

Beyond Maximalism: Resolving the Novelistic Incompatibilities of Realism, Paranoia, Omniscience, and Encyclopedism through Electronic Literature.

Abstract:

In *The Maximalist Novel*, Ercolino defines a type of novel that displays multiform maximizing and hypertrophic tension. He lists Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) and *Mason & Dixon* (1997), Wallace's *Infinite Jest* (1996), DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997), Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001), and Bolaño's *2666* (2004) as examples of the term, and classifies the maximalist novel using ten elements: length, encyclopedic mode, dissonant chorality, diegetic exuberance, completeness, narratorial omniscience, paranoid imagination, intersemioticity, ethical commitment, and hybrid realism. While Ercolino's ten elements accurately identify and classify a significant novel form that has emerged, I argue that these elements are incompatible with one another, which has resulted in criticisms of maximalist novels, as well as a number of maximalist novelists to abandon the form. While Ercolino argues that these incompatibilities represent an 'internal dialectic' of the genre, I argue that this is too conflicting to be stable as a novelistic form. These incompatibilities include the incompatibility of multiple (hybrid) realisms, the incompatibility of paranoid imagination with ethical commitment, and the incompatibilities of narratorial omniscience and an encyclopedic mode with a persuasive realism. By examining contemporary fictional works written by previously maximalist novelists, I reassess Ercolino's ten elements in order to identify the reasons why certain authors have moved beyond the limits of his definition. In so doing, I compare and contrast Ercolino's 'maximalist novel' with Woods's 'hysterical realism,' and Johnston's 'novel of information multiplicity.' Using the Franzen and Smith corpuses as examples, this paper speculates on the future form of the novel as it progresses into the 21st Century. From this literary interrogation, I apply these conclusions to my digital creative practice by developing the digital novel *The Perfect Democracy* (funded by the Australia Council for the Arts). This work takes as its subject the entire population of contemporary Australia. Such a vast subject is impossible to represent in a work of

fiction. The whole work is presented as a 3D frame-like artefact, that can be navigated as a whole, allowing readers to be presented with a multivalent, broad-canvas novel, while resolving the paradoxical issues identified in my interrogation of Ercolino. I propose that this will be achieved by utilizing Calvino's Six Memos. Images of Australian currency will be used as a structural device to remove weight by representing the whole society from the richest to the poorest in the quickest way possible, and a multitude of simultaneous digital writing formats and voices will be used to precisely depict characterization.

Keywords:

maximalist novel – realism – relatedness – paranoia – narratorial omniscience

Introduction

Stefano Ercolino defines the maximalist novel as ‘an aesthetically hybrid genre of the contemporary novel that develops in the second half of the twentieth century... “Maximalist,” for the multiform maximizing and hypertrophic tension of the narrative; “novel,” because the texts... are indeed novels’ (xi). He lists Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* (1973) and *Mason & Dixon* (1997), David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest* (1996), Don DeLillo’s *Underworld* (1997), Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* (2000), Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections* (2001), and Roberto Bolaño’s *2666* (2004) as examples of the term, and classifies the maximalist novel using ten elements: length, encyclopedic mode, dissonant chorality, diegetic exuberance, completeness, narratorial omniscience, paranoid imagination, intersemioticity, ethical commitment, and hybrid realism. While Ercolino’s ten elements accurately identify and classify a significant novel form that has emerged, I argue that these elements are incompatible with one another, which has resulted in criticisms of maximalist novels, as well as a number of maximalist novelists to abandon the form. While Ercolino argues that these incompatibilities represent an ‘internal dialectic’ of the genre, I argue that this is too conflicting to be stable as a novelistic form. These incompatibilities include the incompatibility of multiple (hybrid) realisms, the incompatibility of paranoid imagination with ethical commitment, and the incompatibilities of narratorial omniscience and an encyclopedic mode with a persuasive realism. By examining contemporary fictional works written by previously maximalist novelists, I reassess Ercolino’s ten elements in order to identify the reasons why certain authors have moved beyond the limits of his definition, and how this may impact the novel form as it progresses into the 21st Century. In so doing, I compare and contrast Ercolino’s ‘maximalist novel’ with James Woods’s ‘hysterical realism’ and John Johnston’s ‘novel of information multiplicity.’ Finally, I propose that these issues can be resolved through born-digital works, such as the Australia Council for the Arts-funded practice-led research project *The Perfect Democracy*.

