introduced the now familiar concept of “cognitive mapping” (1991, p.51) Under this term, Jameson designates a theoretical or artistic discourse that provides a referential model of the postmodern scene without falling back into the epistemological dogmatism of classical realism. Beyond its attempt at referentiality, cognitive mapping should indeed also comment on its own epistemological and discursive strategies. Jameson’s call for cognitive mapping provides a theoretical validation for a referential project that has inspired different literary practices since the 1960’s.

Magical realism: both informs the prevailing postmodern attitude toward reality (there is not just one reality, but a kaleidoscope of realities) and constitutes at the same time the most successful medium for its signification. Theo D’haen’s statement “the cutting edge of postmodernism is magic realism” (2001) substantiates this claim. As its name suggests, magical realism is not a deviation from realism but a correction of it, “magical realism may be considered an extension of realism in its concern with the nature of reality and its representation, at the same time that it resists the basic assumptions of post-enlightenment and literary realism” (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 6). In paradigmatic magical realist fiction, the supernatural, the explainable and the miraculous coexist side by side in a kaleidoscopic reality whose apparently random angles are deliberately left to the audience’s discretion.

Hysterical Realism: in 2001, reviewing Zadi Smith’s debut novel, *White Teeth*, the British writer and critic Wood coined the phrase ‘hysterical Realism’ in order to describe what he considered to be a literary mode characterized by strong contrast

between the absurd, prolix prose and the action of the novel, or between the character's description and the attentive, detailed examination of the specific social phenomena. In his article, *Human, All Too Human* which was published by the *New Republic*, Wood introduced that phrase which denotes his conception on the "big, ambitious novel that pursuits vitality at all costs and which knows a thousand things, but does not know a single human being" (Wood, 2001). The critic considers Don DeLillo and Thomas Pynchon to be the pioneers of the genre, followed by David Wallace and Salman Rushdie.

James Wood insists on some of the particularities of the literary sub-genre as resulted from the analysis of the texts of the above mentioned writers; an excess of main and secondary stories intertwining, doubling, even tripling on themselves. The critic states that the principles of realism have not been abolished. On the contrary, they have been used and abused and as such, he does not object to matters of verisimilitude, but to those of morality. Accordingly this style does not lack reality, per contra; it seems to escape reality, while it borrows from reality itself. Narratives are excessively centripetal; the characters are always searching for connections, relations, patterns and comparisons. In that entire uninterrupted search, there is something essentially paranoid as concerns the belief that everything is mutually determining and interacting. The characters are not really alive or full human, yet they impose connections that, finally, are rather conceptual. What is missing is the humane, thus underlying the crisis of characters and the way they can be represented in literature.

Maximalism: Maximalist fiction denotes fictional works, particularly novels that are unusually long and complex, digressive in style, and make use of a wide array of literary devices and techniques. Among the novelists associated with this style are David Foster Wallace, Jonathan Franzen, Richard Powers, Rick Moody, William T. Vollmann, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and Paul West. In their separate ways, both minimalism and maximalism have been explained as responses to the declining relevance of literary fiction in a cultural landscape dominated by newer

media such as television, video games, and the internet. In his outstanding article, *The Maximalist Novel* (2012), Stefano Ercolino defines it as,

[...] should be situated within a stream of continuity with the best engaged literary tradition of the twentieth century and not under the banner of a rupture with the postmodern literary system [...] the maximalist novel can be seen as a postmodern recuperation of postmodernist elements, or better still as a genre of contemporary novel generated by an interference between modernist and postmodernist aesthetic codes [...] an aesthetically hybrid genre of the contemporary novel. (Ercolino, p.35)

He analyses the powerful symbolic identity of the maximalist novel and explores its traits, such as: length, encyclopaedic mode, dissonant chorality, diegetic exuberance, completeness, narrative omniscience, paranoid imagination, intersemioticity, ethical commitment, multitude of narrative threads. The goal of the encyclopedic narratives is a synthetic representation of the totality of the real thus responding to the novelists' desire of conceptually mastering the more complex and elusive reality, of representing it and the fields of knowledge necessary for its synthesis. The maximalist novel abounds in recurrent themes of great historical, political and social importance, and thus it is perfectly inscribable in the tendency of returning to the realism of the nineteenth century.

