

**Historicizing Fiction/Fictionalizing History in Don  
DeLillo's Historiographic Metafiction: *Libra***

**A Research Paper**

**Submitted by**  
Fatema Hamdy Abdel Gawad Mohamed

## **Abstract:**

This research paper offers an attempt to examine the degree of historical authenticity of the factual/fictional account built by Don DeLillo in his novel *Libra* to solve the Kennedy assassination riddle. *Libra* raises questions about our relationship to historical facts and how the reader is supposed to react to their degree of truthfulness. It exemplifies the ability of fiction to provide another view which can enjoy the same degree of truthfulness the historical record does. DeLillo's account of the assassination depends upon the conspiracy theory which considers the murder as part of a larger plot involving not only Lee Harvey Oswald, whose name is mentioned in all historical records accounting for that event, but also a number of CIA agents who accommodate the fictional part of the story. DeLillo built his story according to the possible answers of a number of questions stirred in his mind by the murder. *Libra*, in this sense, provides a good example of historiographic metafiction, one of the postmodernist subgenres of the historical novel, by illustrating the postmodernist challenge of the authority of history as a factual metanarrative and acknowledging the subjective nature of the process of interpretation adopted by historians.

## ملخص:

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية بالتحليل و الاستقصاء رؤية للكاتب الأمريكي دون ديليلو لحادثة اغتيال الرئيس الأمريكي جون كنيدي و كيف عرضها في إطار أدبي من خلال التداخل بين التاريخ و الأدب في روايته *برج الميزان* (١٩٨٨). و يناقش ديليلو من خلال روايته العلاقة الشائكة بين الأدب و التاريخ مرجحا قدرة الأدب على بناء وجهة نظر حول الأحداث التاريخية تتمتع بنفس درجة مصداقية الوثائق التاريخية التي تؤرخ للحدث. و تقوم رؤية ديليلو لحادثة الاغتيال على نظرية المؤامرة و التي تعتبر أن جريمة قتل كنيدي هي جزء من مخطط كبير يضم، بالإضافة للمتهم الرئيسي لي هارفي اوزولد، عددا من عملاء وكالة الاستخبارات المركزية الأمريكية و الذين يلعبون دور البطولة في الجزء الأدبي للرواية. و في هذا الإطار، فإن رواية *برج الميزان* تقدم نموذجا مميزا للرواية "ما وراء القص التاريخي"، و هي احد أشكال الرواية التاريخية في عصر ما بعد الحداثة و التي تتحدى مصداقية التاريخ و منهجه السردي القائم على الحقائق الموضوعية.

## 1. Introduction:

*Libra* (1988) is a postmodernist historical novel written by the American writer Don DeLillo (1936- ) to account for the events leading up to the assassination of the American president John Fitzgerald Kennedy which "remained one of the most resonant events in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and an inalienable part of the American psyche" (Galina 77). Despite the fact that John Kennedy is not the first president to be assassinated in the history of the United States of America, his assassination has been the most controversial

causing a widespread debate about the reasons behind the murder, and arousing many questions concerning whether it was carried out by a sole gunman or several ones. As a historiographic metafiction, *Libra* raises a number of questions about our relationship to historical facts and how the reader is supposed to react to their degree of truthfulness. *Libra* proves that fiction can provide another view which can enjoy the same degree of truthfulness the historical record does.

## **2. Historiographic Metafiction: A Critical Overview:**

Historiographic metafiction, as a term, was coined by Linda Hutcheon in her essay "Beginning to Theorize the Postmodern" (1987), and defined later in her comprehensive study *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), as denoting

those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages . . . [It] displays a theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs [that] made the grounds for a rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past" (105).

Historiographic metafiction offers a new vision of history which is completely different from what used to be traditionally perceived as 'historical'. Historiographic metafiction "destabilizes received notions of both history and fiction" (Hutcheon120). Nineteenth century literature used to be occupied with lies, falsification, and fabrication while history used to be regarded as concerned with absolute truth. The postmodernist age, on the other hand, regards nothing as surely an absolute truth; both the historian and the fictional writer are concerned with multiple truth(s), points of view, rather (hi)stories.

