

The Novel as Performance: The Example of Raymond Federman

Serpil Oppermann and Michael Oppermann

Raymond Federman defines his novel *Double or Nothing* (1971) as a constant movement in language, as one long and incessant improvisation (LeClair and McCaffery 130-31). Federman's statement points to a basic resemblance between a jam session and the act of writing. It underlines a certain aspect of his work, namely its apparently spontaneous, performatory nature. Especially his poetry finds a new dimension in a live performance with German avantgarde jazz combo Arte De Fakt; a jazz session appears to be an almost ideal framework for Federman's masterful explorations of the musical qualities of language, as it is also demonstrated by his recording of *Playtexts 1 and 2* (1992) for Bayerischer Rundfunk. The use of one and three jazz musicians respectively results in a brilliant fusion of a poetry recital and a jam session. By referring to *Double or Nothing* as an incessant improvisation, Federman deliberately annihilates any borderline between his poetry and his novels. The notion of a novel as a constant movement in language, on the other hand, points to a structure which is very typical of performance art. Laurie Anderson's *Oh Superman*, for example, presents itself as an eight-minute uninterrupted hymn to an icon of American popular culture. The song defies the musical laws normally associated with a record that would top the American singles charts for three weeks in 1982. Anderson's incessant narrative flow is musically echoed in a composition such as Steve Reich's *Piece for an Orchestra*, which is entirely based on a gradual variation of the same musical pattern, on the principle of modulation. Anderson and Reich seem to explore the very energy which is inherent in poetry and music respectively.

It is this basic interest in words and music as means of energy display which Federman shares with many established performance artists. In that respect, Jerzy Kutnik's categorization of Federman's fiction as "Novel as Performance" is vital and will not be questioned in this study. Kutnik successfully argues that writers such as Federman and Ronald Sukenick have "adapted the performatory model of art developed earlier in the plastic and performing arts as well as in poetry to the unique conditions of fiction" (xxvii). By linking their works to such diverse artistic practises as Jackson Pollock's action painting, Charles Olson's notion of "projective verse," or Merce Cunningham's vision of postmodern dance, Kutnik negates one basic discrepancy which clearly distinguishes various forms of performance.

Whereas Pollock was primarily interested in the very act of creation, in the spontaneous transference of energy to the canvas, both Anderson and Cunningham have turned away from art as a mere form of energy display. Instead, they explicitly deal with and make very distinct comments on American culture. In her major work *United States, Parts 1-4*, for example, Anderson posits herself in a kind of "field situation" (Sayre 99) in which facts, images, theories, words and music constantly resonate against each other. Thus established patterns of American life and identity are being exposed. Performance, in other words, is a very incongruent category which embraces both mimetic and non-mimetic forms of art. Consequently, this study, after highlighting Federman's relationship with the aforementioned practitioners of performance, questions the specific relationship between Federman's writings and a (traditional) binary opposition between mimetic and non-mimetic forms of representation.

The Novel as a Record of its own Occurrence

Kutnik states that in an Action Painting the "act or performance became a necessary condition for the creation of a painting, for its being a work of art, and for its being apprehended and experienced by the viewer" (6). This is true for all other works of performance art in which life was projected in terms of energy flow, and the performer's energy discharged in painting, music, dance or poem. It is also typical of the Happening which fused all of these modes into one spontaneous occurrence. The aim was to create an experience by dissolving the boundaries between life and art. Pollock, for example, spontaneously disseminated paint on the surface of a canvas so that the painting became an autonomous display of movement and dynamism; thus, it turned into an act or performance, an action painting. The final product, in other words, presented itself as the story of its own occurrence.

In a similar manner, Federman's novel *Double or Nothing* displays itself as a performance of its own subject matter. It is a novel about the possibility of writing a novel, a novel which exposes its very construction process. With a remarkable display of graphical design and typographical play, *Double or Nothing* demonstrates the visual movement of its fictional process. It relates the story of a narrator who decides to lock himself in a room for 365 days in order to tell his own life story. This story is not presented as a piece of autobiography in a linear narrative pattern. Instead, the narrator uses a protagonist called Boris to relate the story of his survival of the Holocaust in France and his subsequent struggle for survival in America. Needless to say, this story is Federman's own: he himself survived the Holocaust in France when his mother, in a spontaneous gesture, hid him in a closet. Minutes later, Federman's entire family was deported to Auschwitz where all of them died in gas chambers. Instead of recounting this story, *Double or Nothing* presents itself as a series of notes "towards a fiction" (158). It concentrates on the problems of survival of the writer who has to live on a limited capital of 1200 dollars. The novel is full of calculations of how to stretch this limited amount