Minimalism: American literary minimalism proliferated in the 1960s. Minimalism and the short story share many striking similarities. Whitney Cynthia Hallet confirms this claim,

As a literary style, minimalism is as the short story does-at the most basic level and in a leaner format. Both are compact, condensed, and contracted in design; both are especially dependent on figurative language and symbolic associations as channels for expanded meaning. (Hallet, 1999, p.4)

The minimalist narrative invites the reader into a realistic world of fiction where characters struggle day-to-day challenges such as divorce, alcoholism, violence and so many psychological problems. In his *On the New Fiction*, Kim Herzinger asserts that “minimalism’s characteristic mode is realist (even hyperrealist), and not fabulist; its characteristic subject matter is domestic, regional, quotidian, and banal”(1985, p.23). Its power engenders from the fact that it evokes within a minimal frame some larger realistic issues by means of figurative associations.

Dirty Realism: characterizes a strain of realism first appearing in American and Canadian writing during the 1960s and increasing in prominence through the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. In the article entitled *Dirty Realism: The New Writing from America*, published in the *Granta Magazine*, critic and editor Bill Buford, drawing on a body of post-1960 American realists, offers a working definition of this newly emergent type of postmodern realism,

Dirty realism is the fiction of a new generation of American authors. They write about the belly-side of contemporary life—a deserted husband, an unwed mother, a car thief, a pickpocket, a drug addict—but they write about it with a disturbing detachment, at times verging on comedy. Understated, ironic, sometimes savage, but insistently compassionate, these stories constitute a new voice in Fiction. (Buford, 1983)

He developed this term to describe a group of selected authors—Richard Ford, Jane Anne Phillips, Raymond Carver, Elizabeth Tallent, Tobias Wolff and Bobbie Mason—who, he felt, shared common aesthetic qualities. Critical reception of Buford’s term has broadened the inclusion of authors, genres and ethnicities in the dirty realist canon. A wide variety of influence from naturalists, to modernists, to postmodernists marks the representative dirty reality text indicating a confluence of a transformation and renovation of the naturalist aesthetic in the postmodern fiction.

New Journalism or Creative Nonfiction: Fact meets fiction: as the American social reality began to shift tremendously as the sixties developed, the new journalists felt the urgency to create hybrid forms that combine fictional techniques with detailed observation of journalism to break with the worn narrative conventions and to seek new forms responsive to the dilemmas of their own times. New Journalism is a portmanteau word denoting works that present verifiable factual contents in the form of a fictional novel. This narrative reportage was nourished by the decline of the novel and the growing popularity of nonfiction.

The term was codified with its current meaning by Tom Wolfe in 1973 collection of journalism articles he published as *The New Journalism* which included works by himself, Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson, Norman Mailer, Jean Didion, Robert Christgau, Gay Talese and others. When journalism and fiction are blended, the result is the creation of a new literary term, namely fiction. Hollowell defines it as,

The new journalism differs from the conventional reporting practiced in most newspapers and magazines in two main ways: (1) the reporter's relationship to the people and events he describes reflects new attitudes and values; and (2) the form and style of the news story is radically transformed through the use of fictional devices borrowed from short stories and novels. (1997, pp.21-22)

The interrogation of the fact/fiction barrier has become in the postmodern era a central, even dominant source of artistic inspiration and innovation. It is a candid testimony of the turbulence and the cataclysmic tenor of the postmodern American life. Truman Capote's landmark *In Cold Blood* (1965) illustrates how the postmodern inclination to blur the boundary between standard journalism and fiction could itself create a new layer of narrative tension within the bounds of the traditional novel. While the story's content tests the boundary of veracity and

falsehood, the innovative use of the 'how-to' manual as a structuring device represents an equivalent formal blending of journalism and fiction.

5. Conclusion:

The reconfiguration of realism under postmodernity no longer betokens the 19th-century confidence in the ability to objectify the totality of the social world. This perspectivist and dialogized conception of realism where the medium merges with subject recognizes the necessity to find other forms of discourse to articulate the sense of opacity and enigmatic complexity that hampers a reflectionist inventory of postmodern everydayness. Postmodern realisms have proved to be highly committed literary forms and ideal for recording decisive moments of the malaise and the anxiety age and multi-dimensionality of the postmodern reality.