Historiographic metafiction illustrates the radical change in the view of the relationship between history and fiction in the postmodernist age which springs mainly from a deep suspicion inherent in the postmodernist thinking towards totalizing, absolute ideas as opposed to a postmodernist interest in plural ones. By interweaving real and fictional characters as well as actual and imagined ones, historiographic metafiction foregrounds the problematic status of history in the postmodernist age as a linguistic construction built according to a human process of ideological selection.

Historiographic metafiction seeks to represent past events from different perspectives building its technique on what is

perceived as an overlap between truth and lies in historical records. It presents a combination of both historical and fictional characters as well as styles of writing. History and literature "go hand in hand and, as a result of placing one within the other, a dialogue arises, a constructive and at the same time an enjoyable dialogue between the past and the present" (Indurian 5). Historical events and characters are presented not according to the details included in historical records, but according to its writer's ideological standpoint which mostly influences his own understanding and representation of historical events and facts. Building upon this, the details of one historical event differ when narrated by different persons, which refutes the claim of the presence of an absolute historical reality.

While it incorporates a past story as its historical content, historiographic metafiction does not simply seek to represent the past, its final end, however, is to question the reliability and authenticity of historical writings to unveil the parallel relationship between the act of recording history and that of writing literature. Such goal is achieved through the use of a mode of writing, namely metafiction, as a literary technique employed to investigate the seemingly contradictory worlds of history and fiction. The use of a self-reflexive mode of writing as a technical frame of historiographic metafiction

may appear to be paradoxical in relation to the historical material it works on. However, its use is intentional and proves to be of great value. The introduction of metafiction within the historical context of historiographic metafiction "problematize[s] the entire question of historical knowledge" (Hutcheon, 89). It paradoxically and self-consciously asserts its fictionality while building such a close relationship with historical reality. It does so not with the aim of gaining any authenticity, but rather to "question our ability to know the past, . . . [and] make readers examine historical facts" (Raja 1).

Moreover, through the use of metafiction, as a literary technique, the writer is given the right to violate the narration by interrupting the narrative flow to comment on events and involve himself within the fictional narrative as if he is one of those fictional persons, or they are real ones like him.

### **3. *Libra*: A Historical Event in a Fictional Scale:**

A postmodernist historical novel written by the American writer Don DeLillo (1936- ), *Libra* (1988) accounts for the events leading up to the assassination of the American president John Fitzgerald Kennedy which "remained one of the most resonant events in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and an inalienable part of the American psyche" (Galina 77); an event particularly "unique among

traumas that have gripped the American collective imagination" (Penguin Guides 1). DeLillo explains in an interview:

November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1963 marked the real beginning of a series of catastrophes: political assassination, the war in Vietnam, the denial of civil rights, youth revolt in American cities, right up to Watergate . . . This sense of fatality, of wide spread suspicion of mistrust came from the assassination of JFK. (Interview with Stephane Bou and Jean Baptiste 92)

The assassination has caused a kind of paranoia influencing the public opinion of the American citizens as well as the whole history of America. It is cleverly described by DeLillo in *Libra* as "The seven seconds that broke the back of the American century" (181).

"Everyone knows the assassination did happen but nobody knows yet how it happened. This very fact provokes to invent reality with documentary illusions" (Galina 77). It has been noted that more than two thousand books have been written to account for the possible reasons residing in the background of that event. DeLillo's account of the assassination depends upon the conspiracy theory which considers the murder as part of a larger plot involving not only Lee Harvey Oswald, whose name is mentioned in all historical



records accounting for that event, but also a number of CIA agents that accommodate the fictional part of the story and who appear to be uneasy about the growing relationship between the American state and the Cuban one. DeLillo has built his story according to the possible answers of a number of questions stirred in his mind by the act of murder:

What if the assassination was a CIA conspiracy? What if agency operatives . . . schemed to stage an unsuccessful attempt on Kennedy's life that would implicate Castro supporters? And what if they seized upon Lee Harvey Oswald . . . as the man to shoulder the blame and finally, what if they decided in the end that a successful attempt would be even more effective than an unsuccessful attempt (Interview with Stephane Bou and Jean Baptiste 94).