of capital over the time-span of 365 days. Here, the writer is confronted with existential questions such as: Do I feed on noodles or potatoes if the room costs 8 dollars a week? How many squeezes go into a tube of toothpaste? How many packages of noodles do I have to buy in order to be able to survive? In other words, the writer never gets down to relating Boris's story. He gets stuck with his own concrete problems of survival, and with theoretical questions concerning the story's inherent problems of artistic representation. Again and again, the writer focuses on the question of *how* the story can be related, thus creating a "real fictitious discourse," as the novel's subtitle proclaims. A self-conscious novel like this cannot be summarized by a traditional "table of contents." The reader gets instead a detailed "Summary of the Discourse" (Figure 1).

All in all, this summary is 7 pages long. It provides the reader with every single detail of the novel's narrative and resembles thus a writer's sketch for production, which ironically doubles upon a traditional table of contents. In this manner, the novel turns into a record of its own occurrence .

The Novel as Multi-Performance

Double or Nothing also confirms the notion of multi-performance, an idea which goes back to an experiment conducted at Black Mountain College in 1952. That year, John Cage presented a so-called "simultaneous lecture" which involved performances by an actor, a poet, a musician, a painter and a dancer. Crossing the boundaries among all artistic disciplines, the idea of a "multi-performance" was born, later reoccurring in the Happenings of the Sixties. *Double or Nothing* presents the reader with an incredible plurality of narrative discourses. It is both a novel and a self-conscious exploration of the possibilities of the genre. It experiments with different narrative modes, as well as engaging in typographical and concrete play so that the protagonist is literally "plunging into the belly of America" (Figure 2).

The novel reproduces the pattern of a discovery of a new continent in the form of a linguistic *tour-de-force* which challenges the boundaries between all kinds of discourses. For example, the foregrounding of concrete play erases the borderline between poetry and fiction (which is also challenged by the inclusion of a number of poems). Various "Shandean oddities" cite the tradition of the metafictional novel: Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* confronts the reader with black, white or marbled pages, footnotes, graphical doodlings and missing or juxtaposed chapters. Federman engages in a similar free graphic play, involving unnumbered pages and typographical arrangements that do not follow a left-to-right or line-by-line pattern. *Double or Nothing* also contains an unnumbered double-column page entitled "Some reflections on the novel in our time" which crosses the border between literature and criticism (a type of discourse Federman labels as "critifiction"). The reproduction of the product information on a box of noodles (Figure 3) appears as a fictional ready-made; several strike-outs (Figure

4) emphasize the novel's notebook character; and complex graphics in the form of question-dollar and saxophone-noodles point to the novel's last phase of production in Buffalo when typewriter and notebook were replaced by a modern computer (Figure 5 and Figure 6). An unexpurgated "word for word" recording of the protagonist's thoughts in French experiments with the form of a bilingual novel (244), and a graphical invitation to walk together with the noodler to the cashier's window becomes a schematic fusion of text and image (Figure 7). A typographical play such as this seems to transform the page into a three-dimensional stage; it also adds an element of movement or dynamism to the static arrangement of the linguistic material.

All in all, the novel resembles a kind of container or an empty box of noodles into which all kinds of linguistic material can be dumped more or less spontaneously. Indeed, the entire novel relies on a series of linguistic improvisations which move in all sorts of directions, just as Allan Kaprow once described the structure of the Happening. Accordingly, the novel's ending is a highly ironical doubling upon finality and closure in conventional fiction (Figure 8) .

Indeed, if the room cost only 7 dollars a week, the end would be the beginning of another set of calculations and of yet another novel. The text points to a circular structure which is typical of the postmodern novel in general, and which, according to Kaprow, also characterizes the Happening. In fact, the novel's narrative concept can be described as a fictional take on Cage's famous composition, "4,33," which, instead of presenting an orchestral piece to an audience (waiting eagerly in a concert hall), recorded the noises of the audience during the silent "performance." Federman, instead of telling the story of his protagonist, concentrates on the noodler's calculations made during the process of writing.