Hybrid and Hysterical Realism

Ercolino claims that in maximalist novels the reader is faced with a unique form of realism, one which is 'heavily conditioned by the powerful antireferential and tautological friction of the artistic act running throughout the entire system of the arts in the twentieth century' (158). He defines this as 'hybrid realism.' This is Ercolino's final and most important element.

Similar to Ercolino's 'maximalist novel,' literary critic James Wood, in his review of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* ("Human, All Too Inhuman"), defines the 'hysterical realist' genre, which he also classifies with texts similar to those Ercolino uses to define the 'maximalist novel'. Wood is critical of these 'big, ambitious social novels' for their conceptual, inhuman characters, which he argues result from their insistence on relatedness. He uses the term 'hysterical' to denote the perpetual-motion of the above-mentioned novels' plots.

The Oxford Companion to English Literature states that, as a literary term, 'realism' is so widely used it is more or less meaningless except 'when used in contradistinction to some other movement.' In *How Fiction Works*, Wood argues that literary realism is the origin from which all other literature emanates:

[Realism] teaches everyone else; it schools its own truants: it is what allows magical realism, hysterical realism, [...] to exist[...] Chekhov's challenge—"Ibsen just doesn't know life. In life it simply isn't like that"—is as radical now as it was a century ago, because forms must continually be broken. The true writer[...] is one who must always be acting as if life were a category beyond anything the novel had yet grasped; as if life itself were always on the verge of becoming conventional. (247–8)

Chekhov's revolution, Wood argues, is that his characters have the ability to forget that they are characters, by wriggling out of the story given them into the 'bottomless freedom of disappointment,' (90) allowing their inner lives to run at their own speed. It is this form of Chekhovian realism that Wood argues is not possible in maximalist/hysterical realist novels.

Examining Chekhov's stories, his style, form, and preoccupations are far removed from those values Ercolino uses to define the maximalist novel. Not only is Chekhov not a maximalist writer, he

is also not a novelist. It would therefore come as no surprise that the Chekhovian realism Wood endorses is incompatible with the maximalist novel, as it is essentially its antithesis.

Yet both Ercolino and Wood use the same term: realism. Esty argues that debates over literary realism, what he calls ‘realism wars,’ have been ongoing since the late Victorian era. Ercolino’s description of ‘hybrid realism’ suggests that the maximalist novels attempt to resolve the realism wars by representing multiple ‘realisms’ within a single work. In response to Wood’s criticism, Ercolino argues that ‘realism’ and ‘postmodern’ are not incompatible. Wood’s position, however, is that such hybridity is not possible, as the interrelatedness necessary for the hybridity to exist ultimately taints the Chekhovian realist aesthetic, even if isolated moments within the novel successfully depict it. In *Information Multiplicity*, similar to the maximalist/hysterical realist genre, Johnston proposes the ‘novel of information multiplicity’, arguing that this form emerges in an environment created by information and web technologies. Johnston and Wood concur that in these works the antirealist impulse ultimately defines the novels’ realism. In either case, Ercolino’s element ‘hybrid realism’ does not resolve the realism wars, but is merely another example of it.

Wood’s position regarding the incompatibility of ‘realism’ and the ‘postmodern’ can be noted in his review of Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections*. Though the ‘maximalist novel’ and ‘hysterical realism’ had yet to be defined when Franzen wrote *The Corrections*, Franzen was aware of the predicament Wood articulates, i.e., that excessive relatedness can result in an unpersuasive realism:

I was torturing the story, stretching it to accommodate ever more of those things-in-the-world that impinge on the enterprise of fiction writing. The work of transparency and beauty and obliqueness that I wanted to write was getting bloated with issues... The novelist has more and more to say to readers who have less and less time to read: Where to find the energy to engage with a culture in crisis when the crisis consists in the impossibility of engaging with the culture? (66)

In discussing his writing process, he claims that the dehumanizing quality of contemporary character is a reflection of reality, as in contemporary society our lives have become inhumanly interconnected.