In terms of its inclusion of factual characters and events as well as fictional ones, DeLillo's *Libra* provides a good example of how a novelist can produce a literary work in which elements of history and fiction can blend together. Such factual/fictional situation built in *Libra* is closely related to Linda Hutcheon's description of one of the basic features of historiographic metafiction as "having the

double awareness of both fictiveness as well as a basis in the real" (107). Such attitude, Hutcheon further explains, opens the way "for the multiplicity and dispersion of truth(s)" (108). *Libra* fills "some of the blank spaces in the known record while making no secret of the fact that this will remain an exclusively literary endeavour. "Here in, though, lies its secret, the secret of the literary as a mode of truth" (Noye 240). The fact that a historical record of an event is built up by human figures depending mainly upon sets of information provided by witnesses, some of whom may not be reliable, this decreases the degree of the reliability of the historical record itself. This element of human interference, playing within the historical record, draws it close to fictional writing and gives fictional writers the chance to make an attempt to reconstruct what is mainly a historical event from their own personal, fictional point of view; that's in Hutcheon's own words, to "play upon the truth(s) and lies of the historical record" (114). "Just like historians are trying to give sense of history, authors of fiction intend to make sense of things that seem to be chaotic or unintelligible and by that create something new in which factual truth and the necessity of reality became unimportant" (Schneider 2). DeLillo, accordingly, "takes the stale facts and weaves them into something altogether new, largely by means of inventing" (Tyler 98).

. While the Warren Commission Report, as a historical record, provides a certain view of the Kennedy assassination, *Libra* proves that fiction has the ability to provide another view which can enjoy the same degree of truthfulness the historical record does. *Libra* plays "around with the past and bring[s] the notion of history into question by showing facets which were ignored" (Hentges 1). Fiction, in this sense, attempts to disrupt "the narrative flow created by historical anticipation causing readers to revisit the supposed truths of history which are now revealed to be as unstable as fiction" (Birckbeck 1).

DeLillo's account on the Kennedy assassination, though partly fictional, works on changing our presupposed views of the different figures involved in that historical event: "While our historic perception of Oswald is one of an immature and naïve patsy in a bigger world event, DeLillo's picture reveals a complex man with deeply complicated values and motivations" (Sampson1). *Libra* traces the life of the supposed murderer: Lee Harvey Oswald, starting with his confusion as a teenage up to the moment he finds himself suddenly involved in the assassination of the American president. It is something like a fictional biography of the supposed murderer, led by historical facts known about the man, and mixed with DeLillo's fictional view of him. In a letter to DeLillo, Norman Mailer wrote:

What you have given us is a comprehensible, believable vision of what Oswald was like, and why Ruby was like, one that could conceivably have happened. . . . You brought life back to a place in our imagination that has been surviving all those years. It's so rare when novel writing offers us this deep purpose (qtd. in Lennon 634).

It has been, then, noted that the difference between the several historical theories proposed to account for the Kennedy assassination, and DeLillo's is the representation of the character of Oswald. While most interpretations are one-dimensional; that's, showing no interest in tracing the development of Oswald's character along the different stages of his life, DeLillo's account is built on a detailed biography of Oswald which turns him from a static figure in historical records, known only by his name, to a dynamic one. Silvia Bizzini explains:

DeLillo's imaginary reconstruction of the events gives him the chance to let the people know Lee Harvey Oswald's other identities Oswald the child brought up in a deprived environment, the son, an unfortunate and desperate man who seeks unsuccessfully to belong to a

group. DeLillo's writing defies the rules of the society of the spectacle which has constructed the one dimensional individual the media have made famous and real for the public. (7)

The main reason, then, for such difference lies mainly in the way DeLillo interweaves fiction with reality which enables him to go in his interpretation where facts cannot go. DeLillo explains, "I invented scenes and dialogues, of course, but I tried to stay as close to what I understood to be the actual Oswald as I could" (Interview with Begley 304).