The Page as Performing Space

In a program recorded for USIS, postmodern American choreographer Cunningham defines his vision of contemporary dance as an exploration of the concrete space of the stage (•). In a similar manner, Federman turns the empty page into a kind of performing space or stage. In fact, he stresses especially the relationship between a jazz performance (Federman himself plays the saxophone) and the act of writing; an equation which is already implied in *Double or Nothing*. As Kathrin Wielgosz explains, the novel's central metaphor "to noodle around" refers to a "casual, aimless playing" (35) in jazz; it is thus reminiscent of the verb "to doodle," which is used especially in relation to writing. In this manner, writing turns into a spontaneous process of filling a space, which relies heavily on improvisation: "My books grow from the inside," remarks Federman, "not necessarily growing from left to right, in one direction, but also from right to left, up and down sideways"(qtd. in LeClair and McCaffery 130). Such a process resembles a game based on free play and arbitrary rules (Kutnik 163) or a long solo

on a tenor saxophone (Figure 9). Federman himself further explains: "The language of my novels just goes on and on, improvising as it goes along, hitting wrong notes all the time--but, after all, jazz always builds itself on a system of wrong chords that the player stumbles upon and then builds from" (qtd. in LeClair and McCaffery 131). Like his favorite saxophone player Charlie Parker (Federman once joined one of his jam sessions!), Federman plays with different motifs (e.g. language patterns) to create a dynamic movement: "All I need is a few words scribbled here and there, and I can make these words grow, explode into pages" (qtd. in LeClair and McCaffery 130). Thus, *Double or Nothing* does not resemble a finished product; it is only one version of a long improvisational movement in language that could be endlessly extended and revised. Accordingly, Federman defines writing as a "constant reshuffling of things until you find the right combination" (qtd. in LeClair and McCaffery 131). The act of producing a novel resembles the (sometimes) complex process of recording a tune; musicians do not only record a multitude of "takes" to select from, they also "splice together" parts from various takes for the final (recorded) version.

Federman typographically spaces and disseminates letters and linguistic units over the page. He "typographically pulverizes the page" (Kutnik 160) by transforming it into an energetic and magnetic field for the linguistic projection of the self (Schöpp 145). German critic Joseph Schöpp even talks of a pre-orgastic vibration of language (51), a notion which is indirectly confirmed by Federman himself who claims that he writes with his entire body: "My body is, I hope, in the text too. It is not just about the great ideas but about myself and I include the body in there. I am very tired when I am finished writing because I have used my body. I get excited, physically, sexually, in that sense" (qtd. in Hornung and Ruhe 383). In that respect, the arrangement of the letters on the page turns into a chance performance which activates space as a potential signifier (Figure 10).

These examples of typographical writing make it easy to understand why critics have labelled Federman's *Double or Nothing* as an exploration of the concrete space of the page. The letters and words become involved in concrete games which could be published as individual poems. Federman turns the page into a kind of stage for the linguistic performance of the author. The most masterful vindication of this schematic fusion of text and graphical display is to be found in *The Voice in the Closet* (1979). The bilingual novel (English and French) tries to approach the key event in Federman's life, namely his survival in a closet (while his parents were seized and deported to Auschwitz). In its unpunctuated typographical layout, each page of the novel is designed as a perfect square box of print containing 18 lines and 68 characters, thus literally imprisoning the words on paper. The English and French versions of the text are included at the opposite ends of the book's black and white covers. Page numbers are also designed to form into square boxes drawn on the left hand side of the page while the text is printed on the right. The book opens with the picture of a handle-less door and, after 20 pages, ends with a drawing of a brick wall on both sides of the page. These graphical devices intensify the

atmosphere of enclosure. The wall at the end signifies the idea of impenetrability. The visual design with its verbal icons creates a concrete as well as a symbolic entrance into Federman's childhood closet. Federman thus recreates the claustrophobic atmosphere and the darkness of the closet in the blackness of the concrete word and the quadrangular page format. The writer copes with his past in the very act of turning the text into a kind of "linguistic purgatory" (Caramello 135), but his language gets entrapped in the textuality of his discourse. To escape such enclosure, the writer repeats words, digresses from and duplicates the original event in an endless process of rewriting. The fundamental irrationality of Federman's closet experience (on which the author has always insisted) could only find an appropriate form in a performatory mode of narrative.