6. Notes:

¹See Jan Bruck for the distinction between mimesis and realism. Bruck claims that mimesis, as its Aristotelian origins indicate, refers to "representation." Objects and conception of mimesis can therefore change from one period to another (as exemplified in the difference between representing social situations by the Greeks and the representation of nature in the eighteenth century). Mimesis does not imply any notion of realism since the latter only emerges in the nineteenth century as part of bourgeois ideology with the demand to represent contemporary "real life" objectively. Despite Bruck's assertiveness in discussing the two concepts, his statement is part of an ongoing debate over their meaning and distinguishability.

²"unreality", in this case, can be subbed for 'lack of authenticity', 'lack of ontological values' or 'incomprehensible complexity'.

³ Roman à clef is a novel in which actual and identifiable people or events appear under fictitious names.

⁴Fiction about fiction, a postmodern strategy to mask the referential aspect of the literary text and to make it refer to its own fictional world. It is synonymous with self-reflexivity

⁵ term coined by Julia Kristeva in her study of Bakhtin's work on dialogue and carnival. The basic premise of the theory of intertextuality is that any text is essentially a mosaic of references to or quotations from other texts. In her *World; Dialogue and the Novel*, Julia Kristeva writes "the literary world is an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning, as a dialogue among several writings" (cited in. Alfaro, 268).

⁶ pastiche: whether applied to part of a work, or to the whole, implies that it is made up largely of phrases, motifs, images, episodes, etc. borrowed more or less unchanged from the work(s) of

other author(s). The term is often used in a loosely derogatory way to describe the kind of helpless borrowing that makes an immature or unoriginal work read like a mosaic of quotations

⁷Baudrillard argued that today the mass media have neutralized reality by stages: first they reflected it; then they masked and perverted it; next they had to mask its absence; and finally they produced instead the simulacrum of the real, the destruction of meaning and of relation to reality (Hutcheon, 1989, p.93)

⁸Russian Formalism, a vitally important trend within Russian Criticism, originates in the work of Opopaz and the Moscow Linguistic Circle and is closely associated with the poetics of Russian Futurism. It lays the foundations for the alter work of the Prague Linguistic circle and thus inaugurates the tradition that eventually gives rise to structuralism. The most important figures associated with it are Jakobson, Boris Eikhenbaum, Shklovsky and Yury Tynyanov.

7. Bibliography list:

Books:

- Auerbach, Erich. (2003). *Mimesis: The representation of reality in western literature*. 1946. (W.R., Tras.). Introduction by Edward Said. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Barthe, Roland. (1970). *S/Z*. Paris: Seuil.
- Banks, Russel. (1986). *Trailerpark*. New York: Baltimore Books.
- Baudrillard, Jean. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. (Faria Sheila, Glaser, Trans.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- Bennett, Tony. (1979). *Formalism and marxism*. London: Methuen Co Ltd.
- Bertens, Hens and Douwe Fokkema. (2010). *International postmodernism: Theory and literay practice*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Borgman, Albert. (1992). *Crossing the postmodern divide*. Chicago: University of Chicago P.
- Bruss, Elizabeth. (1982). *Beautiful theories: The spectacle of discourse in contemporary criticism*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP.
- Candido, Antonio, & Sal Beker, Howar. (1995). *On literature and society*. New Jersey: Princeton University.
- Corkin, Stanley. (1996). *Realism and the birth of the modern United States*. Athens, Ga: The University of Georgia Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. (1976). *Of grammatology*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Gardner, Allan & Smith, Llyod. (1989). *Uncanny America Fiction: Medusa's face*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Hallet, Whitney Cynthia.(1999). *Minimalism and the short- Raymond Carver, Amy Hempel, and Mary Robinson*. London: E Mellen Press.
- Herman, Luc.(1996). *Concepts of realism*. Columbia, SC: Camden House.
- Hollowell, John. (1997). *Fact& fiction: The new journalism and then nonfiction novel*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press.
- Hutcheon, Linda. (1988). *A Poetics of postmodernism*. New York: Routledge.
- Jameson, Fredric. (1991). *Postmodernism or the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Luckàs, Georg. (1963). *The meaning of contemporary realism*. (John &Neché Mander,Trans.). London: Merlin.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. (1999). *The Postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. (Geoff Bennington, & Brian Massumi, trans.). Minneapolis: U of Minnesota.
- McHale, Brian. (1992). *Constructing Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.
- Ousby, Ian. (n.d). *An introduction to 50 American novels*. London: Pan Books.
- Rebein, Robert. (2001). *Hicks, tribes & dirty realists: American fiction after postmodernism*. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Ruland, Richard & Malcolm, Bradbury. (1992). *From puritanism to postmodernism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Stern, J.P. (1973). *On realism*. London: Routledge.
- Sturrock, John. (1979). *Structuralism and since: From levi Straus to Derrida*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Todorov, Tzvetan Todorov. (1968). *Pétique (Qu'est ce que le structuralisme 2)*. Paris : Seuil.
- Zamora, Lois Parkinson, & Faris, Wendy B. (1995). *Magical realism: Theory, history, community*. Durham: Duke UP.
- Journal Articles:
- Alcolf, Linda Martin, Moya, Paula M.L. Mohant, & P. Satya .(Nov.20, 1998). Multiculturalist politics and the realist theory of identity. *American studies association*. Conference. Seattle.
- Barth, John. (1980). The literaure of replnishment: Postmodernist fiction. *Atlantic monthly*. (1), 239-40.
- Barth, John. (1984). The literature of exhaustion. *The friday book: Essay and other non-fiction*. London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Bradbury, Malcolm.(1979). Putting in the person: Character and abstraction in current writing and painting. In Malcolm Bradbury & David Palmer (Eds.), *The contemporary English novel*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Bufford, Bill. (1983). Dirty realism. *Granta* 8. London. Retrieved from

[Http://granta.com/dirtyrealism/](http://granta.com/dirtyrealism/)

Chace, William M. (1991). Historical realism: An eco. *James Joyce quarterly*, 28, (4), 889-901.

D'haen, Theo. Magical realism and postmodernism: Decentering privileged centers. In Lois Parkinson Zamora, & Wendy B. Faris (Ed.), (pp.191-208).

Den Tandt, Christophe. (1999). Postmodern realism: Is there room for referential cultural practices in a postmodern context? In Pierre Michel & Errik Uskalis (Eds.), *Belgian essays on language and literature*. Ed. Pierre Michel and Errik Uskalis, (pp.41-53). Liège: L3.

Ercolino, Stefano. (Summer, 2012). The maximalist novel. *Comparative literature*, (p.64).

Federman, Raymond. (1975). Surfiction--Four propositions in form of an Introduction. In Federman (Ed.), *Surfiction: Fiction now ...and tomorrow*, 8. Chicago: Swallow.

Graff, Gerald. (1979). The myth of the postmodernist breakthrough. In Malcolm Bradbury (Ed.), *The Novel today: Contemporary writers on modern fiction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Green, Daniel. (2003). Postmodern American fiction. *The authorial review*, 1(4), 729-741.

Circuses and Arts Museums: Antioch Review. DOI: 10.2307/4614569.

Heath, Stephen. (1986). Realism, modernism and language-consciousness. In Nicholas Boyle and Martin Swales (Eds.), *Realism in European literature: Essays in honour of J.P.Stern*. 103-122. Cambridge University Press.

Herzinger, Kim A. (Winter, 1985). Introduction: On the new fiction." *Mississippi Review* 40(41), 35-41.

Opdahl, Keith. (1987). The nine lives of literary realism. In Malcolm Bradbury, Sigmund Ro, & Edward Arnold (Eds.) *Contemporary Amercantile fiction*. 18-22. Great Britain.

Sukenick, Ronald. (1975). The new tradition in fiction. In Raymond Federman (Ed.), *Surfiction: Fiction now...and tomorrow*. Chicago: Swallow p.5

Thornton, William H. & Han Thornton, Songok. (1993). Toward a cultural prosaics: postmodern realism in the new literary historiography. *Mosaic*. (26), 119-141.

Wood, J. (2001). Human, all too inhuman. *The new republic*. Retrieved from http://www.powells.com/review/2001_08_30.html