*Libra* makes its way not only into the mind of Lee Harvey Oswald, but also into the minds of the CIA conspirators as well as that of Jack Ruby, Oswald's murderer. Through such deep exploration of the minds of his characters, DeLillo makes it possible for his readers to grasp what is supposed to have gone on offstage, and illustrates how few moments in history have decided the lives and future of a whole people. T-Jay Mackey is the only real figure of the CIA group presented, but due to DeLillo's artistic talent, he is able not only to create fictional characters, but also to recreate historical ones as well; Mackey appears even more inventive than fictional characters, and the fictional ones appear as realistic as Mackey.

Parallel to the stories of Oswald and the CIA conspirators is the story of the retired CIA senior, Nicholas Branch, who has been brought in after twenty five years to compile a full, logical account of the many pieces of information available of the murder of the American president. DeLillo explains the implication of the inclusion of a character like Branch in *Libra*:

[W]hat I was trying to express with Branch was . . . two main things: one was the enormous amount of material that the assassination generated, material which eventually makes Branch almost impotent. He simply cannot keep up with it: the path changes as he writes. The material itself becomes, after awhile, the subject. The other thing I wanted to do with Branch was to suggest the ways the American consciousness has changed since the assassination" (Interview with Connolly 8).

Despite the efforts exerted by Branch and the availability of lots of documents: eyewitness testimonies, police records, and photos; Branch finds it difficult to piece together such unrelated sets of information into one single logical account. After long hours of hard work, he discovers that it is quite impossible to reach one result about

the death of Kennedy: how and by whom. It has been equally impossible for Branch to provide a unified account of the assassination that can include what obviously appears to be unrelated, even contradictory materials:

In one sentence the weapon is described as 45-caliber.

In the next sentence, it is 22-caliber. . . . Oswald's eyes are grey, they are blue, they are brown. He is five feet nine, five feet ten, five feet eleven. He is right-handed, he is left-handed. He drives a car, he does not. . . .

Branch has support for all these propositions in eyewitness testimony and commission exhibits" (300).

The situation becomes more problematic with that mystery which envelopes the events and leaves some missing gaps. Branch increases the difficulty of his task by his insistence on including everything and his refusal to use the techniques employed by writers of fiction as well as historians such as selection, adaptation, organization, inclusion, exclusion, . . . etc, in order to decide which is relevant and which is not. Branch seeks to build a truthful and unbiased historical record of that historical event, but his aim proves unattainable. His failure gives evidence to the fact that "historiographies are created, not found, and that their creation

inevitably requires human judgement and discretion" (Mills 45). DeLillo compares Branch's supposed historical record to a novel written by James Joyce: "This is the megaton novel James Joyce would have written if he'd moved to Iwoa city and lived to be a hundred . . . This is the Joycean Book of American, remember-the novel in which nothing is left out" (182). DeLillo's comparison is made up on purpose: as a modernist writer, James Joyce has been known for his incoherent narrative that involves a quite confusing plot structure. These are the same characteristics that can be used to describe Branch's historical account.

It is, then, through Branch that DeLillo illustrates the concern of historiographic metafiction with the problems related to the way history is grasped and explained in retrospect. The difficulties Branch encounters in his quest for a coherent version of the Kennedy assassination illustrate the process of selection and interpretation adopted by historians in recording history, which results in a kind of unreliability and distortion of historical records. Branch finds himself in face of a multiplicity of perspectives which reflect the subjective views of their writers rather than an objective historical fact. Accordingly, he comes to a conclusion that "history cannot be told by anyone to anyone, that it is not merely hidden but essentially



inexpressible, that it transcends language and rational thought" (Jollimore 1). Accordingly, It will never be known for sure "what compelled the actions of Oswald, . . . Nor, . . . the exact motives of night club owner Jack Ruby who killed Oswald. . . . Nor will know the precise driving force behind the broader conspiracy, if there indeed was one, for Kennedy's killing" (Sampson 1).