The closet experience is the archetypal sign for Federman to find a linguistic expression for the biographical events of his past. It is inscribed throughout his novels, and his fiction always points to the discursive nature of this autobiographical nucleus.

Multiple Subjectivity

The relationship between *Double or Nothing* and modern dance can be developed even further. Federman's complex mode of authorial dispersal relies heavily on a multiple notion of subjectivity which is especially crucial to postmodern choreography. This can be seen from the following observation by American dancer Stephen Petronico, commenting on his own solo performance "Number 3":

In "Number 3" I was working with a series of perhaps 17 characters, collecting images of Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Judy Garland and all. Reagan's in there and a few of the TV ministers are in there. Basically, people who command power through their spoken word. I began layering these photographs in a sequence that sort of flips back and ahead in time. Then I began splicing the photographs together. Sometimes you get a wrist of Judy Garland with a leg of Ronald Reagan ... that kind of multi-layering in the body. I find that the effect of the layering is much more interesting than the character itself. (•)

A very similar technique of multi-layering (which, in Petronico's case, creates a series of highly fragmented movements) is to be found in *Double or Nothing*. The novel does not only consist of a dialogue between a writer and a protagonist. It also introduces a first person, a recorder, who, in a supposedly passive manner, records the words of the writer (the second person). A fourth person called "the author" (Federman refers to him as "the supervisor") acts as the writer's *alter ego* by creating unity between voices 1-3. All of them become involved in a chance performance ([Figure 11](#)). The spacing of the word "together" in Figure 11 points both to an existential separation of the narrative voices from the authorial voice, and to a hidden unity between them. In *Take It or Leave It* (1976), too, the story of a luckless protagonist is related through a multiplicity of voices including a

"second-hand teller," a "primary teller" and the French protagonist himself. Their voices merge and converge into a pluralized "I" which deconstructs and subverts the unicity of a single "I." The merging of their voices is an attempt to play out the multiple possibilities embedded in the textualized narrative "I." The digressions, asides, cancellations and repetitions, which characterize the novel's performatory mode and which affirm the verbal display of the textual voices, point to the ultimate erasure of one central and authoritative source of truth concerning the autobiographical nucleus. Federman's authorial identity dissolves into multiple voices that double upon one another in an unceasing and uneasy flow of language, thus creating a "long uninterrupted solo ... pure improvisation without shape" (•). *The Voice in the Closet* also presents itself as a highly fragmented dialogue between the writer Federman, the small boy hiding in the closet, and Moinous ("me" and "us" in French), two further projections of the authorial self. All in all, Federman creates a notion of subjectivity which is complex, mobile and multi-layered, as is marvellously illustrated by the following poem from *Take It or Leave It*:

MOINOUS OR M E T O O

I undouble
I multiply
I play hide-and-seek with myself
I subdivide
I cry and decry in two languages
I disappear
I see me seen
I use the thou form with myself
I cut and recut myself
I remend myself with red thread
I disperse
I am moved
I put me in myself
I me we
I unknot
I me us
I me too
I singularize
I pluralize also
I decenter
I play ping pong alone from both sides
I schizophrenize
I amortize
I mask my mask
I meusize
I metooize
I me we am I
I decentralize
I concentrate toward the open side
I add up
I double up and undouble again

I redouble or nothing
I multiply by two and demultiply by four
I me me I
(•)

The Dialogic Mode of Writing and Reading

It is the dialogic mode of presentation, however, which most immediately links Federman's novels to a concept of performance. *Double or Nothing* resembles a questions-and-answers activity between the writer (the second person) and the protagonist (the third person). In this manner, the novel presents itself as a constant process of perforation between two narrative layers (also known as the formalist opposition between story and discourse). The writer cannot separate his (or Boris's) story from its aesthetic problems of representation. For this reason, the novel turns into a dialogue between a writer and his text. For example, the narrator discusses the name of his protagonist. Should he call him Jacques, Solomon, Robert or Boris? Should the name of the heroine be Mary, Marie or Peggy? Should the novel start in France or in America? How is it going to end? Which narrative tense should be used? (Past, present, conditional future or a combination of all of them?) Should it be a first or a third person narrative-and so on. Federman creates a highly self-conscious text which, on every single page, functions as a mirror of its own process of production.