Franzen is therefore arguing against writing a ‘novel of information multiplicity,’ stressing a desire to move away from the antirealist impulse that Johnston and Wood argue characterizes the work of Pynchon, DeLillo, etc. As a novelist, Franzen wishes to inform and report to the reader on the state of the culture. He concedes, however, that the novel no longer serves a function as social instruction. Even if the novel serves no role as reportage or social instruction, Franzen maintains that such a novel should strive to be all-encompassing (82). In other words, Franzen champions maximalism as an ideal in and of itself. Franzen’s solution, then, is to create a ‘broad-canvas novel’ that attempts to make interconnectedness human, what Wood calls a ‘softened DeLilloism’. In *The Corrections*, Franzen retains the core ambitions of the maximalist novel, while moving beyond Ercolino’s definition. Wood praises this ‘softened DeLillo’ approach, but believes the artistic success of Franzen’s novel is not because of its extreme interconnectedness, but in spite of it. Even if the ambitions of the maximalist/hysterical realist novelist can coexist with Chekhovian realism, Wood argues that they are not comparable. The connection between a ‘malaise in ourselves and in our culture’ is purely conceptual and muddies the Chekhovian realism that centers the novel. This suggests that it has become impossible for the contemporary novel form to ‘pin down an entire writhing culture.’

Paranoid Imagination, Ethical Commitment, and the Influence of Kafka

Ercolino argues that ‘paranoia is one of the most characteristic elements of the postmodern narrative universe’ (105). He continues: ‘Everything is linked: this is the unshakeable conviction of the paranoid, a conviction that finds its structural equivalent in the direct or indirect interconnection of all the stories, of all the characters, and of all the events that proliferate in maximalist novels’ (111). Paranoia, then, can be regarded as one of the ‘antirealist impulses’ Ercolino notes in describing ‘hybrid realism.’ Likewise, Johnston argues that Pynchon and DeLillo’s works are characterized by paranoia. In *Gravity’s Rainbow*, he writes that paranoia is ‘no longer designated a mental disorder but rather a critical method of information retrieval’ (62). The paranoid imagination Ercolino defines can be observed not only in the novels described, but also in Franz Kafka’s *Amerika* (1927). Pynchon (in

Bloom), DeLillo (in DePietro)), Wallace, Rushdie, Smith (in *Changing My Mind*), and Bolaño (in Klenemeier) have all cited the importance of Kafka in relation to their work. For the contemporary maximalist novelist, Kafka's influence appears, fittingly, inescapable.

Amerika evokes the dreamlike claustrophobia and agoraphobia typical of Kafka's novels, which is due to the novel's paranoid imagination. The narrative relies on coincidence and excessive relatedness. The difference between Kafka's novel and the novels described, however, is its relation to 'real' phenomena. While informed by research of the present (Hofmann (in Kafka, *Amerika*, 1996) claims Kafka's book is 'up to the minute, with its telephones and gramophones, electric bells and electric torches, lifts, the Brooklyn Bridge... [and] an early reference to Coca-Cola' (xiii)), from the opening paragraph in which the Statue of Liberty is seen holding a sword, it becomes clear that Kafka's *Amerika* bears little resemblance to a 'real' experience of a European immigrant in the United States. The interconnectedness is persuasive as Kafka establishes a dream-like quality and logic. Unlike the hysterical realists, whose close examination of real-world issues creates immediate, enclosed context, Kafka's novels elude such readings. Given contemporary widespread information and global awareness, however, writing of other countries, institutions, or cultural groups with such disconnect from 'real' phenomena presents ethical representational issues.

In her review of *The Maximalist Novel*, Hayles notes that Ercolino does not make reference to the influence of information technologies, databases, computational media:

much of the impetus toward the massive information flows apparent in the examples derive from the creation and dissemination of the personal computer, the emergence of the web, the spread of social media, and the pervasiveness of Internet search engines. (521)

Hayles continues that these developments undoubtedly explain why the maximalist novel differs from other big encyclopedic modernist novels (e.g., Melville's *Moby-Dick* and Joyce's *Ulysses*). Similarly, these developments (i.e., emergence of the web, spread of social media, etc.) highlight a significant difference between the paranoid imagination displayed in the works of Kafka and in the contemporary

maximalist novelists. In other words, one cannot write (or indeed read) as Kafka did in the contemporary digital age.