While the story of the murder is retold in details within the pages of *Libra*, Branch, who accommodates the world of the same novel, is paradoxically unable to compile a coherent account of the event which enjoys a considerable degree of consistency and authenticity, just as Brian Rajski explains, "[C]ontrasting Branch's sense of futility, DeLillo else where in the novel clearly lays out who conspired to murder of JFK and their motives. By doing so, DeLillo shows that the facts still do not provide any clear sense of the forces that shape history" (1). Knowing a number of facts which surround an event, Branch explains, is not enough to write a history of it: "There is enough mystery in the facts as we know them, enough of conspiracy, coincidence, loose ends, dead ends, multiple interpretations . . ." (58).

Branch is not part of the story of the assassination, but he plays even a more important role; the role of history. He "casts the

light of history over the other characters' most commonplace moments"( Tyler 98). It is through Branch, then, that DeLillo brings the lines of the historical and the fictional together. Metafiction as a literary technique is cleverly employed in DeLillo's projection of multilayered realities. This is clearly seen in a leading sentence which is repeated in the novel more than once: "There is a world inside the world" (13, 47, 153, 277), or in others which carry the same implication: "There are stories inside stories" (450). Branch, a fictional archivist in a fictional plot, is writing his own fictional interpretation of the Kennedy assassination, which is mainly a historical event. DeLillo is writing his own interpretation of the historical assassination as well as the fictional story of Branch. DeLillo writes his own factual/fictional story of Oswald who believes himself participating in writing the American history as seen in naming his diary "Historic Diary", of which DeLillo quotes fragments in his novel. Branch "creates Oswald's story within the author's own story and thus, via him we can see DeLillo in the process of creation" (Galina 81). The novel, then, involves three plots: the Branch plot, the CIA agents' conspiracy plot, and the Lee Harvey Oswald's plot. The three plots, which involve both fictional as well as factual characters and events, meet in one point: the few

historical moments involving the assassination of the American president, which are fully factual.

*Libra* reveals its status as a metafictional work in more than one way. The metafictional aspect is further illustrated by virtue of involving references to how to create plots and invent stories: "Plots carry their own logic. There is a tendency of plots to move toward death. . . . The idea of death is woven into the nature of every plot. A narrative plot no less than a conspiracy of armed men. The tighter the plot of a story, the more likely it will come to death" (221). There is also an implication of the presence of the author seen in his sudden interference in the fictional narrative to comment upon the events. He is absent but present; nowhere but everywhere. Examples are dropped here and there in the novel: "If you allot your time, you can accomplish fantastic things. I learned Latin when I was your age. I stayed in doors and learned a dead language, for fear of being noticed out there, made to pay for being who I was. 'He forgot I'm here'" (46).

Not only the author, but even the reader is sometimes referred to in the text and even directly addressed: "We are here to help you clarify the themes of your life" (162), "This is the Joycean Book of American, remember-the novel in which nothing is left out" (182), "See? Everything is taken care of" (334), "Let's regain our grip on

things" (15). Branch himself is regarded by some critics as illustrating the reader who can be seen within the pages and among the characters of the novel. By addressing the reader directly, DeLillo involves him in the fictional story as well as claims a strong relation to reality by building such a close connection with that supposedly realistic reader.

So far, the riddle of the Kennedy assassination remains unresolved. The Warren Report, though made of twenty six volumes; eight hundred eighty nine pages, failed to provide a logical, coherent view of the events, and its concluding results proved to be controversial. DeLillo explains, "The story does not have an end out here in the world beyond the book-new theories, new suspects, and new documents keep turning up. It will never end" (Interview with Begley 305). Similarly, the assassination problem in *Libra* remains unresolved as Branch notes, "It is impossible to stop assembling data. The stuff keeps coming" (59), and he finds himself trapped within many opposing, contradictory views. "It is impossible not to notice that the novel is not raised by the author to the level of compiling the single true version of the assassination: the final dot is not put in the investigation of this crime" (Galina 78). The ending of the novel is

left open offering extra chances for more fictional accounts as well as factual ones to come up and enrich the historical version of the story.