His subsequent novel, *Take It or Leave It*, is also based on a performatory model. It is told live by a "second-hand narrator" to a group of (highly critical and inquisitive) listeners sitting in an auditorium. The story of the novel is related as a constant interplay of questions and answers. The formal mode of the novel's production process deliberately marginalizes the plot which concerns the experiences of a young French immigrant who survived the Holocaust and came to the US. The French protagonist has been drafted into the army during the Korean War, and joined the paratroopers. He serves in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. He becomes the Cyrano of the regiment there by writing love letters for the illiterate soldiers. And, in order to escape their jibes and taunts, he volunteers to fight in the war. He is told that he has one month to get to California to catch the boat to the Far East. He decides to take this time as a vacation to travel across the country and explore America in his 1947 Buick Special.

Take It or Leave It is formatted as a work in progress that self-consciously discusses its inherent aesthetic principles in the process of writing. In this respect, *Take It or Leave It* is a "critifictional" text. Contrary to a traditional mimesis of product, which is based on the reader's identification with an illusion of realism created in the novel, metafictional texts such as *Take It or Leave It* focus on the "mimesis of process" (Hutcheon 8) by emphasizing the story of their own creation. They discuss the novel as a genre and double upon the very conventions that mark

a traditional "realistic" mode of writing. The result is a self-reflexive text that always points back to its own textuality, especially by a constant perforation of the multiple discourses. In this manner, the novel's journey pattern does not only function as a story device, but as a metaphor of writing itself: "Out of Massachusetts and into Vermont. From one State to another. From one section to the next" (•). In another passage, the protagonist's disruptive journey-which in itself parodically doubles on the pattern of the great journey in American fiction-is linked with a conception of the reading process: "Do it my way ... go my own way right and left ... up and down ... to the north and to to the south ... before we arrive at the end ... 30 days later ... 200 or 300 pages should suffice"(•). The novel refers to the "leap-frog technique" of reading (•), thus implying the notion of a self-conscious reader who constantly digresses in all directions in the process of reception.

Federman's novels are conceived as "pre-texts" that come into existence in an interaction between the process of narration and the imaginative reconstructions of the reader, who is always implied in the novel's dialogic mode of presentation. For the narrator and reader alike, the order of events does not lie in a linear chronology but in the human mind. So, "the leap-frog technique" of reading equates with the leap-frog technique of writing which doubles upon the realistic discourses based on chronology and cause and effect relationships. The lack of pagination in the novel is the first indicator of this technique and a reminder that the story will not be told in an orderly manner. In fact, the process of telling or relating a story can never be separated from the problems of its aesthetic representation.

This is especially obvious in *To Whom it May Concern* (1992), a novel in which a writer sends a series of letters to an unknown recipient. In these letters, he develops the story of Sarah and her cousin, who both survived the Holocaust in France and subsequently settled down in America and Israel respectively. The writer wants to invent a narrative which encompasses both their survival and their subsequent reunion in Israel thirty-five years later. But he encounters a crucial question. Is this possible? He tackles such questions as, Can such tragic events be communicated in the limited framework of traditional forms of representation? Can they be transcribed into the unproblematic context of referential language? Throughout the novel, the writer interferes with the plot structure and the continuity of the narrative in order to reveal his anxiety about finding a proper form for his story and the unrepresentable feeling of loss which lies behind the events. The process of formulating the story becomes a major obsession. Whenever he attempts to tell a coherent chain of events, he faces problems of disintegration, dissipation into incomprehension, and digression. He writes: "The question before me, however, is not of the story. The story? Always the same. The question is of the tone and of the shape of the story . . . its geometry. Yes, how to stage the story of Sarah and her cousin?" (18). He also asserts that "Sarah's story should not be touched by the banality of realism" (106), and thus accentuates the threat of a representationalism that suppresses the multiple possibilities of textual production in order to reduce it to one stable semantic dimension. To avoid this trap of representational closure, he

will "digress. Skip around. Improvise. Leave blanks that cannot be filled in. Offer multiple choices. Deviate from the facts, from the where and the when, in order to reach the truth" (104). What results is the defeat of representativity of the historical and social events that occurred fifty years ago. Federman's message lies here, in the fact that fiction itself communicates its own truth, and in the fact that self-reflexive fiction especially emphasizes the signification process of fictional truths, which reach out to the unimaginable horror of what happened through a performatory mode of writing. At the end of the novel, the writer states that this story "is addressed, in its indecision and formlessness, TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, and get on with it" (167).