In the information/networked age, a novel that is structured by paranoia yet aspires towards ethical commitment (as Ercolino claims the maximalist novel does) is ultimately at odds with itself. In Bolaño's *2666*, for example, the heavy interrelatedness of the novel's structure draws a comparison between the female homicides of Ciudad Juárez and World War II and the Holocaust. It is difficult, however, to determine in what capacity one atrocity can or should illuminate another, and how a reader should make this comparison. Indeed, *2666*'s structure explicitly segregates these components. Ercolino posits that his elements can be split into two camps, playing 'different roles in the *internal dialectic* of the genre' and that a '*hierarchy* of the materials is always presupposed which guarantees the genre's morphological and symbolic *hold*' (114). This he labels the chaos/cosmos function: 'anarchy versus order, centrifugal forces versus centripetal forces, chaos versus cosmos' (115). In *2666*, then, the relationship between female homicides of Ciudad Juárez and the Holocaust could either be 'meaningful' (cosmos) or simply two independent events that have no correlation (chaos). The novel's 'paranoid imagination' that informs the novel's interrelated structure, however, both allows and encourages parallels between the female homicides and the Holocaust. Not only the structure, but the meaning of the work is defined by its paranoia.

The very notion of a 'cosmos' function is at odds with maximalist novels' social realism; in the case of *2666*, the social realism of the very relentless, specific, almost journalistic approach to the female homicides is at odds with a parallel to the Holocaust. Despite the fact that maximalist novels are 'monopolized by themes of great historical, political, and social relevance,' addressing themes such as history, war, drugs, capitalism, and technology (Ercolino, 136–7), the use of paranoid imagination to draw connections between these themes lacks 'ethical commitment' as it draws immoral parallels.

Narratorial Omniscience and Cliché

Since Wood's review of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* in which he defines and criticizes 'hysterical realism,' Smith has written of her shifting approach towards the contemporary novel. Smith argues that such 'hysteria' is necessary, as in contemporary culture the immediacy of news, political commentary, and satire means that the fiction writer who addresses contemporary issues or institutions risks cliché: 'Even if you find [Pynchon, DeLillo, Foster Wallace, etc.] obtuse, they can rarely be accused of cliché, and that... is the place where everything dies.'

Smith further explores her desire to make connections in her essay "Rereading Barthes and Nabokov." She finds Barthes's notion of reader authority appealing as a reader, but paralyzing when applied to the act of writing itself. *White Teeth*, for example, is constructed in such a way as to represent a vast multiplicity of voices within the culture. The text stretches itself to accommodate and engage with a profusion of public and private issues. To avoid plot immobility, coincidence, Dickensian caricature and paranoid imagination are utilized, which has resulted in Wood's criticisms. In her essay, Smith contrasts Barthes's approach with Nabokov's assertion of authorial privilege:

Barthes spoke of the pleasure of the text, Nabokov of asking his students to read "with your brain and spine... the tingle in the spine really tells you what the author felt and wishes you to feel." Barthes, though, had no interest in what the author felt or wished you to feel, which is where my trouble starts. (43)

This trouble is the desire to create an authorial text that accounts for the birth of the reader(s) without resorting to excessive interrelatedness or the potential cliché of twenty-first-century bourgeois political apathy.

Smith attempts to resolve this trouble in her fourth novel *NW* (2012). Stylistically, it marks a departure from her other work, utilizing a combination of first- and third-person perspective, numbered fragments, and typographical arrangements. *NW* does not display 'paranoid imagination,' as connected events become tangential, having quiddity in and of themselves. Particularity is based primarily on class, rather than ethnicity. Similar to Irie Jones at the conclusion of *White Teeth*, at the conclusion of *NW* Natalie Blake, feeling decentered and fraudulent, sets up anonymous sex

encounters via the Internet. Unlike Irie in *White Teeth*, however, the ‘decentered’ form that reflects Keisha/Natalie’s decentered sense of identity makes this choice human and persuasive, rather than conceptual or hysterical. At the novel’s conclusion, after Natalie’s affairs have been exposed and she loses track of her children in a pet store, Smith writes: ‘She raised her head from her newspaper. She called out. Nothing. She walked to the fish, the lizards, the dogs and the cats. Nowhere. She reassured herself she wasn’t the *hysterical* [emphasis mine] type’ (288).