*Libra* raises a number of questions but with no definite answers provided by DeLillo himself. DeLillo states in a note at the ending of the novel: "This is a work of imagination. While drawing from the historical record. I've made no attempt to furnish factual answers to any question raised by the assassination" (No Page Number), that's because *Libra* is after all a novel and nothing but a novel. DeLillo makes such note to remind his readers that the inclusion of some real, historical details must not cease the work from being literary at base. For Francisco Carrasquer, a historical novel "has to be and cannot be anything other than a novel. Not primarily or particularly a novel, but a novel from hand to toe. After being a novel, only afterwards, can it be imbued, dyed, or pained as historical" (qtd. in Indurian 2). In an interview with Anthony Decurtis, DeLillo assures that *Libra* is "an exploration of what variations we might take on an actual event rather than an argument that this is what really happened in Dallas in November of 1963 and in the months before and in the years that have followed" (24).

It is such misunderstanding of the interrelation between fact and fiction in *Libra* which led a number of critics to condemn

DeLillo for what they regarded as "fuelling an unhealthy American obsession with conspiracy theories, . . . [and] adding to the frequently irresponsible speculation that surrounds the shooting of the thirty fifth president" (Penguin Guides 1). Bruce Bawey believes DeLillo's novels have been "designed to batter us, again and again, with a single idea: that life in America is boring, benumbing, dehumanized" (26). Similarly, George Will regards *Libra* as "an act of literary vandalism and bad citizenship" (qtd. in Remnick 141). Jonathan Yardley further accuses DeLillo of cheating: "Thanks to a conspiracy of literary radicals he [DeLillo] has quite inexplicably acquired a substantial literary reputation. . . . [*Libra*] will be lavishly praised in those quarters where DeLillo's ostentatiously gloomy view of American life and culture is embraced" (qtd. in Lentricchia "Bad Citizen" 3). In addition, *The New York Times Review of Books* granted DeLillo the title of "The Chief Shaman of the Paranoid School of American Fiction" (Interview with Begley 308). The problem with those critics who hold such allegations, however, lies in the fact that they tend to forget that *Libra* is not a book of history, but one of fiction, and that DeLillo is not a historian, but mainly a novelist. Daniel Aaron illustrates such fact in "How to Read Don DeLillo" (1999): "Don DeLillo is a writer of fiction, not a historian,

but like Nicholas Branch, his mind's eyes fix on the shadowy connections professional historians usually fail to see or dismiss as baseless supposition" (81).

"A gripping masterful blend of fact and fiction, alive with meticulously portrayed characters both real and created, *Libra* is a grave, haunting, and brilliant examination of an event that has become an indelible part of the American psyche" (Jollimore 1). DeLillo skilfully weaves "together fact and fiction to create an engrossing tale. It is a measure of his success that while reading, one must keep reminding oneself that this is indeed, a novel making no claim to literal truth" (Wood 15). It is through DeLillo's skill in building such a complex factual/fictional mixture in *Libra* that he was able to use not only fiction in exploring the world of history, but history itself is used in "exploring the nature of fiction and fictionality" (Johnston 186). *Libra* is what Meghan O'Rourke describes as "a historical novel that transforms rather than merely documents, our understanding of that chapter in American history" (1).

### **3. Conclusion:**

The past will never be recovered. It can only be accessed indirectly through its textual remains, represented in written and spoken documents and testimonies. The main aim of recording history, which is to provide an objective account of the past, proved to be impossible, quite unattainable in the postmodernist age. Within such atmosphere, historical sources of past events lose their status as truthful sources of reality. Such new position puts history on equal footing with fiction after the loss of its factual basis which used to constitute its distinctive nature. "So there were and always will be fictional elements and interpretations in the reports and writings about past events" (Schneider 1). The line, then, between history and fiction has disappeared.

Such radical change of the relationship between history and fiction resulted in the development of a postmodernist subgenre of the historical novel, namely historiographic metafiction, which is built on a self-awareness of its status as well as that of history as human constructions. Historiographic metafiction integrates both the factual as well as the fictional. It reflects the postmodernist tendency to question the supposedly realistic historical accounts in order to find satisfactory answers for a number of questions that occupied the



minds of postmodernist critics: how history is created, and by whom. Through its use of metafiction as a technical frame, historiographic metafiction asserts its status as fiction, while it paradoxically rebuilds its own vision of what is mainly a historical event, and even seems to assert its truthfulness.