The novel as a whole does not totalize itself into one comprehensible historical sense, because the events themselves cannot be synthesized into a definite representational form. Thus, the constant process of perforation between story and discourse lays bare the inability of realist conventions to represent the past. The dialogic mode of representation makes clear that the past can only be reinvented in language, not represented. It is re-created on the basis of "invented events" in which "imagination supersedes memory" (Federman, *The Supreme Indecision of the Writer* 59). In other words, the performatory model is potentially anti-mimetic because it constantly challenges any kind of realistic illusion. On the other hand, Federman's texts insist that although the relationship between language and reality can only be tentative, the world should be represented. The act or "performance" of writing itself is important because it presents a means of coping with the past, as argued in this study's last section.

Performance and Post-Performance

It has to be said that the performatory nature of Federman's writing is only one side of his artistic creativity. All of Federman's texts have gone through an extremely long process of writing and rewriting. The 20 pages of *The Voice in the Closet*, for example, represent what remained from an original manuscript of 250 pages. As Federman himself affirms, "You won't believe this, but I worked on the damn thing for seven months, yes seven months straight, night and day, 15 hours, 18 hours at a time, almost went nuts in this crummy room, this stinking closet, banging away on that old selectric of mine" (*The Twofold Vibration* 114-115). His first novel, *Double or Nothing*, cost Federman four years of almost incessant work, a time-span which immediately disqualifies any categorization of his texts as spontaneous performances in language only. All of Federman's novels are also proof of the difficulty of writing under the "Postmodern Condition." Performance is only one part of the artistic activity. Coming to terms with an experience in the writer's past also means a long process of rewriting. Analyzing the specific relationship between performance and post-performance would be the central task for a production aesthetics of the postmodern which has not been developed yet. The following two observations might nevertheless serve as a point of departure for such a project.

Federman regards the self as part of an infinite process of becoming. His writings confirm Paul Ricoeur's notion that "the metamorphosis of the world in play (in text) is also the playful metamorphosis of the ego" (94). For Federman every single act of linguistic performance pushes the barriers of language, which is, as Wittgenstein pointed out, the canvas or magnifying glass through which we perceive reality: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world" (5-6). In that respect, every single act of performance enlarges the writer's understanding of self and reality. Secondly, Federman views performance as "an act of liberation" from the burden of his past. In this manner, the closet (in which Federman was hidden by his mother) turns into the room of the writer in which the words explode into the empty space of the page. The empty page has to be filled with words in an activity of "noodling" or "doodling" around in language. As Charles Caramello states, "The central event in Federman's fiction is not the extermination of his family but the erasure of that extermination as a central event" (132).

In its typographical rearrangement and constant process of revising, however, the writer launches a conscious transference of performance into an hermeneutical act of redefining the self. As Federman asserts, the self becomes a point of departure. This fact can be illustrated by the following passage in which Boris, the protagonist in *Double or Nothing*, looks at himself in the mirror, apparently for the first time in five years:

after all these years, five years, because he had changed so much, much taller, but skinny like hell, his stomach sticking out, his eyes bulging out, he really looked atrocious standing there in front of the mirror with his erect dick in his hand, and yet he suddenly **almost as in a dream** became aware of himself, aware of being alive instead of being dead. . . . and even though he did not recognize himself, it made him aware of himself at some different stage of his life, of being someone else other than what he was before the camp. . . (193)

In this passage, Boris sees an image in the mirror that marks off his present self from his past self. The words "almost as in a dream" are emphasized by bold graphical display in order to point to the category of experience, which is linked to the writing process. Boris (as the writer's *alter ego*), who tries to recognize himself in the mirror, perceives his physical change (which points to a change of identity) without fully comprehending it. He does not understand what he sees in the mirror. It is in the very act of writing, in the very moment of fictionalization, that the event turns into experience: the words "almost as in a dream" perforate the narrative and try to capture a spontaneous moment of anagnorisis. The bold graphical display points to a post-performatory mode of typographical rearrangement in which the writer self-consciously refers to this moment of recognition. In that respect, every act of writing marks an act of detachment from the authorial self, which undergoes a constant process of redefinition. To conclude, as Paul Ricoeur maintains, "It is in telling our own stories that we give

ourselves an identity. We recognize ourselves in the stories we tell about ourselves" (qtd. in Madison 95).

Works Cited

Caramello, Charles. *Silverless Mirrors: Book, Self and Postmodern American Fiction*. Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1983.