A significant difference between *White Teeth* and *NW* is the novel’s use of omniscient narration. Paul Dawson argues that twenty-first century fiction has seen a revival of omniscient narration and that this emerges from an ‘encounter with some of the technical experiments of postmodern fiction’ (4). In the case of *White Teeth*, Dawson argues that there are

substantial passages of digressive and garrulous commentary throughout the novel which directly address the reader. ...the narrator employs the editorial “we” to rhetorically invoke a general consciousness. (128)

In *NW*, however, such an authorial voice is absent. Though the novel fluctuates between four different characters’ perspectives, the points of view themselves remain that of the characters. *NW*, therefore, has more in common with the Modernist novels than the omniscient perspective of *White Teeth*. *NW* would not be classified as a maximalist novel. As a result, any intersemioticity or diegetic exuberance is justified as being the voice of the character. Smith’s reduced omniscience and interconnectedness in *NW* suggests a stylistic return to the Modernist novel in order to both account for the birth of the reader(s) without resorting to excess or cliché. While a text such as *NW* rejects Johnston’s assertion that the literary form must be ‘machinic’, it contains characters who are capable of interacting with such information systems. It therefore remains both contemporary (i.e., of the networked/digital age) and human.

A Light Encyclopedic Mode

Ercolino argues that a key element in defining the maximalist novel is an ‘encyclopedic mode.’ Encyclopedism is not the ambition of the maximalist novelist, rather it is a tool in ‘attempting to satisfy its synthetic ambition’ (40). Ercolino cites Italo Calvino, crediting him with pointing out that the desire to write encyclopedic works was one of the strongest aspirations of modernism (27). In *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Calvino (1988) addresses the encyclopedic under his lecture on multiplicity. Calvino’s own later novels reflect this value. What is not present in the later novels of Calvino, however, is a sense of Chekhovian/lyrical realism. Even in a novel such as *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, where particular chapters display a sense of realism, it is framed and presented as a construct.

As well as a less forced interconnectedness, Smith expresses a predilection for ‘controlled little gasps of prose, as opposed to the baggy novel’ and an admiration for these qualities in the works of Kafka, Borges, and Cortázar. Smith goes on to ask, if it is ‘this reverence, this care, this suppression of ego that Wood wants to see from us?’ This reverence is shown in *NW*, but is taken a step further in Smith’s *The Embassy of Cambodia* (2013). Smith still interweaves particularities, but reduces this density so as to lighten the amount of reality imposed on her characters and the text. In other words, *The Embassy of Cambodia* depicts Chekhovian realism.

This opposes Ercolino’s first element: length. Smith’s rejection of length, however, does not necessarily reject the core ambitions of the maximalist novel, as it does not necessitate a reversion to literary minimalism. Smith still interweaves particularities, but reduces this density so as to lighten the amount of reality imposed on her characters and the text. Plots do not converge at a central apex; rather, the plot leaves the protagonist unemployed with a wholly unclear future. Smith’s predilection could therefore be regarded as a desire for what Calvino labels lightness. For Calvino, lightness is understood in terms of its binary opposite, weight. His reason for treasuring lightness is a desire to write in such a way as to represent his own time, to identify himself with the collective and individual energies propelling the events of the century. The weight of all these issues, however, becomes problematic when attempting to write cohesive, dramatic, engaging fiction. As Ercolino points out, the problem with the encyclopedic project in the postmodern is that it ‘explodes, crushed by its own

weight' (29). Borrowing from Greek mythology, Calvino compares this type of weighty text to the stare of the Medusa in that it paralyses language and narrative. This, however, is not to suggest that a writer should ignore the weight of the world. Though binary opposites enable Calvino to define his values, this does not necessitate the negation of the binary opposite. Like Perseus, who decapitated the Medusa and carried its head, the writer should be light without negating or neglecting weight.