The factual/fictional situation which Don DeLillo builds in *Libra* is perfectly situated within the frame of historiographic metafiction. DeLillo re-stories the history of the Kennedy assassination and his account is added to a great number of sources which attempt by one way or another to account for the dispute which surrounds such event. In his critical reworking of such historical event, DeLillo builds his fictionalized view within a historical context using metafiction as a mode of writing. He succeeds in drawing attention to the difficulties involved in building a coherent, but also truthful account of a historical event through the inclusion of the character of Nicholas Branch whose aim to build a truthful and unbiased historical record of the assassination proves impossible. Branch fails to accomplish his task because of his strict adherence to historical truthfulness and authenticity. DeLillo ,on the other hand, succeeds in building his own story; being originally a novelist, DeLillo uses the tools made available by fiction to its writer, and at

the same time, takes advantage of freeing himself from the supposed demands historiography requires; that's, by writing within the frame of the self-referential technique which consciously acknowledges the fictive status of its writing while paradoxically building a close relationship with reality by basing its story on what is mainly a historical event.

Side by side with his presentation of what can be regarded as a realistic story, being originally a historical event, DeLillo adds artistic elements of innovation which endow his novel with a postmodernist colour that allows it to be highly appreciated as a distinctive and unique contribution to the innovative style of postmodernism.

## Works Cited

- Aaron, Daniel. "How to Read Don DeLillo". *Introducing Don DeLillo*, edited by Frank Lentricchia, Duke UP, 1999, pp. 67-82.
- Bawey, Bruce. "Don DeLillo's America". *Don DeLillo*, edited by Harold Bloom, Chelsea House, 2003, pp. 21-28.
- Birckbeck, Janice Cormie. "Fiction Creating the Historical in Don DeLillo's *Libra*", *Crime Culture*, [www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Articles-Winter10/cormie\\_libra.html](http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Articles-Winter10/cormie_libra.html). Accessed 17 Sep. 2013.
- Bizzini, Silvia Caporale. "Resisting the Postmodern Historical Vision: Imag(in)ing History in Don DeLillo's *Libra*", pp. 1-13 [rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/4598/3/DELILLO%27S%20LIBRA.%20HISTORICAL%20VISION.pdf](http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/4598/3/DELILLO%27S%20LIBRA.%20HISTORICAL%20VISION.pdf). Accessed 13 March 2015
- DeLillo, Don. *Libra*, Penguin Books, 1991.
- . Interview with Anthony Decurtis. "An Outsider in This Society". *Introducing Don DeLillo*, edited by Frank Lentricchia, Duke UP, 1991, pp. 43-66.

- . Interview with Kevin Connoly. "An Interview with Don DeLillo".  
*The Brick Reader*, edited by Linda Spalding and Michael Ondaatje, Coach House Press, 1991. 260-69.
- . Interview with Adam Begley. "Don DeLillo: The Art of Fiction CXXXV". *Paris Review*, vol. 35, no.128, 1993, pp. 275-306.
- . Interview with Stephane Bou and Jean Baptiste. "A Conversation with Don DeLillo: Has Terrorism Become the World's Main Plot?" *Panic*, vol. 1, Nov. 2005, pp. 90-95
- Galina, Pastushuk. "Don DeLillo *Libra* as a Sample of Postmodern American Fiction". *Philology*, vol. 80, no.67, 1997, pp. 75-88.
- Hentges, Jane. "Coming out with a Bag: Rewriting the past in Sarah Water's Historiographic Metafiction *Tipping the Velvet*". *Ligue*, 2005, [www.ligue.org](http://www.ligue.org). Accessed 12 Nov. 2014.
- Hutcheon, Linda. "Canadian Historiographic Metafiction". *TSpace*, 1984, pp. 228-238,  
[tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/9420/1/0017.pdf](http://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/9420/1/0017.pdf).  
Accessed 17 Apr. 2013.
- . *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, and Fiction*,  
Routledge, 1988.
- Indurian, Carlo Mata. "Brief Definition and Characterization of a Historical Novel". *Academia*,

[www.academia.edu/1482784/Brief\\_Definition\\_and\\_Characterization\\_of\\_a\\_Historical\\_Novel](http://www.academia.edu/1482784/Brief_Definition_and_Characterization_of_a_Historical_Novel). Accessed 17 Sept. 2013.