Cunningham, Merce. in *Merce Cunningham and Dance Company*. USIS Video, 1977: 60 min.

Federman, Raymond. *Double or Nothing: A Real Fictitious Discourse*. (1971) Rpt. Boulder: Fiction Collective Two, 1992.

-----*.Take It or Leave It*. (1976) Rpt. New York: Fiction Collective, 1987.

-----*.The Twofold Vibration*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

-----*.To Whom It May Concern*. Boulder, Normal, Brooklyn: Fiction Collective Two, 1990.

-----*. The Supreme Indecision of the Writer (The 1994 Lectures in Turkey)*. Ankara: The Poetry/Rare Books Collection, 1995.

Hornung, Alfred and Ernstpeter Ruhe, eds. *Autobiographie und Avant-garde*. Tübingen: Günter Narr Verlag, 1992.

Hutcheon, Linda. *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. New York: Methuen, 1984.

Kaprow, Allan. "'Happenings' in the New York Scene." *The Modern American Theater: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Alvin B. Kernan. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Kutnik, Jerzy. *The Novel as Performance: The Fiction of Ronald Sukenick and Raymond Federman*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.

Madison, G. B. *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Le Clair, Tony and Larry McCaffery. *Anything Can Happen: Interviews with Contemporary American Novelists*. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Petronico, Stephen. in *Retracing Steps: American Dance Since Post-Modernism*. USIS Video, 1988: 89 min.

Ricoeur, Paul. "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology." *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Sayre, Henry. "Performance." *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Schöpp, Joseph C. *Ausbruch aus der Mimesis: Der Amerikanische Roman im Zeichen der Postmoderne*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1990.

Wielgosz, Anne-Kathrin. *Kinds of Spaces: Poststructuralist Concepts and Metafictional Appropriations*. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1993.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. Mc Guinness. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Humanities Press, 1961.

Figure 1 (Top)

Summary of the Discourse

Page No.	Topics
Title page	Title, subtitle, and name of author
Dedication	Dedication to four persons
Quotation	Quotation from Robert Pinget
0-000000000	Prologue where the intramural relationships of three persons whose real and fictitious existences are closely related are established
000000000.0	Footnote about the possible existence of a fourth person who (like a supervisor) may also be involved in the discourse
Symbolic page	Needles and symbols
1	Beginning — the room
1-3	The noodles and more about the room
3	Wall paper
3-4	Flying horses on the wall paper and discussion of a possible title for the discourse
5	Comparison with Stendhal and possible opening paragraph
5-6	Farewell to the world and more about the room and the noodles
7-9	Considerations on the food value of noodles and speculations on the advantages of noodle boxes
10-11	Noodles or Potatoes (a poetic view)
11.1	Digression on potatoes
12	Attempt at settling up a working schedule
13	Possibility of tomato sauce; the temporal element (365 days)
14-15	Comparison with other guys in similar situations
16-17	Some facts about life in the room
17-18	Coffee
19-20	Working conditions
20-21	On the boat; first encounter with the girl from Milwaukee
21-25	Some background information about the protagonist's journey to America

Figure 2 (Top)

it's like *p*
 l
 u
 n
 g
 i
 n
 g into the *Belly of A m e r i c a*
 * * * * *
 * * * * *

Figure 3 (Top)

each one hundred grams of that stuff contains approximately 5.1021 milligrams of sodium *imagine that* the average serving of this product *no kidding* when cooked contains approximately 1.52 milligrams *without exaggerating* of sodium before each four ounces of this enriched product will provide the following percentages of minimum daily adult requirements of these essential food substances *how can a guy go wrong*:

Vitamin B ₁ Thiamin	50%
Vitamin B ₂ Riboflavin	25%
Iron	32%
No Salt Added	00%
Niacin	40%

Doesn't come out even — but what a discourse — incredible

Figure 4 (Top)

Indeed can already see myself

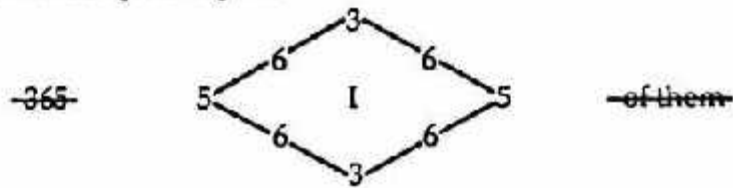


Figure 5 (Top)