Miller (in Dawson) argues that the rise of the maximalist/hysterical realist movement was in fact a shift in American fiction away from minimalism, 'exemplified in the tradition from Hemingway to Carver' (162), to maximalism. Smith's *The Embassy of Cambodia* therefore is not simply a return to literary minimalism, but a move beyond maximalism in that it retains the ambition of the maximalist novel while shedding length/weight.

Smith's *NW* and *The Embassy of Cambodia* suggest that while depicting interconnectivity is possible and even potentially persuasive, it is not a vital revelation. In the case of *NW*, while the stories are interconnected, this is primarily to justify its structure as a novel. In fact, *The Embassy of Cambodia*, with its Willesden setting, reads almost as an *NW* offcut. This brings into question the necessity for the 'lyrical realist' novel as an appropriate form to depict contemporary culture, and whether or not it will persist for reasons other than tradition or money.

The Perfect Democracy

This practice-led research takes as its subject the entire population of contemporary Australia. It is also about the impossibility of representing this in a work of fiction. Visible images of Australian currency have therefore been used as a requisite structural device to remove weight by representing the whole society from the richest to the poorest in the quickest way possible. A multitude of simultaneous writing formats (palimpsestic writing, columns, 3D shapes, etc.) and voices (wills, business plans, legal transcripts, stream-of-consciousness, etc.) are used to precisely depict characterisation. The whole work forms a 'border-like' shape that interconnects everything literally, persuasively, and diegetically.

In the contemporary hyper-interconnected pandemic context, it would appear that we need the maximalist novel more than ever. At the same time, the incompatibilities articulated above are all the more prominent. Through this practice-led research project, I hope to show how the incompatibilities of the contemporary novel can be resolved in new electronic literary forms that push beyond literary maximalism.

Works Cited

- Bolaño, Roberto. *2666*, translated by Natasha Wimmer. London: Picador, 2009.
- Bloom, Harold. *Thomas Pynchon*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.
- Calvino, Italo. *If on a winter's night a traveler*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.
- . *Invisible Cities*. London: Pan Books, 1979.
- . *Six Memos for The Next Millennium*. London: Vintage, 1988.
- Dawson, Paul. *The Return of the Omniscient Narrator: Authorship and Authority in Twenty-First Century Fiction*. Columbus: The Ohio State Univ. Press, 2013.
- DeLillo, Don. *Underworld*. New York: Scribner, 1997.
- DePietro, Thomas. *Conversations with Don DeLillo*. Jackson: Univ. of Mississippi, 2005.
- Ercolino, Stefano. *The Maximalist Novel: From Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow to Roberto Bolaño's 2666*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Esty, Jed. "Realism Wars." *Novel* 49, no.2 (2016): 316-342.
- Franzen, Jonathan. *The Corrections*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.
- . *How to Be Alone*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.
- Hayles, N. Katharine. "Maxing Out the Novel". *Novel* 49, no.3 (2016): 519-522.
- Johnston, John. *Information Multiplicity: American Fiction in the Age of Media Saturation*. The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1998.
- Kafka, Franz. *Amerika*, translated by Edwain Muir. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.
- . *Amerika (The Man Who Disappeared)*, translated by Michael Hofmann. London: Penguin Books, 1996.

Klenemeier, M. 'Unser Teil der Traurigkeit'. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 27 April.

<https://www.nzz.ch/article7ZAC8-1.388933>, 2002.

Rushdie, Salman. *Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002*. New York: Modern Library, 2003.

Smith, Zadie. "This is how it feels to me." *The Guardian*, 2001.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/oct/13/fiction.afghanistan>.

--. *White Teeth*. New York: Vintage International, 2001.

--. *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2009.

--. *NW*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012.

--. *The Embassy of Cambodia*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2013.

The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature, edited by Margaret Drabble, Jenny Stringer, and Daniel Hahn. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007.

Wallace, David Foster. (2007) *Consider the Lobster and other essays*, New York: Back Bay Books/Little Brown and Co.

Wood, James. "Human, All Too Inhuman." *The New Republic Online*, 2000.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/61361/human-inhuman>.

--. *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief*. New York: Picador, 2000.

--. "What the Dickens" *The Guardian*, 2001.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/nov/09/fiction.reviews>.

--. *How Fiction Works*. New York: Picador, 2008.