Johnston, John. *Information Multiplicity: American Fiction in the Age of Media Saturation*. Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publishing Data, 1953.

Jollimore, Troy. "In Retrospect: Don DeLillo's *Libra*". Review of *Libra*, by Don DeLillo, 8 July 2008, [bookcritics.org/blog/archive/In\\_Retrospect\\_Troy\\_Jollimore\\_on\\_Don\\_DeLillos\\_Libra](http://bookcritics.org/blog/archive/In_Retrospect_Troy_Jollimore_on_Don_DeLillos_Libra). Accessed 17 Sept. 2013.

Lennon, Michael. *Norman Mailer: A Double Life*. Simon & Schuster Paper Backs, 2013.

Lentricchia, Frank. "*Libra* as Postmodern Critique". *Introducing Don DeLillo*, edited by Frank Lentricchia, Duke UP, 1999, pp. 193-215.

---. "The American Writer as Bad Citizen". *Introducing Don DeLillo*, edited by Frank Lentricchia, Duke UP, 1999, pp. 1-6.

Mills, Mark Spencer. "Interrogating History or Making History? Vonnegut's *Slaughter House-Five*, DeLillo's *Libra*, and the Shaping of Collective Memory". MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, Dec. 2006,

<http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1763&context=etd>. Accessed 12 April 2014.

Noya, José Liste. "Naming the Secret: Don DeLillo's *Libra*".

*Contemporary Literature*, vol. 45, no.2, Summer 2004, pp. 239-275.

O'Rourke, Megan. "Falling Man". *The Book Club: Slate Plus Today*,

23 May 2007,

[http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/jurisprudence/2017/05/jeff\\_sessions\\_hard\\_line\\_drug\\_policies\\_explained.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/jurisprudence/2017/05/jeff_sessions_hard_line_drug_policies_explained.html). Accessed 12 April 2014.

Penguin Reading Guides. "*Libra*: Don DeLillo". *Penguin Clubs*,

2013, [www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/libra.html](http://www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/libra.html).

Accessed 17 Sept. 2013.

Rajski, Brian. "Don DeLillo Running Dog (1978)". Review of *Libra*,

by Don DeLillo. *The Voice Imitator: Bibliography as*

*Bibliography*, 29 Jan. 2010,

[voiceimitator.blogspot.com/2010/01/don-delillo-running-dog-1978.html](http://voiceimitator.blogspot.com/2010/01/don-delillo-running-dog-1978.html). Accessed 12 Mar. 2015.

Rao, Maya. "The Construction of Cyclical Time in *Waterland*".

*Postcolonial Web: Postimperial and Postcolonial Literature in English*, 1996,

[www.postcolonialweb.org/uk/gswift/wl/swift3.html](http://www.postcolonialweb.org/uk/gswift/wl/swift3.html).

Accessed 1 Sept. 2016.

Remnick, David. "Acts of Justice: Risk and Representation in Contemporary American Fiction",

[www.digitool.library.mcgill.ca/thesisfile102824.pdf](http://www.digitool.library.mcgill.ca/thesisfile102824.pdf).

Accessed 17 Sept. 2013.

Sampson, Mark. Review of *Libra*, by Don DeLillo, 1 Aug. 2012,

[freerangereading.blogspot.com/2012\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html](http://freerangereading.blogspot.com/2012_08_01_archive.html).

Accessed 17 Sept. 2013.

Schneider, Markus. *Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five as Historiographic Metafiction*, Druck and Brndug, 2008.

Tyler, Anne. "Dallas, Echoing Down the Decades: *Libra* by Don

DeLillo". Review of *Libra*, by Don DeLillo. *The New York Times Book Review*, 24 July 1988,

[www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/16/lifetimes/del-r-libra.htm](http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/16/lifetimes/del-r-libra.htm).

Accessed 7 Sept. 2013.