Figure 6 (Top)



Figure 7 (Top)

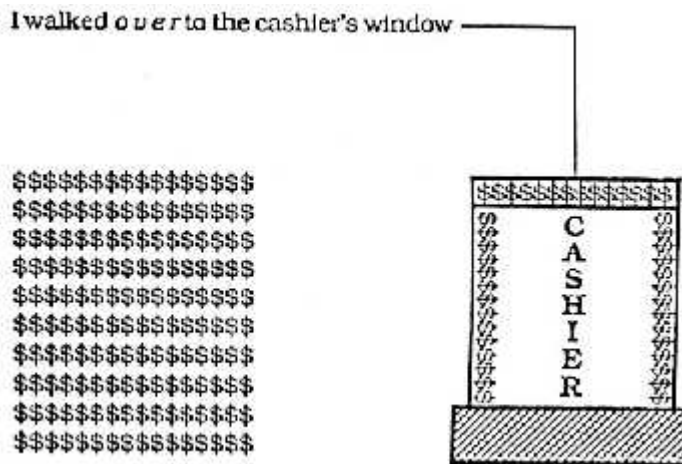


Figure 8 (Top)

*Just thinkfor instanceif the room costs only 7 bucks a week...
7 times 52 makes 364...*

259

Then
it
does
not
necessarily
have
to
be

NOODLES!

Figure 9 (Top) [Text]

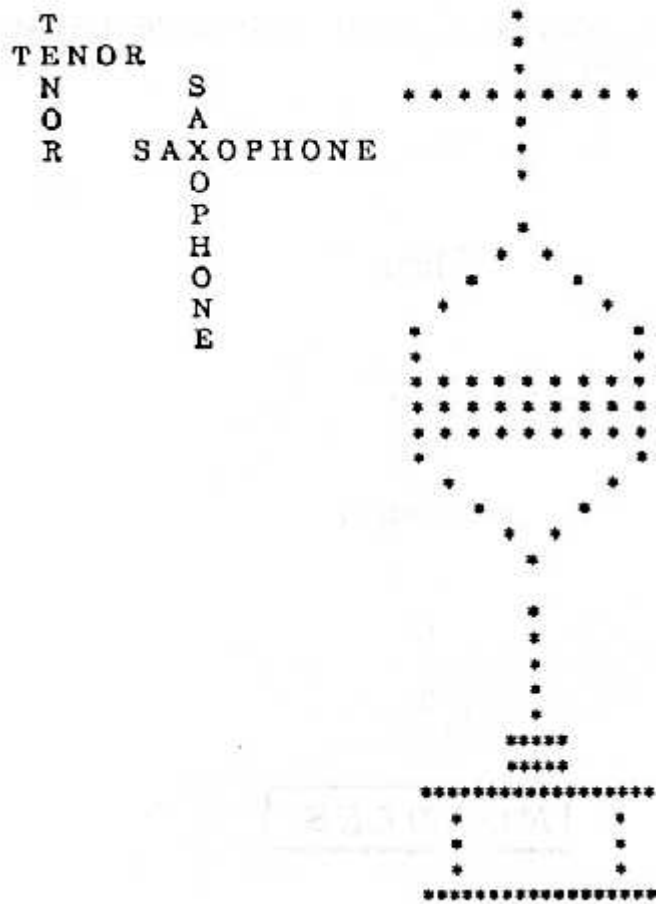


Figure 10 (Top)

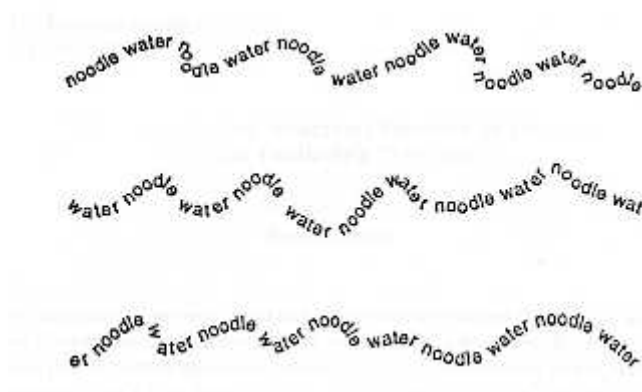


Figure 11 (Top)

me

myself

I

to
ge
th
er